

## HOW TO PRAY

### James 4:2

**Introduction:** Every culture through the ages has "prayed" to somebody or some thing at some time or other. To seek help from a source more powerful than people has been done since the first man was created. Some prayers are silent, mental prayers, some are written, some are whispered, some are spoken, some are shouted, some are in strange "tongues." Some prayers are accompanied with gifts and some even with personal injuries hoping to get the attention of the one to whom the prayer is addressed. So we live in a modern world today, witch craft, superstitions and such are things of the past. We have moved beyond all that. But have we moved beyond the need of help from someone greater than we are? Have we become so independent, so capable, so intelligent that we can do all things by ourselves without any outside help? Some seem to think so but the fact is that God IS and so is Satan. Those of us who believe in God need His help every minute of every day. So, how do we pray to our God?

### I. PRAYER IS IMPORTANT

1. We need to pray because there is a devil.
2. We need to pray because it is God's appointed way for obtaining things, and the great secret of all things lacking in our lives is our neglect of prayer. *"...Ye have not because ye ask not..."*
3. Those men whom God set forth as a pattern of what He expected Christians to be, the Apostles, regarded prayer as the most important business of their lives.
4. Prayer occupied a very prominent place and played a very important part in the earthly of our Lord. (**Mk. 1:35; Lk. 6:12**)
5. Praying is the most important part of the present ministry of our risen Lord.
6. Prayer is the means that God has appointed for our receiving mercy, and obtaining grace to help in time of need. (**Heb. 4:16**).
7. Prayer in the Name of Jesus Christ is the way Jesus Christ Himself has appointed for His disciples to obtain fullness of joy. (**John 16:24**)
8. Prayer, in every care and anxiety and need of life, with thanksgiving, is the means that God has appointed for our obtaining freedom from all anxiety, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding.
9. Prayer is the method that God Himself has appointed for our obtaining the Holy Spirit. (**Luke 11:13**)
10. Because of what prayer accomplishes:
  - Prayer promotes our spiritual growth.
  - Prayer brings power into our work.
  - Prayer avails for the conversion of others.
  - Prayer brings blessings to the Church.

### II. PRAYING UNTO GOD

1. Get an audience with God. Yes, you can, our God wants to hear from you.
  - Before a word is offered, we should have the definite and vivid consciousness that we are talking to God, and should believe that He is listening to our petition and is going to grant the thing we ask of Him. This is only possible by the Holy Spirit's power, so we should look to the Holy Spirit to really lead us into the presence of God and should not be hasty in words until He has actually brought us to the throne of God.
2. Pray without ceasing. Earnestly, "stretched-out-edly," intensely. (**Luke 22:44, Heb. 5:7, Rom. 15:30**).  
Much of our modern prayer has no power in it because there is no heart in it. We rush into God's presence, run through

a string of petitions, jump up and go out.; If someone asked us an hour later what we prayed for often we couldn't tell them. **If we put so little heart into our prayers, we cannot expect God to put much heart into answering them.** How shall we attain earnestness in prayer? We cannot do it by ourselves, the true method is explained in **Rom. 8:26**. If we would pray with power, we should pray with fasting. This of course does not mean that we should fast every time we pray, but there are times of emergency or special crisis in work or in our individual lives when men/women of downright earnestness will withdraw themselves even from the gratification of natural appetites that would be perfectly proper under other circumstances, that they may give themselves up wholly to prayer. There is peculiar power in such prayer.

3. United prayer. (**Acts 12:5, Matt. 18:19**)

This unity must however, be real. The desire must be the same, one cannot ask for a friend while the friend asks for him/herself. This is not the same unity. But where there is real agreement, where the Spirit of God brings two believers into perfect harmony concerning that which they may ask of God, where the Spirit lays the same burden on two hearts, in all such prayer there is absolutely irresistible power.

### III. PRAYING IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Why do we add "in the name of Jesus or in Christ's name" at the end of a prayer? If you gave a check to a bank with your own name signed on it, you are asking of that bank something which is yours and it will be given to you if you have an account and money in that account. If, however, I go to the bank with somebody else's name on the check I am asking in that person's name for money to be taken from his/her account, not mine. So it is when we go to the "bank of heaven." We go to God in prayer, but we have nothing deposited there, no credit there and if we go in our own name, we will get absolutely nothing. But Jesus has unlimited resources in heaven and He has authorized/granted us the privilege of going to the "bank" with His name on our requests and in doing so, our requests will be honored. So much of our modern prayer is vain because people approach God as if they have some claim upon God and that He is obligated to answer their requests/prayers.
2. **1 John 5:14, 15**. If we are going to pray according to God's will, then we will get whatever we ask of Him. How can we know what prayer is according to His will?
  - First by the Word of God. Search the scriptures. When anything is definitely promised in the Word of God, we know that it is His will to give that thing. When we pray for wisdom, we know that it is God's will to give us wisdom, for He says so in **James 1:5**. Here is one of the greatest secrets of prevailing prayer: To study the Word to find what God's will is as revealed there in the promises, and then simply take these promises and spread them out before God in prayer with the absolutely unwavering expectation that He will do what He has promised in His Word.
  - Another way in which we may know the will of God is by the teaching of His Holy Spirit. (**Rom. 8:26, 27**). When we are led out by the Holy Spirit in any direction to pray for any given thing, we may do it in all confidence that it is God's will, and that we are to get the very thing we ask of Him, even though there is no specific promise to cover the prayer.

### IV. HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

1. **James 4:3**. A selfish purpose in prayer robs prayer of power. The true purpose in prayer is that God may be glorified in the answer.
2. **Isaiah 59:1, 2**. Sin hinders prayer. Perhaps some hidden, unforgotten sin that has gone unconfessed, unjudged.
3. **Ezekiel 14:3**. Idols in the heart cause God to refuse to listen to our prayers. What is an idol? It is anything that takes the place of God. Anything that is the supreme object of our affection. God alone has the right to the supreme place in our hearts.
4. **Proverbs 21:13**. Stinginess will rob prayer of power. Perhaps this is the most common hindrance.

5. **Mark 11:25.** An unforgiving spirit is one of the most commonest hindrances to prayer.
6. **James 1:5-7.** Prayers are hindered by unbelief.

## V. THE NEED OF A GENERAL REVIVAL

1. Consider first of all what a general revival is. A revival is a time of quickening or impartation of life. A revival is a time when God visits His people and by the power of His Spirit imparts new life to them, and through them imparts life to sinners dead in trespasses and sins.
2. We think that we want revival, but look at what a real revival is: It is a searching of hearts, since we are professed Christians, what a radical transformation of individual, domestic and social life would be brought about and many other things that would come to pass if the Spirit of God was poured out in reality and power. If all this were known, the real cry of our average church would be "O God, keep us from having a revival.." A real revival would cause everyone to search their lives, bring out all hidden sins and grudges. It would transform lives completely. Do we really want this? Do we want to ask forgiveness of our fellow Christians? If we do want this, then take a look at the result.
  - The pastor has a new love for souls. He forgets his ambition to preach great sermons and simply longs to see people brought to Christ.
  - Pastors get a new love for God's Word and a new faith in God's Word. A genuine wide-sweeping revival would do more to turn things upside down and thus get them right side up.
  - Pastors would have new liberty and power in preaching.
  - Christians could come out from the world and live separate lives, giving up the sinful things.
  - Christians would get a new spirit of prayer. Prayer would no longer be a duty but a necessity.
  - Christians would go to work witnessing and winning the lost.
  - Christians would have a new joy in Christ.
  - Christians would have a new love for the Word of God.

## CONCLUSION:

If you really want a revival, the **pray** for one. Surrender yourselves to God. Do what He asks and above all, do not be ashamed of Him.

Do you see now what **real** prayer is all about? Do you really want to pray as you ought?