

FOUNDATION FOUR

PRAYER

NEW NATURE CHURCH

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VISION

Every believer lives in intimate, two-way communication with God, every day of their lives.

WHY PRAY?

God is all about intimacy. In John 17:3 Jesus makes it clear that eternal life is all about knowing God and Jesus. “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the one and only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” The whole purpose of life is knowing God. We can get to know God through his word (the Bible), through the Holy Spirit and through prayer, a two way conversation with Him.

Prayer is all about intimacy with God, it is conversation with God and can be about anything at all. God is really interested in us and He also knows that as we spend time with Him, we will get to know Him, become more like Him, love Him and discover who we are.

When people begin a relationship with God, prayer is often something that sparks many questions and wonderings. How do you talk to someone you can't see? How does God talk back? What should I say? The good news is that prayer is easy, the bible has many examples for us to learn from and we have the Holy Spirit to help along the way.

When we talk with another person we get to know them. Often this happens little bit by little bit over a long period of time, with many conversations and interactions. As our relationship grows with another person we get to know a lot about them such as how they think, what they like and what they don't like. Prayer and intimacy with God is the same, as we spend time in prayer, a two way conversation where we talk and listen, we get to know what He is like and how he thinks.



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EQUALS INTIMACY

Prayer transforms us to become more like God. Have you ever spent time around a group of friends and found yourself talking more like them or even picking up some of their behaviours? It is the same with God. As we get to know Him He reveals new things about Himself to us and this enables us to know Him better and become more like Him.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:18

Here it literally states that as we look at the glory of God (the incredible power of who He is as He reveals Himself to us) we are literally changed into this same glory. This is what prayer is all about, knowing God more intimately and becoming like Him.

Prayer is also our way of depending on God in everything and bringing every need to Him. As we tell God our needs we can begin to trust Him to meet them, just as a child asks their parent for a drink knowing that they will receive it.

As we bring our thoughts, wonderings and requests to Him we give God the opportunity to answer and be our provider.

In James 4:2 God simply tells us “[You do not have because you do not ask.](#)”

Read Philippians 4:6-7

God’s will is to answer us and provide for us, but we must ask in order for this to happen. Part of prayer is the asking.



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WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

Prayer is not meant to be complicated, it is like talking to a friend - just talk! Talk to God about everything: questions, what you are grateful for, needs, desires, even disappointments, why you love him, what you want to know and see, things you understand, things you don't understand - everything! There is no correct way to pray. You don't have to speak a certain way and you can have your eyes open or closed. You may like to stand, sit, walk, kneel or even lay down. The important thing is that you talk, listen and obey.

Jesus disciples once asked him to teach them how to pray. His reply has become known as the Lord's prayer. It is found in Matthew 6:5-13.

5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 “This, then, is how you should pray:

““Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
10 your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’

This prayer is often recited in Christian gatherings. There is certainly power in reciting scripture but there are also some principles in this prayer which we can use to guide our own prayers.

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1) Pray by yourself. Verse 6 is about praying to know God rather than to impress others. Our relationship with God is exactly that, OUR relationship. It is not a show to impress others. So make time to pray by yourself each day.

2) Worship God, remembering who He is. Verse 9 reminds us that God is holy and we need to remember that and worship him. Jesus begins by showing us that worshipping God is part of prayer and a really good starting point. This can be as simple as saying "God you are so good. I just love you so much."

3) Verse 10 reveals God's will that earth is just like heaven. This means we are to pray that earth looks like heaven. There is no sickness in heaven, so we pray for sickness to go. There is no sorrow in heaven so we pray for joy to come into situations here on earth. Part of prayer is praying for ourselves and others, when we pray we must pray from this position. God is wanting His Kingdom to come and His will to be done in each situation on earth as it is in heaven. If you are not sure how to pray, ask the Holy Spirit to show you.

4) Verse 11 asks for the needs for today. Bring your needs to God, trusting that He will provide. Financial needs, relationship needs or even strength needs. God can give us just what we need.

5) Verse 12 reminds us to forgive and ask for forgiveness. God has forgiven all of our sin and we must now forgive all who sin against us. Ask Holy Spirit to show you if there is anyone you are holding offence with or needing to forgive.

6) Verse 13 identifies our need for God to deliver us from temptation and evil. The enemy loves to throw temptation at us. It can be things like tempting us with looking at pornography or it can be a small whisper telling us it's OK to act out in anger towards someone. The LORD God almighty fights for us and will always make a way for out for us. [1 Corinthians 10:13](#) "...God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."

Ask for His protection and His help everyday, always depending on Him.

This is not a formula to be strictly adhered to, however, Jesus taught the disciples to pray like this for a reason. These are principles to keep us focused on God, His goodness, His will, His provision, His forgiveness, His protection and our role to imitate and reflect our God in prayer and life each day.

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HOW DOES GOD REPLY?

Part of prayer is listening. If you have a conversation with a person where they just talk, talk, talk and then leave, there is not much communication or relationship occurring. Conversations involve speaking and listening. When we pray we need to take the time to listen too. Expect a reply! God has asked us to pray because He wants to reply; He wants to speak to us more than we want to listen.

There are many ways which God speaks. Here are some common ways:

He speaks by the Holy Spirit. This may come as a “voice” either aloud or in your spirit, a picture, a thought, a feeling, a dream, a vision, or any other way Holy Spirit wishes.

He speaks through the Bible. The Bible is often referred to as the living word of God. As we read it Holy Spirit gives us revelation which speaks to us, this may be for the specific day, it may answer questions we have or show us something about God or ourselves which we did not realise. This is just the beginning, there is no limit to how God can use scripture to speak to us.

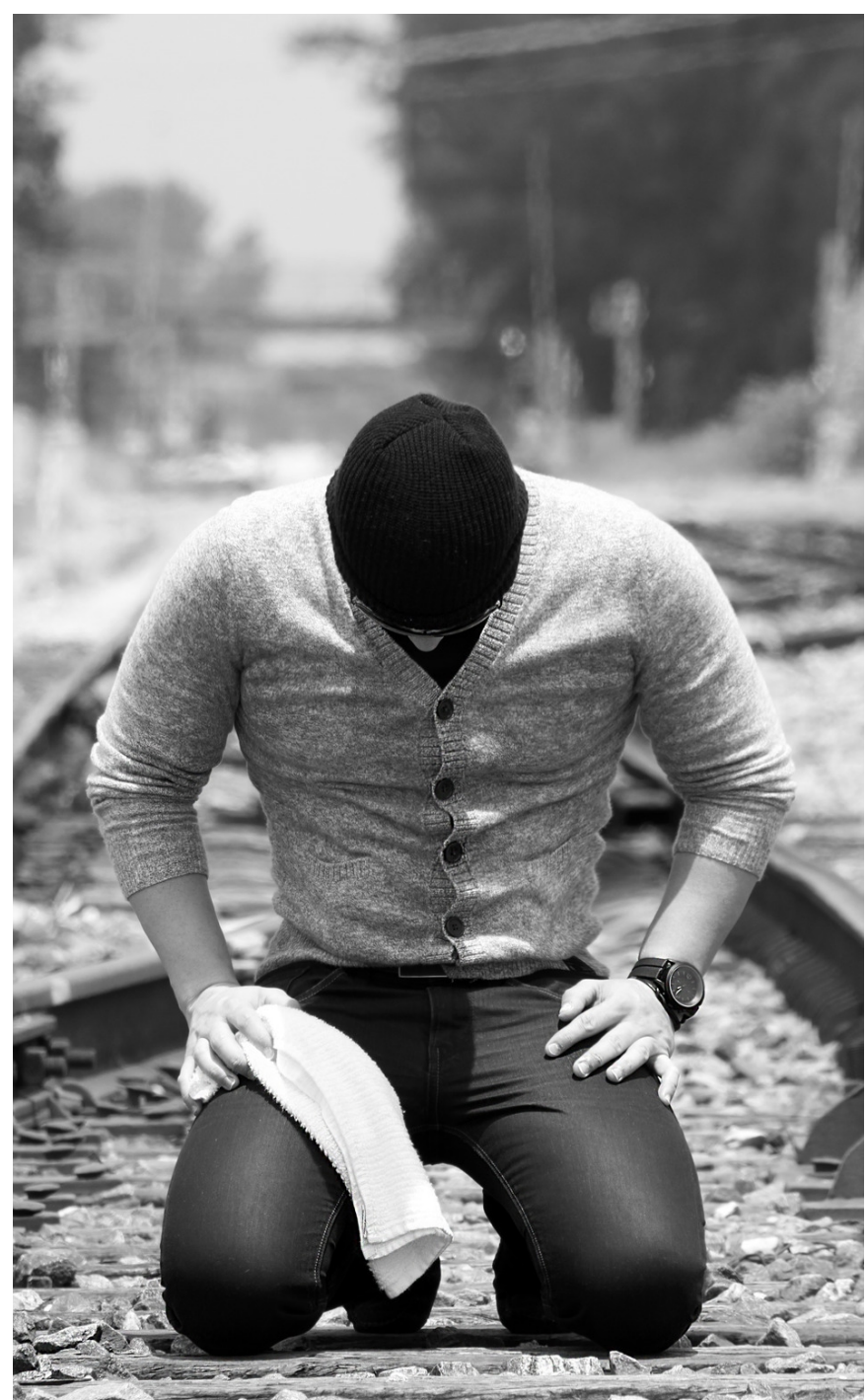
He speaks through others. God may give someone a specific word for you, or they may just simply tell you something which answers a question you have. He loves to use the church, the body of Christ, to build each other up and reveal the Father.

HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP US TO PRAY?

Sometimes we just don't know what to pray. Our heads may feel empty or overfull, or we just can't figure out how to say what is inside us. God has given us his Holy Spirit to help. The Spirit helps us pray by searching out the deep things of God and revealing it to us (1 Cor 2:10-12). In this way He shows us how to pray out what is in God's heart to do. As Holy Spirit reveals God's heart he often prompts and leads us in how to pray what God is revealing. If you don't know how to pray what Holy Spirit reveals, just ask Him to show you.

He also gives us the gift of tongues. When we are unsure of what to pray we can pray in tongues and the Holy Spirit prays and intercedes on our behalf.

Read Romans 8:26-27.



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WHEN SHOULD I PRAY

What would you do if you wanted to get to know another person? You would spend time with them. Maybe doing something that you both like, sitting having a cuppa, maybe doing normal everyday things together, the list can go on. Prayer is the same, if we want to know God we have to spend time with Him talking and listening. Prayer builds our relationship with God. Jesus often withdrew to pray.

Read Luke 5:16; Mark 1:35.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says that we should “pray without ceasing”. So prayer is meant to be a regular, daily practice. Pray by yourself each day, some people find this easier in the morning, others at night or there may be another time which works for you. Also, as you go about your day, talk to God about everything - speaking and listening.

PRAYER IS POWERFUL

Remember that prayer is powerful. God is pleased with you and He wants you to pray so that He can answer. Our prayers have great power because God answers!

“Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you ill? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

James 5:13-18

Elijah was a prophet in the Old Testament, a human being, just as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

REFLECTION

When will you pray each day?

What are some things you will pray about?

What are some thing you are not sure about?

How does God speak to you and lead you now?

What are you believing for as you pray?