

Praying God's Words

...But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

Romans 8:24-27

Prayer for every situation (Luke 18:13)

"Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner" The Tax Collector (Repeat)

Prayers for times of doubt (Mark 9:24)

Lord I believe, help my unbelief

Prayers in grief (Psalm 6)

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak. O Lord, heal me, for my bones are greatly troubled. How long O Lord? Deliver me. I am weary with my groaning; all night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears. The Lord hears the voice of my weeping. He hears my supplication, the Lord will receive my prayer. Have mercy and deliver me.

Prayer for times of distress (Jonah 2:2,5-7,9)

"In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me..To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit. When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.. I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you.. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'"

Prayers for humility (Psalm 36)

Oh continue your steadfast love to me, and your righteousness of heart! Let not the foot of arrogance or pride upon me, nor let the hand of the wicked drive me away.

Prayers for spiritual enlightenment (Col. 1:9-12)

I ask that I may be filled with knowledge of Your will with all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that I may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing

You, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to Your glorious power, for all patience and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified me to a partaker in the inheritance of the saints

Prayers to instill the desire for God in us (Psalm 27)

One thing I ask You Lord, that I will constantly seek, that I may dwell in Your house my Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon Your beauty and inquire in Your temple. For you will hide me in Your shelter in the day of trouble; You will conceal me in the cover of Your tent; You will lift me high upon a rock.

Prayers for boldness (Acts 4:23-31)

Grant Your servant all boldness to speak Your word, to stretch Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done in Your name Jesus Christ.

Prayers to know oneself (Psalm 139:23-24)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties; and if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Prayers for safekeeping from wickedness (Psalm 141)

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies. Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness. And let Him rebuke me; it shall be as excellent oil; let my head not refuse it.

Prayers for guidance (2 Thes. 1:11-12)

Lord, I pray that You make me worthy to Your calling, and that by Your power You may bring into fruition my every desire for goodness, holiness, and deeds prompted by faith. I pray this so Your name, Lord Jesus, may be glorified in me and I in You, according to Your Grace, mercy, and love. Amen.

Prayers for chastening (Jeremiah 10:23-24)

"Lord, I know that people's lives are not their own; it is not for them to direct their steps. Discipline me, Lord, but only in due measure — not in your anger.."

"When you pray, try to let the prayer reach your heart. It is necessary that your heart should feel what you are talking about in your prayer, that it should wish for the blessing for which you are asking... Observe, during prayer, whether your heart is in accord with that which you are saying."

- St. John of Kronstadt

Prayer – Workshop

Overcoming the Obstacles

Prayer is ‘**The oxygen of our spiritual life**’. We need prayer in order to stay alive spiritually; therefore, we are sure that it will be attacked by the devil. Prayer is not necessarily easy but we know that if we persevere in prayer, we will receive the fruits of our labour:

I have received this great fiery Spirit: receive Him now yourselves. If you wish to receive Him that He may dwell in you, first offer hard labours of the flesh and humility of the heart. Raise your thoughts up to heaven night and day. Ask in uprightness of heart for this fiery Spirit and He will then be given to you...Persist in prayer diligently, with all your heart for this Spirit dwells in upright hearts. He will reveal to you higher mysteries and other things which I cannot express in ink and paper...Celestial joy will then be your portion day and night. (Saint Anthony the Great, Letters 8)

What do you understand about prayer from this passage?

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What obstacles do you face/ what do you find difficult about prayer?

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Common deceptions about Prayer

1. I'll do it later

- We won't
- We must learn urgency to pray - by starting on this personal relationship with God and tasting His sweetness, we will eventually long to pray.

2. I just spent 4 hours at church; I don't need to pray again ...

- Never substitute personal prayer time, in the silence of your room, with other spiritual activities.

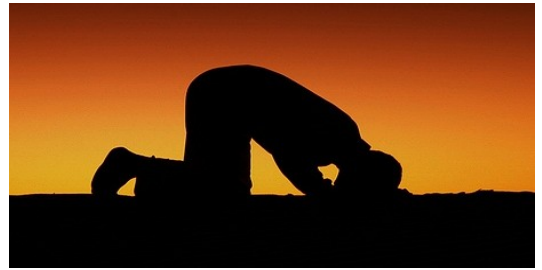
3. God doesn't mind, I can pray while lying in bed in stead.

- You're right, you can pray in bed, but this should be an 'add on', not a substitute.
- We stand in prayer like we stand in church – we give God respect as He is King of Kings

Exercise:

Can you think of another way we can give God respect, humble ourselves and enter prayer in the fear of God?

Do you know how to do a Metania?



Some common obstacles towards prayer

Obstacle	Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I never know what to pray about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask God to teach you. The Agpeya (book of Hours) gives us words when we don't have them. Also, the words are from the Bible so we know they are according to His will.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even if I pray the Agpeya...I don't really understand the psalms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look up orthodox commentaries/explanations to each psalm, even if you just pray one psalm a day, pray it whilst understanding what you're saying.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I try to pray but I'm always too tired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set aside a particular time of day e.g. first thing in the morning or when you get back from school, to pray formally. That doesn't mean we shouldn't pray at any other time...we must make sure we also pray throughout the day whenever we remember God
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I get bored....ESPECIALLY with the Agpeya....it's just repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask God to give you a spirit of understanding and love of the words you are praying. Don't rush into prayer – take a couple of minutes before you start, to focus on God. Some people find it helpful to look at a picture of Christ e.g on the cross and meditate on this.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distractions in my room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose an area with no mirror or pictures/posters. Use your senses: Picture of a saint, hold a cross, speak out loud
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Busy thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free your mind and pray about all your concerns e.g personal prayer before you start praying from the Agpeya – turn your distraction into virtue. 1 Peter 5:7 'casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you' Pray out loud

Exercise

In a group of three: two people try to have a conversation whilst the third person whispers in one person's ear.

Apart from moving away what can you do to continue having a conversation with your partner?

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This is to highlight the importance of praying out loud. If we only pray in our heads, our thoughts are as loud as our prayer and we get distracted. By praying out loud it can help drown them out and help us



What's this?

Do you know how it can be used to help with prayer?

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Exercise:

This is just one way some people like to focus and use their senses in prayer. Can you think of any others?



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