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Prayer 4: Fulfilled Prayer

One may pray and never analyze the elements of prayer. What is supposed to happen when we pray? What are our goals in praying? Many sincere people kneel to pray without any idea of what they are to do while praying. Once we know what to do, praying will never seem quite so difficult to us again. Before long, we will be praying for an hour every day and more!

Jesus referred to an hour of prayer (Matthew 26:40). The following is a plan for an hour of prayer. An hour of prayer can be broken up into 6 ten-minute periods made up of these elements: praise, forgiveness, petitioning, interceding, praying the Word, and thanksgiving. We can make prayer a journey through these elements of prayer.

There are many more aspects of prayer than this list suggests. However, you will find that when we pray, our prayers will almost always be composed of these elements. Thus, if we learn to use them in prayer, they will impart to us a more complete understanding of what we are to do when praying. As we practice these elements of prayer, praying may become easier for us; and our prayer time will be more of a joy than a dreaded frustration. Let's break each of these elements down to understand what they entail; and let's discuss the techniques involved in using them during our prayer hour.

The first element in prayer is praise! Praise is the backbone of our walk with God. Nothing is more exciting and beautiful than the sincere praise of praying people. God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalms 22:3). Praise is the very purpose of spiritual life (1 Peter 2:5). Praise is the way to higher ground. Isaiah 58:14 states:

“Then shalt thou _____ thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of thy Father Jacob: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it”

Praise unleashes us from our own problems and worries. Praise gives recognition to the beneficent nature of God.



Praising God is a little different than thanksgiving to God. In thanksgiving, we give thanks for the good things He does for us and others: the blessings of God. We praise God for His goodness and majesty. We praise Him for who He is; we thank Him for what He has done.

The second element of prayer is forgiveness. Forgiveness itself, has two parts:

1. We must pray for forgiveness of our shortcomings and sin
2. We must also pray to have a forgiving spirit toward those that spitefully use us

How do we pray for our own forgiveness? 1 John 1:7-10 states:

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. {8} If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. {9} If we _____ our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. {10} If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

We must be willing to be totally honest in acknowledging and confessing our sins and in asking for God’s forgiveness.

In the next lesson, we will cover other aspects of fulfilled prayer: Forgiving others, petitioning, praying the word, interceding, and thanksgiving.

Discussion:

1. What are some of the important elements in prayer?
2. Why is “praise” such an important aspect of prayer?
3. What is thanksgiving and why is it such an important aspect of prayer?
4. What is a prerequisite to receiving forgiveness from God in prayer?
5. Why is it essential to ask for God’s forgiveness in prayer?