

A Simple Guide to Prayer: God-Centered Praying

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Paul tells Christians to “pray in the Spirit” (Eph 6.18). Daniel prayed not on account of the great things that he (or Israel) had done, but on account of God’s great compassion (Dan 9.18). Scripture beckons all to praise God’s great and awesome Name for He is holy (Ps 99.3). To pray is to pour out one’s soul to the Lord (1 Sam 1.15) and to take hold of God in prayer (Isa 64.7). This brief writing offers no demands nor does it offer a magical ritual for praying. It does, however, seek to provide a memorable framework — a simple guide — to God-centered praying. May this enhance, encourage, and edify God’s children as they seek His face continually (Ps 105.4).

1. Pray for the FAME OF GOD

God longs for the nations to see His fame and to worship His glory. O that all the nations would come before God, see the fame of His great Name, and bow before the Savior God has sacrificed for sinners. The fame of God’s Name consists of the great renown, the awesome reputation, the majestic person, the unrivaled work, and the unique character of God. None can compare with the Lord. His fame spreads beyond boundaries and cultures. Nations must seek Him, honor Him, and worship Him! The psalmists would pray let your glory be above the earth (e.g., Ps 57.5). So then, let God’s people who possess Christ as their supreme Savior and cherished treasure pray that God would cause His fame to spread rapidly so that men would see the greatness of God and bow before His great Name.

2. Pray for the FAMILY OF GOD

Every person should pray for his own immediate family. There are those who are immediate family members that should receive frequent prayer for salvation, grace, strength, and Spirit-endowed power. This may include praying for your spouse (if God has provided you with this gift) daily. One can pray that God would provide the grace to regenerate them if they currently live as God’s enemies. Or, if they are saved, one should pray that God would strengthen them each day to live in a manner worthy of God’s calling. They can use prayer that they might fulfill their God-given roles in the home, at the workplace, with the children, with the church, and with the lost. And believers should especially pray with fervently for children to come to faith. All children need to be daily brought to Christ with the plea that Christ may touch them and save their souls. If a parent loves his child, he must intercede daily for their souls.

3. Pray for the FLOCK OF GOD

The Scripture contains many commands to pray for one another (e.g., James 5.17). God’s people can pray for their local churches on a frequent basis. The body of Christ needs incessant intercession so that she will be a Church holy, blameless, and without spot or wrinkle. Christians should pray with fervency and frequency for their pastors and elders. The saints of God should particularly lift up the men of God who labor in the teaching of the Word so that they would have fruitful days during the week of prayer, sermon preparation, study, personal application, repentance, and joy in the Holy Spirit. All God’s people should pray for one another that every

family would come prepared to corporate worship. As one would arrive at a business meeting well-prepared, on time, and ready to discuss the immediate matters, so God's people should pray for one another to prepare to meet God and to hear from God through the ministry of the preaching of the Word. The sick need prayer. The elderly need intercession and encouragement. The young children, youth, and teenagers need much prayer for God to grip their souls with a blazing love for the gospel. All the marriages need unending prayer. Christians should pray that the husbands would love their wives as Christ loves the Church and that all the wives would serve, submit to, and respect their husbands just as the Church submits to Christ. Missionaries should be lifted up. Various ministries, upcoming events, and evangelistic outings should be borne up in prayer. Those who will visit the church each week should be prayed for that God would soften their hearts to the true gospel, convict them of the truth, and drive them to repentance and faith in the Savior. God's saints should pray for one another that all true believers would have frequent opportunities and strong courage to evangelize the lost weekly. The purity of the church should be prayed for. The flock should pray for the encouragement of the church leaders, that they would not lose heart, grow discouraged, become fainthearted, become proud, or self-reliant. Praying that the gospel of grace would spread like wildfire through the entire flock — young and old alike — should be perpetual prayers from God's people to God's heart.

4. Pray for the FILLING OF GOD

Another helpful guide to prayer should point the person of God to pray for God to graciously yet powerfully fill him with the Spirit that day. God does give the Spirit without measure and He has given His Spirit to comfort and help God's children by driving them back to the words of Christ. As alcohol controls a person, so the filling of the Holy Spirit refers to the Spirit's control of a Christian. A believer must take careful note of himself (his soul) and his doctrine. He must pray that God would endow him with strength for the upcoming day, meeting, event, or activity so as to speak, live, and respond in a way that is Christ-exalting and gospel-reflecting. The man of God should beseech the Lord to equip him with divine truth to saturate his heart and mind so that the Scriptures would reside within him continually. He should pray for his own heart to be happy in the Lord that day, he should beseech that Christ would be exalted in his speech, he should entreat the Lord that he would act in a godly way at home as he relates to his family members and by the way he uses his time. He should pray for God to sovereignly and providentially bring people with whom he can proclaim the gospel of salvation and beg them to believe and surrender to Christ and His Lordship.