

## ***"Oh! One hour with God infinitely exceeds all the pleasures and delights of this lower world."* - David Brainerd**

To begin using this simple plan you can divide your hour into twelve five-minute "points of focus." This allows a specific amount of time for each aspect of prayer. At times some areas may require only a few moments while others - like interceding for lost souls - may require far more than five minutes. Think of the impact your prayers will have on a troubled world. One hour each day equals 365 hours, or 45 continuous "eight-hour" work days. (Imagine asking your employer for six weeks off work so you can spend time with Jesus praying.)

Until we *make time* for prayer every day, prayer will never become the force God intends it to become in our daily walk. (Susanna Wesley had 19 children and still made time to pray one hour a day.) Be careful not to become a slave to any "prayer system." Indeed, prayer is not a system at all but the development of a relationship between man and God. The highest goal of the devotional habit is to strengthen this relationship.

### **12 Points of Focus When Praying:**

#### **1. Praise:**

Praise is vocal adoration of God. Adoration is the act of rendering divine honor, esteem, and love. Praise puts God in His rightful position. We must first draw attention to God in prayer before we draw attention to ourselves. Praise is unselfish. Praise comes from the old French word, *preiser*, which means *to prize*. *Prize* means *to value, esteem, and cherish something*. To "Praise the Lord" is to pronounce that God is worthy of honor.

#### **2. Waiting:**

"Waiting on the Lord" is the silent surrendering of the soul to God. It is allowing the Lord to search your heart and see if there is any sin standing between you and a clear conscience that is void of offense toward God and man. The focus of waiting is on yielding to God and preparing the heart of the prayer warrior for the next step: confession.

#### **3. Confession:**

God does not ask us to confess our sins because He needs to know we have sinned. Instead, it is because He knows that **we** need to know that we have sinned. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). Confession is the most painful part of personal prayer. This act of declared admission gives God access into the heart of a believer. It could be described as "spiritual surgery." There can be no healing *within* until there is first confession *without*. Until known sin is fully dealt with, we are not ready to pray. How can a Holy God pour Himself through a believer whose life is clogged with the debris of the world? The Holy Spirit works best through a clean vessel, and confession begins the process of cleansing.

Bitterness toward others drains prayer of power. It has been said, "The great danger in having enemies is not what they may do to us - it is what we do to ourselves as we allow harsh, bitter, angry reactions to develop. Unless our attitude toward others is forgiving and redemptive, God will not hear us."

Science tells us that a small piece of lint or moisture from a fingerprint can cause a guided missile to miss its mark by hundreds of miles. In prayer, sin is equally devastating. The psalmist said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

#### 4. Scripture Praying:

The degree to which we believe in God's Word and apply it in prayer is the degree to which God will pour out His power during our prayer. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Fasting and long hours of prayer do not build faith. Reading books about men of faith and their exploits stirs a deep passion for faith but does not build faith. The Word alone is the source of faith. Try to read or listen to one chapter of Scripture during each devotional hour. As you listen, ask yourself, "Does this verse prompt me to pray for something specific?"

#### 5. Watching:

"Watching" means "to be on the alert" or "to keep awake in order to guard." To pray correctly one must be mentally alert and vigilant. Praying is hampered by a dull, drowsy frame of mind. Satan seeks to hinder the effectiveness of our prayers. He will try to draw our minds from the key issues of prayer. To watch in prayer is to become aware of these attacks and stand firmly against them. We should especially guard against prayer that lacks purpose. We should be claiming specific things in prayer.

#### 6. Intercession:

Intercession is prayer offered on behalf of another. It is to stand between a lost being and an almighty God, praying that this person will come to know about God and His salvation. True, our prayer does not save the sinner, but somehow it serves to prepare his heart for the moment when word reaches him of Christ's love. Intercession is much more than merely praying for others. Interceding is engaging in actual spiritual battle. Carefully prepare for intercession by developing a specific plan that includes special prayer for God's work around the world. (See *Operation World* by Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk.)

#### 7. Petition:

Some things God will not give until we want them enough to ask for them. Petition is asking God for specific personal needs. Asking is the rule of the Kingdom. It is the confession of helplessness in a specific matter. "Blessed are the poor in spirit [the paupers in spirit]: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5: 3). Petition is not the prayer of a man opening heaven's doors to release God's power. Rather, it is man opening his heart's door to receive power already appropriated by God. Expressing helplessness is the key to opening that door, thus giving access to our need. We must define the specific need. We are to ask with a beggar's humility, to seek with a servant's carefulness, and to knock with the confidence of a friend.

#### 8. Thanksgiving:

."Enter into his gates with thanksgiving *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name." (Ps 100:4) Thanksgiving differs from praise in that praise focuses on who God is, whereas thanksgiving focuses on what God has specifically done for us. Thank God for His spiritual, material, physical blessings. Don't generalize, but be specific. "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thessalonians 5:18). For every specific prayer of petition may we share two or three specific expressions of thanksgiving.

## 9. Singing:

"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing" (Psalm 100:2). Bring a hymnbook with you to prayer and pause in your devotional hour to sing a song unto the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to create an original melody in your heart so your song is truly "a new song" (Psalm 40:3).

## 10. Meditation:

The person who spends time meditating on God's Word will find tremendous depth and understanding that will touch all areas of his life. The difference between the saints of old and ourselves is not one of inherent nature: it is simply that they took time to ponder God, to gaze upon Him in an act of supreme attention, while we are too greatly overrun with small activities to find leisure for such pondering. "Waiting" is an act of loving, whereas "meditating" is an act of thinking. Constantly ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate and stretch your thinking.

## 11. Listening:

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak. . ." (James 1:19). To listen in prayer is to mentally ascertain divine instructions from God concerning specific matters for that day. Best friends are always good listeners. If we truly desire to be friends with the Lord, we must learn the secret of listening. We do not engage in prayer to tell God what to do. Our goal in prayer is to discover what God wants us to do so that He will be glorified. Listening is a practical function. You are asking God to order your day. The value of having a paper and pencil is that it displays faith. *"My tongue is the pen of a ready writer"* (Psalm 45:1).

## 12. Praise:

In the closing moments of prayer, the soul pauses to contemplate the awesome wonder of God's being. Focus on His omnipotence (power), His omniscience (knowledge), and His omnipresence (presence). Let your spirit rejoice for a few moments at the conclusion of your hour of prayer.

"Prayer opened the Red Sea. Prayer brought water from the rock and bread from heaven. Prayer made the sun stand still. Prayer brought fire from the sky on Elijah's sacrifice. . . . Prayer overthrew the army of Sennacherib. . . . Prayer has healed the sick. Prayer has raised the dead. Prayer has procured the conversion of souls." – J.C. Ryle

So, let us go forth in joyful anticipation to discover new secrets of "world changing" prayer.

**"Lord, teach me to recognize the worth of my prayers."**

# The Goal of Prayer

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

"We live in a day characterized by the multiplication of man's machinery and the diminution of God's power. The great cry of our day is work, work, work, new organizations, new methods, new machinery; but the great need of our day is prayer. It was a master stroke of the devil when he got the church so generally to lay aside this mighty weapon of prayer. The devil is perfectly willing that the church should multiply its organizations, and deftly contrive machinery for the conquest of the world for Christ if it will only give up praying. He laughs as he looks at the church to-day and says to himself:

"You can have your Sunday-schools and your Young People's Societies, your Young Men's Christian Associations and your Women's Christian Temperance Unions, your Institutional Churches and your Industrial Schools, and your Boy's Brigades, your grand choirs and your fine organs, your brilliant preachers and your revival efforts too, if you don't bring the power of Almighty God into them by earnest, persistent, believing, mighty prayer." – Dr. R.A. Torrey

Spiritual warfare is going on about us constantly. We aren't fighting Communist dictators when we pray for the doors of their nations to open to the Gospel; we are fighting the spiritual powers of wickedness that influence these dictators. (See II Corinthians 10:3-5.) Because then warfare is spiritual, only spiritual weapons can win it. Prayer is the only spiritual weapon that will do the job.

“Truly, something happens when I pray that does not happen if I don't. O Lord, teach me to pray!”

## Good Habits to Develop

1. Learn to acknowledge God immediately upon rising.
2. Make a specific time for prayer. There are 96 fifteen minute time periods every day. Surely every believer in love with Jesus could set aside one, two, three, or four fifteen-minute periods daily to be with Him in prayer.
3. Use a prayer list. Be specific and pray intelligently.
4. Pray aloud. This causes the pray-er to listen more carefully to his petition and to treat Christ as Someone Who is right there in the room.
5. Maintain a spirit of prayer throughout the day.
6. Use “arrow prayers” and aim at “prayer targets” throughout the day. An “arrow prayer” is a one-sentence prayer directed at the circumstances you encounter throughout the day.
7. Devote one minute each hour for prayer

# Quotes on How to Pray

"Books on prayer are good, but not good enough. As books on cooking are good but hopeless unless there is food to work on, so with prayer. One can read a library of prayer books and not be one whit more powerful in prayer. We must learn to pray, and we must pray to learn to pray." – Leonard Ravenhill

"Praying is the best school in which to learn to pray, prayer the best dictionary to define the art and nature of praying." – E.M. Bounds

"We can read all the books that have ever been written about prayer, but until we actually choose by an act of our will, to pray, we will never learn." – Hope McDonald

"The mysterious art of prayer is learned by apprenticeship at the throne of Grace." – Mrs. Elizabeth Prentiss

"As we spend time in prayer we will better understand prayer." – unknown

"God's child can conquer everything by prayer. Is it any wonder that Satan does his utmost to snatch that weapon from the Christian, or to hinder him in the use of it?" – Andrew Murray

"The Devil is perfectly willing that the church should multiply its organizations and its deftly contrived machinery for the conquest of the world for Christ, if it will only give up praying . . . The Devil is not afraid of machinery; he is only afraid of God. And machinery without prayer is machinery without God." – R.A. Torrey

"Have you ever stopped to wonder what the devil's favorite word might be? I've come to the conclusion that his favorite word is tomorrow. If prayer does more damage to Satan than anything, he must fear prayer more than anything." – Hope McDonald

"The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayer-less studies, prayer-less work, prayer-less religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray." – Samuel Chadwick

*"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2).*

"I have often said it would be a thing very desirable and very likely to be followed with a great blessing, if there could be some contrivance, that there should be an agreement of all God's people in America . . . to keep a Day of Fasting and Prayer to God; wherein we should all unite on the same day . . . Some perhaps may think its being all on the same day, is a circumstance of no great consequence; but I can't be of that same mind. . . . It seems to me, it would mightily encourage and animate God's saints, in humbly and earnestly seeking God, for such blessings which concerns them all; and that it would be much for the rejoicing of all, to think, that at the same time, such multitudes of God's dear children, far and near, were sending up their cries to the same common Father, for the same motives." – Jonathan Edwards