

Prayer

I. Definition

- A. Hebrew: *request, seek, ask, desire, make petition*
- B. Greek: *beg, beseech, request, desire, entreat*

II. First Mention

- A. To people (or angels in human form) often in sinful circumstances:
 - 1. Genesis 12:13 (Abraham to Sarah asking her to claim she is his sister)
 - 2. Genesis 13:8,9 (Strife between Abraham's servants and Lot's servants)
 - 3. Genesis 16:2 (Sarah requesting Abraham to use Hagar to produce his heir)
 - 4. Genesis 18:3,4 (Abraham to the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ {Theophony})
 - 5. Genesis 19:2 (Lot to the two angels at Sodom)
 - 6. Genesis 19:7-8 (Lot dealing with the Sodomites)
- B. To God: Genesis 20:7,17; (Abraham to God for Abimelech)

III. Last Mention

Revelation 5:8; Revelation 8:3,4 (These three verses are the only mention of prayer in Revelation. They refer to the saints prayers ascending before the throne of God by way of the golden altar.)

IV. Ways to Pray

- A. Fold hands (or put them together pointed towards "heaven")
- B. Sign of the cross (often associated with Catholic priests)
- C. Evangelistic invitation "Every head bowed, every eye closed and no one looking around!"
- D. Deacon Pious (Tightly squeeze the eyes shut, pause before speaking to amplify the effect, raise voice to orator mode, address God with flowery descriptive adjectives, pray in an organized three point outline – Thanksgiving, Petition and Praise – and end with a slightly advanced version of the traditional "in Jesus name, Amen")
- E. In a restaurant before you eat (good testimony or casting pearls before swine?)
- F. Sickbed
- G. Hold hands
- H. Raise hands
- I. Stand (Mark 11:25)
- J. Kneel (Psalm 95:6)
- K. Sit
- L. Flat out face down (Genesis 17:3)
- M. In a whale's belly (Jonah 2:1)
- N. Around the ships John 6:23)
- O. During the process of a shipwreck (Acts 27:35)
- P. During an execution on a cross (Luke 23:34)
- Q. With the accompanying dramatics of fire: Moses (Exodus 9:23); Elijah (1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10); David (1 Chronicles 21:26); Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:1)

Conclusion: No right or wrong position; Circumstances will often determine the appropriate position

V. Frequency of Prayer

- A. Vain repetition (Matthew 6:7)
- B. Without ceasing (Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- C. Perseverance
 - 1. Abraham prayed ten times for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:32)
 - 2. New Testament instruction: (James 5:16 Ephesians 6:18)
 - 3. Parable of Jesus teaching perseverance in prayer: (Luke 18:1-8)

VI. Public Prayer or Private Prayer?

- A. Corporate Prayer: (James 5:16; Matthew 18:19,20)
- B. Personal Prayer: (Matthew 6:6; Mark 1:35)

VII. Particular Prayers in Scripture

- A. The Sinner's Prayer (Luke 18:9-14)
- B. The Disciples' Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4) (Commonly called "The Lord's Prayer")
- C. The "Real" Lord's Prayer (John 17)
- D. The Prayer of Jabez (1 Chronicles 4:9-10)
- E. The Prayers of Job (Job 1:5; Job 42:8-10)
- F. The Prayers of Jonah (Jonah 2; Jonah 4:2-3)

VIII. Prayer of the Holy Spirit for Us

- A. Found in the 8th Chapter of Romans
- B. The Context of Romans 8
 - 1. No condemnation (Romans 8:1-4)
 - 2. The carnal strives with the spiritual (Romans 8:5-9)
 - 3. The spiritual is led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:10-14)
 - 4. The partnership with Christ in an inheritance as well as suffering (Romans 8:15-17)
- C. Three Groans
 - 1. Creation (The curse or entropy) (Romans 8:22)
 - 2. Us (Our aging and dying body) (Romans 8:23)
 - 3. The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26)
 - a. Father searches the heart
 - b. The Spirit desires we comply with the will of the Father
 - c. Possible only through the Son – His work at Calvary and intercession in Heaven
- D. The Grand Result – Things work together to accomplish God's will and purpose (Romans 8:28)

IX. Waiting in Prayer

- A. Discussed in the 40th Chapter of Isaiah
- B. The Context of Isaiah 40
 - 1. The nature of God (Isaiah 40:12-28)
 - 2. God is omniscient (Isaiah 40:28)
 - 3. God never grows weary or nor faints (Isaiah 40:28)
- C. Promise to those who wait (Isaiah 10:29-31)
 - 1. Strength is renewed
 - 2. They mount up with wings as eagles
 - 3. They run and are not weary
 - 4. They walk and do not faint

Why reversed "normal" order? It is harder to maintain our daily walk with God than to soar with the eagles when everything is in grand shape!