

What is prayer?

Prayer is the Christian's way of communicating with God ie. is talking to God the emotions and desires with God and to fellowship with God and expect God to speak to us. Prayer is having a loving relationship with the Creator of the heavens and the earth. It is direct address to God, Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus as Mediator and through the enabling grace of the indwelling Spirit. Prayer is a privilege God graciously grants to His children, enabling us to express our submission to His will for our lives. *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 4:6-7)

Without prayer one will be powerless. Anything that interrupts our connection to God or leads to self-reliance is wrong. We could look at Adam and Eve's actions in Genesis 3 as a type of prayerlessness. They eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and are too ashamed to speak with the Lord as He comes to meet them in the garden. They are disconnected from God in their sin; their communication with Him is interrupted. Adam and Eve's prayerlessness was sin and it was caused by sin. Prayerlessness is adverse to a good relationship with God.

Christ is our best example of prayerfulness. He Himself was a man of prayer, and He taught His followers to pray. Since Jesus is to be the pattern for our life which also includes our prayer life, we need to take a look at prayer habits of Jesus. According to Scriptures, what godly habits of prayer do we see in the life of Jesus? *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.* (Mark 1:35) Jesus desire isolated intimacy with the Father when He already experiencing continual communion with Him. Jesus prioritized prayer daily. He petitioned the Father with fervent cries and tears. (Hebrews 5:7) and was heard because of His godly fear. Jesus prayed as an example to his followers. We need to ask the Lord Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus did go to heaven after His finished work on the cross as High Priest to His people. Jesus is still very active on our behalf in Heaven. It is important to understand that Jesus is the only Advocate and Mediator between men and God the Father. Jesus is our Comforter, Helper in Heaven, pleading our case before God as our Advocate making intercession for us. We can then draw near to God through him, the throne of grace.

How's Your Prayer Life? It is time to seek the Lord. (Hosea 10:12) Prayer lies at the root of all personal godliness. To pray is to change. God uses prayer to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God the more we see our need and more we desire to be conformed to the image of Christ. Thus when we pray our Father God graciously reveals to us our hiding places that we might repent and be set free. A good example of both the proud and the humble is Jesus' parable about the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18:9-14. It is about two different men, they both go to the temple to pray. Pharisees were a religious sect, noted for their strict observance of the Law and traditions of the elders. Tax collectors, on the other hand, were considered immoral men. Each man's prayer was different from the other. Pharisee Thank God that he is not like others, I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I possess. Thus he reveals how he trusted in his self-righteousness. The tax collector expressed his repentance and humility in what he did. He stood afar off. He would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven. He beat his breast in anguish over his sins. He expressed his repentance and humility in what he calling himself a sinner, Pleading God for mercy. The tax collector goes home justified. He found favor with God. He had received wonderful blessedness. The Pharisee also goes home with nothing! The meaning and purpose of this parable *"for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"* Jesus warns against self-righteousness. Pharisee trusted in his own good works, but it was to no profit. Jesus warns against arrogance, Pharisee despised others, including the tax collector. Pharisee was full of pride and was quite self-righteous. The other was humble; he recognized his sins and asked for God's mercy and was justified. Let us not trust in our own righteousness, but in the mercy and loving kindness of God offered so abundantly in His Son Jesus Christ! Jesus teaches us how and in what manner we ought to pray to be heard by God. Without the proper spirit, our diligence in prayer will be for nothing. (Psa 51:1-3) As you consider cultivating humility, ask God to develop humility in your prayer life.

God's people will have a natural desire to communicate with their Lord. (Psalm 5:3) Prayer brings the power of God to bear on the situations, that we are concerned about, that God is able to work in our lives and in the lives of others and it opens new possibilities. So we can freely bring all of our concerns, thoughts, desires, our hurts and our needs to Him, knowing that He is our loving Father wants hear from us. The burning of the incense was symbolic of the prayer of the people rising up to God. *Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.* (Psa. 141:2) Prayer is described in Bible as seeking God's favour. (Exo 32:11) pouring out one's soul to the Lord (1 Sam. 1:15), crying out to heaven (2 Chr. 32:20), drawing near to God (Ps 73:28) God's house is to be a house of prayer. God's people are to be people of prayer: *"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God,* (Jude:20-21) Pray in the Spirit at all times with every kind of prayer. (Eph 6:18) 1. Praise and Worship: worship is the giving of honor and devotion as a divine being in spirit and truth. 2. Commitment: prayer dedicating and consecration your life to the will of God. 3. Supplication: prayer request God for something, for healing, for deliverance from evil. 4. Confession: prayer repenting and asking forgiveness for sin. 5. Intercession: prayer for others. 6. Waiting for Spiritual Gifts: prayer fills us with His power and makes our service for Him effective use us for His glory.

We all want our prayers to be “effective,” so much so that when we focus on the “results” of our prayers. *“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective”* (James 5:16), and that the *“eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer”* (1 Peter 3:12; Psalm 34:15) Prayer saved the righteous Daniel from the lion’s den (Daniel 6:11), God’s chosen people benefitted from Moses’ right standing with God in the wilderness. (Exodus 16–17) The barren Hannah’s steadfast and humble prayers resulted in the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 1:20), and the Apostle Paul’s prayers even caused the earth to shake. (Acts 16:25-26) Fervent and earnest prayers of God’s righteous who is righteous in all his ways before the Lord can accomplish much.

We need to make sure our prayers are in line with God’s will. *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us”* (1 John 5:14-15) Praying in accordance with God’s will is essentially praying in accord with what He would want. As God’s children we can rely on the Holy Spirit to intercede for us, as *“the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will”* (Romans 8:27). Since the Spirit of God knows the mind of God, Spirit’s prayer is always in keeping with the will of the Father.

Some people would like prayer with no conditions. They wish God when summoned by prayer, must grant any request they make. They find a measure of encouragement in the story of Aladdin and his lamp, seeking to that level of control over God’s power in their prayer life. But the biblical fact is that prayer has conditions. It’s true that Jesus said, *“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive”* (Matthew 21:22) But, even in that statement, we have one condition to prayer: faith. As we examine the Bible, we find that imply conditions

1) *Pray to the Heavenly Father* (Matthew 6:9). This condition to prayer might seem obvious, but it’s important. We don’t pray to false gods. We pray to the God of the Bible, who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and whose Spirit indwells us. Coming to Him as our “Heavenly Father” implies that we are first His children—made so by faith in Christ. (John 1:12) Tell the Father how much you love Him, restore yourself to fellowship with Him.

2) *Pray for good things* (Matthew 7:11). We don’t always understand or recognize what is good, but God knows and He is eager to give His children what is best for them. And often blessings come after the times of testing. The Lord pleased that Solomon had asked an understanding mind to discern what is right and wrong. God give him a wise and discerning mind. (1Kin3:5-15) Father who is in heaven gives good things to those who ask Him!

3) *Pray for needful things* (Philippians 4:19) Placing priority on God’s kingdom is one of the conditions to prayer. *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* (Mat.6:33) Promise is that God will supply all our needs, according to his riches in glory in Christ, not all our wants.

4) *Pray from a righteous heart* (James 5:16). The Bible speaks of having a clean conscience as a condition to answered prayer. (Heb.10:22) It is important that we keep our sins confessed to the Lord. *“If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear”* (Psalm 66:18) Always invoke 1 John 1:9 and be restored to righteousness.

5) *Pray from a grateful heart* (Philippians 4:6) Part of prayer is an attitude of thanksgiving. Pray for it, thanking God in advance for seeing you through. Pray for everything, be fearful of nothing, and thankful for anything.

6) *Pray according to the will of God* (1 John 5:14). An important condition to prayer is that, we should commit ourselves to God’s will. Jesus prayed this way all the time, even in Gethsemane: *“Not my will, but yours be done”* True prayer is submitted to God in submission to His perfect will, for He alone knows all things, and works all things for our good. *“Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”* We want to do what God wants us to do.

7) *Pray in the authority of Jesus Christ* (John 16:24). Jesus is the reason we are able to approach the throne of grace (Hebrews 10:19–22), He is our mediator (1Timothy 2:5), that we pray in Christ’s name. (John 14:13-14) It is the finished work of Jesus on the cross and His present work as intercessor that makes prayer possible. Jesus told them that anything they asked for in His name, for God’s glory, would be done for them.

8) *Pray persistently* (Luke 18:1). In fact, pray without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17). One of the conditions to effective prayer is that we don’t give up. Incessant, continual prayer is essential to vitality of your relationship to the Lord

9) *Pray unselfishly* (James 4:3). Our motives are important. Pray behind with selfish desires and wrong motives. An unwillingness to be reconciled to someone prevents prayer from being effective. (Matthew 5:23-24)

10) *Pray in faith* (James 1:6). Prayer offered in faith with assurance, and faith prays with submission. *“If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”* (James 4:13-15) Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Effective prayer is a way to strengthen our relationship with our Father in Heaven. When we study and obey His Word and seek to please Him, the same God who made the sun stand still upon the prayer of Joshua (10:12-13) invites us to come boldly before the throne of grace and pray with confidence that He will extend His mercy and grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16) Elijah’s prayer for rain to be withheld—and his later prayer that rain would fall—met all of above conditions. (James 5:17–18) There’s no need to be confused by mountains, for they can move. (Mar11:23) It’s the strength of our faith, not the length of our prayers that pleases Him to whom we pray, so we don’t need to impress God with our eloquence or intelligence. After all God knows what our needs are even before we ask. (Mat.6:8) *I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands,* (1Tim2:8

Have you ever felt discouraged in your prayer life? Maybe it feels like you can't communicate with God like you used to be, like your prayers stop at your ceiling and do not reach God. Maybe you lack a desire to pray. The truth is, if you have felt this way, you need to examine your life and see what hindrances or desire to pray.

The most obvious hindrance to an effective prayer life is the presence of un-confessed sins in the heart of the one who is praying. Because our God is Holy, there is a barrier that exists between Him and us when we come to Him with un-confessed sin in our lives. *"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear"*(Isaiah 59:2) When the Bible talks about regarding wickedness, it's referring to un-confessed sin. God is perfect and can't abide sin in us. If we knowingly tolerate sin in our lives, it pushes God away from us. As a result, it makes our prayers powerless. David coincided, knowing from experience that God is far from those who try to hide their sin.(Psalm 66:18) We should make sure we have no un-confessed sin in our hearts when we pray. When we are living according to the flesh, rather than in the Spirit, our desire to pray and our ability to effectively pray with God are hindered. Although we receive a new nature when we are born again child of God, that new nature still resides in our old flesh, and that old "tent" is corrupt and sinful. The flesh can gain control of our actions, attitudes, and motives unless we are diligent to "put to death the deeds of the body"(Romans 8:13) and be led by the Spirit in a right relationship with God.

If we are to grow in our relationship with God and become strong people of prayer, we must learn to obey. Keeping free from sin is not enough, neither is faith. Obedience should be a natural outgrowth of faith in God. He that obeys God, trusts Him; he that trusts Him, obeys Him. In Matthew 6:9-10. It is a clear acknowledgement that God is in charge, that He is sovereign. And it establishes our relationship to Him: that of a child under the authority of his Father. Anytime we disregard the divine order of things, we're out of bounds, and we hinder our relationship with our Heavenly Father. A person whose will is surrendered to God has a relationship with Him similar to the one described in the parable of the vine and the branches.(John 15:7) The branch depends on the vine and lives in one accord with it. In return, vine provides it with everything it needs, result is great fruitfulness

Another barrier to effective communication with God is praying with selfish desires and wrong motives.(James 4:3), rejecting God's call or ignoring His advice (Proverbs 1:24-28), worshipping idols (Jeremiah 11:11-14), Ezekiel 14:3 clearly shows that God does not even want an idol worshiper to talk to Him. When we remove idols from our lives, we become ripe for a personal revival. Ask yourself; look honestly at your career, possessions, and family. If there are things you wouldn't consecrate to God, then they're blocking access to Him. Turning a deaf ear to the cry of the poor serve as additional obstacles to an effective prayer life.(Pro 21:13) Selfish prayers are always those that are intended to gratify our own selfish desires and we should not expect God to respond to such prayers. Living according to selfish, fleshly desires will also hinder our prayers because it produces hardness of heart toward others. When we go to God in prayer, our concern should be His will and needs of others.

A major hindrance to effective prayer is a spirit of un-forgiveness toward others. When we refuse to forgive others, a root of bitterness grows up in our hearts and chokes our prayers. This principle is illustrated in the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:23-35. This story teaches that God has forgiven us a debt that is beyond measure (our sin), and He expects us to forgive others as we have been forgiven. To refuse to do so will hinder our prayers. And a person cannot enter prayer with bitterness and come out with blessings.

Another major hindrance to effective prayer is unbelief and doubt. Lack of faith has an incredibly negative impact on a Christian's life. Without faith, prayer has no power. Praying without doubt means praying in the secure belief and understanding of God's character, nature, and motives. *"anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him"*(Hebrews 11:6) When we come to God in prayer, doubting His character, purpose, and promises, we insult Him terribly. Our confidence must be in His ability to grant any request that is in accordance with His will and purpose for our lives. We must pray with understanding that whatever He purposes is the best possible situation. James 1:6-8 calls one who doubts *"like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind"*. The word double-minded means where a person is emotionally divided. That condition makes a person unstable and incapable of hearing from God or receiving His gifts.

Finally, disharmony in the home is a definite obstacle to prayer. Peter specifically mentions this as a hindrance to the prayers of a husband whose attitude toward his wife is less than godly. *"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers"*(1 Peter 3:7) Where there is a serious conflict in family relationships and the head of the household is not demonstrating the attitudes Peter mentions, the husband's prayer communication with God is hindered. Likewise, wives are to follow the biblical principles of submission to their husbands' headship if their own prayers are not to be hindered.(Ephesians 5:22-24)

All these prayer hindrances can be dealt with at once by coming to God in prayers of confession and repentance. And reconcile with someone restoring brotherly relations. When we confess sin, God forgives it, and cleanse us. It is the gift of the Father who, out of Love, forgives us. *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more"*(Jer. 31:34) At that point our relationship is restored, and our prayers regain their power.

Jesus teaches His disciples the model Prayer

-4-

When the disciples came to Jesus, they said "*Teach us to pray*" Then Jesus got more specific. He said, "*In this manner, therefore, pray*".(Matthew 6:9-13) It contains the attitude that people should approach God in prayer. He then gave an instruction in verse 7 to not use vain repetitious prayers! Jesus was providing an outline to show the general structure and topics that should be included in our regular prayers to God. This outline would more accurately be called a model prayer as Jesus taught His disciples. We must allow Jesus Christ to teach us how to pray and remove traditions that contradict what He taught! Prayer began with the plural form "Our", further in the prayer we see statements like "give us," "lead us," and "forgive us." In every sense, the model prayer is an intercessory prayer because you pray for others as well as yourself. God's child can conquer everything by prayer. Is it any wonder that Satan does his utmost to snatch that weapon from Christian to hinder him in the use of it?"

VS 6:9 - "*Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.* Prayer first begins by praising and exalting the Lord, and really this should be the aim of all of our praying. Jesus teaches to pray and address God as 'Our' Heavenly Father. When we Christians approach God as 'Father' this should remind us of His love and care over us. He is not only our Father but He is also 'in Heaven' brings us face to face with the awesome nature of Him who is almighty and powerful and reigns and rules over all of creation. Thus, though we as Christians address God as our Father, we must also realize that we must always approach Him with the utmost reverence and humbleness. When we say "Hallowed be Your Name" we proclaim the Person, power, and authority of God. The word 'hallowed' in Greek comes from root word for 'holy' thus God alone is truly Holy, Loving, Faithful & Righteous.

VS 6:10 - "*Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven*" - Jesus taught that we ought to pray for God's 'kingdom' to 'come' When you pray "Your will be done" over yourself or another person, you are interceding for His perfect will to be done on earth and in particular in us and in our lives. In Rom. 12:2, His will is "good, acceptable, and perfect". When we pray "Your Kingdom Come" we are actually declaring that God's kingdom to be represented on earth and for His will to be done. We are interceding that God will be acknowledged as King and that life here on earth may be regulated by His commands. When we say the words "Your Kingdom come" we are actually asking God to remove anything that is in rebellion against His Kingdom, including words, attitudes, desires, behavior, etc., in ourselves and others. God's purpose fulfilled when the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is established here on earth, and our King will reign forever.(Rev.11:15)

VS 6:11 - "*Give us this day our daily bread*" - Jesus taught us to ask daily for all of the necessities of life. This part of the prayer consists of where we bring before the Lord the various "physical as well spiritual needs" This refer to clothes, shelter, food, transportation, jobs, etc., but it also refer to Spiritual manna living by God's word. We are to ask for our daily bread in the sense of the Word of God being our daily bread.(Matt 4:4) God wants us to be dependent upon Him for all that we ever have need of, for dependence upon Him brings Him glory, it is His desire to meet our needs. God promises to meet all of our needs as we place Him first in our lives.(Mat.6:33) He taught us to pray not only for ourselves but to identify with others. If you have responsibility over anyone, then it is important to include in your prayers the people you oversee, also your church, company, city, country.

VS 6:12 - "*And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors*" Jesus teaches us to ask for forgiveness for our sins in our praying. Our debt of sin that each of us owe to God. We owe God a debt of punishment for our sins which He has forgiven through Christ, His substitutionary work on the cross. And now we must forgive others for the debt of sins they have committed against us from a heart of gratitude for grace to which we ourselves are debtors. Lord expects us to forgive others in same way in which He forgives us, not unmerciful servant.(Mat18:23)

VS 6:13 - "*13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.[For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen]* Jesus teaches us to pray to resist the temptations of sin and for strength to overcome the forces of evil. Satan could place a uniquely temptation before any one of us Christians and we would find ourselves too weak to resist, therefore we ought to pray that we shall not encounter situations where we will have such temptations to sin. The Bible warns of temptations which come from the devil. When we pray, "Do not lead us into temptation," we are asking God to preserve us from enticement to sin, so that we might not fall or fail the test, from the tempter our enemy, Satan. In Ephesians 6:10-18, Apostle Paul provides detailed information about the evil one and the spiritual armor which God provides for our defence. We should be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might and stand boldly in the face of these evil forces. He decrees that it is possible to stand against every wile(deceit, cunning, craftiness) of the devil. That we should war a good warfare (ITim.1:18), fight an effective fight of faith (ITim.6:12) and battle intelligently with purpose.(I Cor9:26)

Heaven is the place where the Lord dwells, and there is perfect order and submission to the One who alone is exalted and lifted up, and all of the angels and creatures there before the Lord are there to serve and worship Him and do His will. The word "*For Yours is the kingdom*" indicates the authority by which prayer has been prayed. It means the kingdom, power and glory belong to God, we can claim the provisions, promises, and protection of this prayer. Certainly we always ought to pray for God to be glorified because God is worthy to be glorified, honoured, praised and thanksgiving. We are to fulfil part of God's purpose in our lives and to seek glorify God's name. We glorify God by rehearsing His attributes and to proclaim the wonderful acts of God. When we say "Amen" means we have prayed all our petitions in the name of Jesus, making a declaration of Faith.

Does God answer all your Prayers? Many people believe answered prayer is God granting a prayer request that is offered to Him. If a prayer request is not granted, it is understood as an “unanswered” prayer. However, this is an incorrect understanding of prayer. God hears all your prayers and he answers every prayer that is lifted to Him. When we ask God for something, the response will be ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ or ‘Wait’. But we do not always receive what we ask for. God only promises to grant our prayers when we ask according to His will. God sees things from an eternal perspective and that there are some things we may never understand in this life.

What does it mean to pray according to God’s will? Praying according to God’s will is praying for things that honor and glorify God and/or praying for what Bible clearly reveals God’s will to be. If we pray for something that is not honoring to God or not God’s will for our lives, God will not give what we ask for. The better we understand God’s Word, better we will know what to pray for, often God will answer “yes” to our requests.

In Matthew 20:20-34 passage we see two requests. The first receives the answer ‘No’ (vv.20–28) and the second the answer ‘Yes’ (vv.29–34) in both cases Jesus asked, ‘What do you want?’ He said to the mother of Zebedee’s sons, ‘*What is it you want?*’ (v.21). He said to the two blind men, ‘*What do you want me to do for you?*’ (v.32) They were blind, so they must have wanted to see, but God wants us to be actively involved. The apostle James says, ‘*You do not have, because you do not ask God*’ (James 4:2) Jesus says, ‘*Ask and it will be given to you. For everyone who asks receives*’ (Mat.7:7–8) Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking. The starting point of answered prayer is actually asking. In the case of the request of the blind men, Jesus’ response was ‘Yes’. ‘Jesus had *Compassion* on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him’ (v.34) On the other hand, Jesus said ‘No’ to the mother of Zebedee’s sons. This response also stemmed from compassion. Her request was for glory, power and promotion for her sons. He points out that she does not seem to understand all implications of her request. Jesus points out that the mother’s request came from a desire to lord it over others. True greatness does not come from lording it over others or from what the world regards as success wealth, position, fame. etc,

Paul prayed three times to be delivered of an affliction, and each time God said, “No.” Why would a loving God refuse to deliver Paul? Sometimes God allows things for good, better for him a life lived by grace. *My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.* Paul began to rejoice in his weakness.(2Cor12:9)

King David desired to build a temple for the Lord and he told the prophet Nathan, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord is under tent curtains” Nathan was pleased with David’s plan for building a temple to the Lord. But the Lord had other plans and told Nathan: “Go and tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: “You shall not build Me a house to dwell in” The Lord then assured David that his son would carry on his desire. Rather than David building a temple, God decided to allow David’s son to oversee this work. David’s response to the promise was to praise the Lord.(1 Chr.28:11–12;17:1–27) Father, thank you for the lessons that we learn from ‘unanswered’ prayer. Thank you that you showed us true greatness. Help me to devote my life to your service and to the service of others. Give me Your grace and Your strength. Amen.

What is the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning? David sets us a great example: ‘*As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.*’ (Psalm 17:15) Start each day seeking God’s presence and finding satisfaction in him. It is not just about asking for things; it is about seeking God’s face and enjoying ‘sweet communion with him’ This is the context of David’s request. He cried out to God for help in the face of his enemies.(v.13–14) God heard and answered his prayers with a positive response ‘Yes.’ Lord, each day when I awake, may I enjoy sweet communion with you and ‘be satisfied with seeing your likeness’

In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says *pray without ceasing*, it refers an attitude of God-consciousness and God-surrender that we carry with us all the time. Every waking moment is to be lived in awareness that God is with us that He is actively involved, engaged in our thoughts, actions. When our thoughts turn to worry, fear, discouragement, and anger, we are to consciously and quickly turn every thought into prayer and every prayer into thanksgiving. Bible says to stop being anxious and instead, “in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”(Phi.4:6) Paul taught the believers to devote themselves “to prayer, being watchful with thanksgiving” and see prayer as a weapon to use in fighting spiritual battles.(Eph.6:18) As we go through the day, prayer should be our first response to every fearful situation, every anxious thought, every undesired task God commands. A lack of prayer will cause us to depend on ourselves instead of depending on God's grace.

For Christians prayer should be like breathing. You do not have to think to breathe because the atmosphere exerts pressure on your lungs, essentially forces you to breathe. Similarly, when we are born into the family of God, we enter into spiritual heaven where God's presence and grace exert pressure on our lives to breathe the air of prayer. Unfortunately, many believers hold their “spiritual breath” for long periods, thinking brief moments with God are sufficient to allow them to survive. Many believers become satisfied with physical blessings and have little desire for spiritual ones. When programs, methods and money produce impressive results, there is an inclination to confuse human success with divine blessing. When that happens, passionate longing for God and yearning for His help will be missing. Continual prayer is essential part of Christian living and dependence on Grace of God. *And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication.*

Prayer and fasting is defined as voluntarily abstain from food and drink for a period of time as God leads in order to focus on prayer and fellowship with God, also warns us against testing the Lord.(Mat.4:7) Fasting equate with afflicting the soul or with denying oneself.(Lev.16:29,31) In Psalm 35:13 fasting with 'humbling oneself. It is one of the ways that God ordained for turning to Him with all of your heart.(Joe.2:12) It is when these two activities are combined and dedicated to God's glory that they reach their full effectiveness. Having a dedicated time of prayer and fasting is simply forcing yourself to focus and rely on God for the strength, provision, and wisdom you need. Fasting is so effective that one can be filled with God's awesome power.

Fasting adds a new dimension to prayer life of the child of God. Fasting prepares the heart of the child of God, who desires to walk with God, praying effective, powerful, Holy Spirit energized prayer to pray life changing prayer of Faith. Especially, in those instances where satan has a long standing stronghold or where there is a strong resistance and stubbornness in the soul, to the getting rid of bad (evil), ungodly habits and attitudes. If giving and praying are an important part of the Christian walk, then fasting must also be an important part of the Christian devotion and walk. So that the enemy will not be able to hinder the effectiveness of our prayers.

In the Old Testament, it appears that fasting with prayer had to do with a sense of need and dependence, and/or of hopeless in the face of actual or anticipated calamity. Prayer and fasting are combined in the Old Testament in times of mourning, repentance, and/or deep spiritual need. Moses fasted during the 40 days and 40 nights he was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God.(Exodus 34:28) King Jehoshaphat called for a fast in all Israel when they were about to be attacked by Moabites and Ammonites.(2 Chronicles 20:3) In response to Jonah's preaching, the men of Nineveh fasted and put on sackcloth.(Jonah 3:5) Prayer and fasting was often done in times of distress or trouble. Nehemiah had a time of prayer and fasting upon learning that Jerusalem was still in ruins.(Nehemiah 1:4) His many days of prayer were characterized by tears, fasting, confession on behalf of his people, and plead to God for mercy. The devastation that befell Jerusalem prompted Daniel to adopt a similar pose: "*So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes*"(Daniel 9:3) Like Nehemiah, Daniel fasted and prayed that God would have mercy upon the people, saying, "*We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws*"(v. 5)

There are instances of prayer and fasting in the New Testament, but they are not connected with repentance. The prophetess Anna "*never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying*".(Luke 2:37) Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights before His temptation by Satan.(Matthew 4:2) The church of Antioch fasted commissioning Saul and Barnabas to the Lord's work.(Acts 13:2) Paul and Barnabas spent time in prayer and fasting for the appointment of elders in the churches.(Acts 14:23) Fasting along with prayer seems to indicate the sincerity of the people Trusting God in the impossible situations in which they find themselves.

We would note that the circumstances and purposes for fasting includes, but not necessarily limited to: God's judgment on ones/church's/people's sin; Need for deliverance from demon spirits and or, getting flesh/soul/self under control. Purposes: Turning back God's judgment on sin; Humble/humiliate the soul through exposure of areas of reproach (bondages, chains, and strong-holds of shame, disgrace, ungodly emotions, evil (sin), unclean spirits in the flesh/soul), in-order that, these reproaches may be brought under control or cast out unclean spirits; And ministering and serving God; "*when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance.*"

According to Jesus in Matthew 6:16-18, what is to be our appearance and attitude when we are fasting? Jesus expected His disciples to fast after He was gone. It is, also clear from these Scriptures that Christ both upheld the discipline of fasting and that He anticipated that His followers would do it. The purpose of Christian fasting should be to take our eyes off the things of this world and focus our thoughts on God. Personal fasting should be done in secret and not boasted about. Leaders may call a public fast and request the whole church fellowship to fast: *Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly.*(Joe 2:15) In Isaiah 58 describes God's divinely approved fast. In this self-denial, we surrender to Jesus more deeply so can work His will in us more completely. It is a powerful tool of repentance. To break the yokes of bondage and to loosen chains of injustice, produces change, brings us to the final glorious result, freedom in Jesus! In the prophet Isaiah's time, the people grumbled that they had fasted, yet God did not answer in the way they wanted. Isaiah responded by proclaiming that the external show of fasting and prayer, without the proper heart attitude, was futile.(Isaiah 58:5-9) We are not to spend time in prayer and fasting in order to lose weight, but rather to gain a deeper fellowship with God.

Jesus in Matthew 17:14-21, tells us that certain things will not happen without prayer and fasting. Jesus casts a demon from a boy in Mark 9, The disciples had been unable to perform, although they had previously been given authority over unclean spirits (Mark 6:7). Later, the disciples asked Jesus why they failed in their attempts to free the boy from the demon, and Jesus said, "*this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.* In this particular case, the demon was exceptionally wicked and obstinate. Jesus seems to be saying that a determined foe must be met with an equally determined faith. Prayer is a ready weapon in the spiritual battle (Eph.6:18) and fasting helps to focus prayer and give it resolve. Priority of prayer and fasting should be an opportunity to express themselves in an undivided and intensive devotion to the Lord and to the concerns of spiritual life.

How does God want us to pray for others? God appreciates people who pray fervently for other people facing trials. Why does God command intercessory prayer, and how does He want us to do it? In the midst of His trial, Jesus prayed fervently. He prayed, not only for Himself, but for His disciples and for us. (John 17:18-21) He knew that His trial would be their trial. Jesus did by His words and His prayers showed that He wanted love and joy and peace and patience and all the fruit of God's Spirit for His followers. He is our Intercessor. (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25) He is at our side and can sympathize with our weaknesses, and He makes it possible for us to receive the mercy and help we need. (Hebrews 4:15-16) And He wants us to learn to be intercessors too.

Intercession is prayer for others. An intercessor is one who takes the place of another or pleads another's case, whereby someone pleads with God on behalf of another or others who desperately need God's intervention. The Biblical basis for the New Testament believer's ministry of intercessory prayer is our calling as priests unto God. (1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 7:11-19) The background for understanding this calling to priestly intercession is found in the Old Testament example of the Levitical priesthood. The priest's responsibility was to stand before God to minister to Him with sacrifices and offerings. The priests also stood between a righteous God and sinful man bringing them together at the place of the blood sacrifice. The New Testament is the "new order" of spiritual priests of whom the Lord Jesus is the High Priest. It is passed on to us through His blood a New Priesthood.

God gives us instructions to pray for others. The apostle James tells us to "pray for one another, that you may be healed" (Jam 5:16) Apostle Paul encourages us to intercede for Church members and ministers, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18-20) Paul exhorts us "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, (1 Timothy 2:1-2) Jesus commanded, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Mat. 5:44)

Why does God want us to pray for others? Intercessory prayer reflects God's own character of outgoing love and mercy. God wants us to think like He does, and praying for others helps us to think beyond ourselves and to grow in compassion for others. God compares prayer with sweet-smelling incense that pleases Him. (Rev. 5:8)

At other times, intercession is made by the Holy Spirit. It may be with groanings resulting from a spiritual burden. It may also be in an unknown tongue. When this happens, the Holy Spirit speaks through you praying directly to God according to the will of God: *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.* (Romans 8:26) You do not understand this type of intercession with your mind, but it is the deepest level of intercessory prayer and the most effective. Be encouraged that God knows our hearts by living in us, hears the prayer of the Spirit.

Intercession is important because it is also revealed in the Biblical record which is filled with the stories of men and women who experienced powerful results through effective intercession. Through effective intercession, you can go spiritually anywhere in the world. Your prayers have no limitations of distance as they can penetrate unreached nations and cross through geographical, cultural, and political barriers. You can affect the destiny of individuals and entire nations. You can actually help save lives and extend the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Study the following Biblical references which reveal what you are to intercede for: The peace of Jerusalem: Psalms 122:6; Laborers in the harvest: Matthew 9:38; That you enter not into temptation: Luke 22:40-46; Them that despitefully use you-(your enemies): Luke 6:28; All the saints: Ephesians 6:18; The sick: James 5:14; One for another (bearing others burdens): James 5:16; For all men, kings, and those in authority: 1 Timothy 2:1-4; For daily needs: Matthew 6:11; For wisdom: James 1:5; For healing: James 5:14-15; For forgiveness: Matthew 6:12; For God's will and Kingdom to be established: Matthew 6:10; For relief from affliction: James 5:13; For unity in the Body of Christ: John 17; For the persecuted church around the world: Hebrews 13:3.

The Bible gives many examples of people praying for others, and we can learn a lot by studying and meditating on these examples. Abraham interceded for the people of Sodom for the sake of his nephew Lot. (Gen. 18:23-33); Moses pleaded for God's mercy for the sinning people of Israel. (Exodus 32:9-14; Numbers 14:11-20); Daniel made supplication to God for his people. (Daniel 9:3-19); Apostle Paul prayed for the people he served (Rom. 1:9-10; 10:1; Eph 1:15-19; Phil 1:3-11; 1 The 3:9-13) Note: You sin by neglecting to pray for others: 1 Samuel 12:23

One of the important tasks of intercession is praying for revival. (Joh 7:38) Revival is an awakening, energizing, restoring of God's people, a strengthening of those things which remain about to die. Return to sound mind, good conscious or life. That which is revived becomes active and flourishing again. Times of refreshing from presence of the Lord. (Acts 3:19) In II Chronicles 7:14, many important principles of revival are contained. First, note that God is speaking to His people "If my people" who are "called by His name". Here is what God's people must do if they are to experience revival. Here is what you must do to prepare for revival: Humble yourself, Pray, Seek God's face, Turn from your wicked ways. Then what God will do in response: "Hear from Heaven"-respond; "Forgive their sin"- reconcile; "Heal their land"- restore. You have given this ministry of intercession and through prayer you can be used by God to touch lives of people, those you have never met and those who are very close to you. God alone can revive us, *Will You not revive us again, That Your people may rejoice in You?* (Psa. 85:6)

A family unit is established upon divine creation to accomplish His purpose and to enrich our lives.(Psa127:3) Marriage is designed and ordained by God.(Gen2:18,24) Satan utilizes any circumstances that promote disputes and destruction within a relationship.(Eph4:26–27;1Pet5:7–8) The majority of families rarely participate in activities together, directing their attention to television or computer. In paying with family members, parents and children lack unity. No family ever breaks up while sincerely praying together for God's help. Family prayer is one of God's highest priorities is preserving family relationships. Our Heavenly Father loves to talk with children and cares deeply about their problems. Praying together allows children to voice their concerns to God.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.(Col4:2) In private, devote yourself to prayer; in public, be a godly witness for Jesus Christ. The connection between these two areas is that private life of prayer is the foundation for a public life of effective witness. In private, we are to be persistent in watchful and thankful prayer. In public, we are to be wise in our conduct and winsome in our words so that we might be effective witnesses of Christ Here first, Paul tells us how to pray; then he tells us what to pray for. Acts 1:14 says of the disciples before Pentecost, *"They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.* These all with one mind were devoting themselves to prayer. After the day of Pentecost, early church *They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*(Acts2:42) Later, rather than getting distracted by waiting on tables, the apostles declared *"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word"*(Acts 6:4)

Paul mentions his own example of persistent prayer in Colossians 1:3, where he says that we are "praying always for you." He adds (Col. 1:9), "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Referring to his prayers for them,(Col. 2:1) "For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf" And he mentions that Epaphras was "always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers."(Colossians 4:12)

"Being watchful" is often used in the context of mentioning our adversary, the devil. After urging us to cast all our anxieties on the Lord, because He cares for us, Peter exhorts: "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"(1 Pet. 5:8) In the Garden, just before His arrest, Jesus told the disciples (Matt. 26:41), *"Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"* To pray thankfully is to pray in faith, especially when our circumstances do not seem to be in our favor. Whatever overwhelming trial, it takes faith to pray, "Heavenly Father, thank you for this trial, because You intend to work it together for my good. You will use it to strengthen my faith. For Your glory. In Jesus name, Amen." So we're to pray persistently, watchfully, thankfully.

What to pray for: Pray for God's kingdom to expand through the spread of the gospel. Paul asked the church to pray for him and his fellow workers, with mission to release people from power of Satan and bring them to God. Praying for God's kingdom to expand involves praying for the workers, for open doors, and for gospel clarity. This includes those on the front lines, who are engaged full time in spreading the gospel. But it also includes all believers, that we all would keep our focus on lost souls and not get distracted with all of the worldly stuff that clouds our eternal perspective. Get a church directory and pray for each person to be effective as a witness for Christ. Pray for open doors for the Gospel. Paul relied on God to open the doors.(Rev.3:8) God must open door for witness then we need to walk through it. When God opens the door and we share the gospel, it is powerful to save souls and transform hearts. So pray for yourself and for others in church that God would open doors for the gospel. Pray for clarity in presenting the Gospel. Paul, the apostle refers to it as "the mystery of Christ, refers to a truth that was previously unknown, but now has been revealed. It can't be known by human wisdom, but only by God's Spirit. It especially referred to the truth that salvation, now available to the Gentiles, who now can enjoy right standing and equal access to God through faith in Christ.(Col.1:26-27; Eph.2:11-3:7) God wants us to prevail in prayer with Him concerning His plan of salvation for all people, witnessing ends of the earth.

Jesus taught parable of persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8, a widow requests an unwilling judge to give her legal protection from her opponents. At first he resists, but finally, because of her perseverance, he relents and grants her request. The point is that we should persist in asking until He grants our requests. *But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*(Mat.6:6) Be alone with God in the closed door, believe in His tender Fatherly love and out of this faith prayer will be born. Pray, review promises. It is this secret converse with God, He sees in secret. Every day in prayer ask what you need for that day. Prayer is not just talking to God but it involves listening also. He will give answers to your questions, guidance for the day ahead and help you order your priorities. Most often He will do this through His written Word or by a still small voice that seems to speak to your heart. Sometimes He will give you a vision or interpret back to your spirit. Sometimes your prayer will result in God calling you to action instead of more prayer. God has given us opportunity to address him "Abba Father" that we come into prayer with reverence, focusing on who God is and will often start with praise and thanksgiving. In prayer the principal thing is faith. "With God nothing is impossible". *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months"*(Jam.5:17)

The prayer of Jabez is found in a historical note within a genealogy: “*Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request*”(1 Chronicles 4:9–10) Jabez, was a descendant of Judah, he was an honorable man. The name Jabez literally means “born with pain” “sorrowful” or “sorrow-maker” His own mother named him this because of the pain she endured in labor! In his prayer, Jabez cries out to God for protection and blessing. Jabez, asks God to keep him from that sorrow that his name both recalled and foretold.

Scripture has many examples of prayers that teach us to depend on God and call upon Him. The prayer of Jabez is very inspiring and challenging for how we approach God with our requests. The prayer of Jabez contains an urgent request for four things: 1) God’s blessing. Jabez acknowledges that the God of Israel and the source of all blessing, and he asks God for His grace. He was calling upon God to help him accomplish the promises of God! 2) An expansion of territory. Jabez prays for victory and prosperity in all his undertakings and that his life would be marked by increase. He wanted his spiritual territory to increase, to claim generations for the Lord. 3) The presence of God’s hand. He understood power of God’s hand to protect and to lead in the right direction. This was Jabez’s way of asking for the guidance of God and His strength to be evident in his daily existence. 4) Protection from harm. Jabez looks to God in confidence as his defender. When Jabez prays, he speaks against the testimony of his name and lets go of the shame it covered him in. For Jabez it turns weakness into glory.

Jabez’s goal in his prayer was to live free from sorrow, and the last thing we read about him is that God heard and answered his prayer. Like Solomon’s humble prayer for wisdom (1 Kings 3:5–14), Jabez’s devout prayer for blessing was answered. The success Jabez enjoyed outweighed the sorrow of his beginning. The prayer of Jabez overcame the name of Jabez. The prayer of Jabez is a good example of how we should make prayer a priority in our lives. We should always look to God for our help in time of need, and we can take our requests straight to the throne of grace.(Hebrews 4:16) Along with the prayers of Hannah, Jonah, Hezekiah, Paul—and of course our Lord’s model prayer(Matthew 6:9–13)—the prayer of Jabez provides a wonderful instance of a child of God approaching the Majesty on High in humility, faith, and reliance upon God’s goodness. Let’s see how this Old Testament prayer can be applied today as we seek God’s provision and leading in our lives.

A prayer warrior is generally thought of as a Christian who prays continually and effectively on behalf of others before God in the manner of praying taught in Scripture. Therefore, prayer warriors pray to Father God (Matthew 6:9) in the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:16; Jude 1:20) and in the name of Jesus (John 14:13). To be a warrior in prayer is to engage in the spiritual battle and fight the good fight of faith wearing the full armor of God and “pray[ing] in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests”(Ephesians 6:10-18) We’re all guilty before God, but God is merciful. Prayer warriors recognize that quality of God’s powers, and call on Him for intervention, in effect, coming between God and the trouble in another person’s life.

While all Christians are to be prayer warriors, there are some people who feel they have a special and unique ability to pray and have been called by God to pray as their special ministry. There are diligent pray-ers who are known for their emphasis on prayer. Bible commands that “requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone”(1 Timothy 2:1) All believers in Christ have the Holy Spirit who helps us communicate our prayer requests (Romans 8:26-27). All believers are to be praying in the name of Jesus, which means that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, that we trust in Him for everything, including His interceding with the Father for us in all things, and that we live and pray in accordance with God’s will, praying in submission to His will.

Let’s study several prayer warriors in the Bible and see what we can learn from them: Jehoshaphat was King of Judah when he received word that his land was being invaded. In 2 Chronicles 20:1-30, we read how the king prayed fervently to the Lord: verses 6-8 Jehoshaphat acknowledged God’s power and His help in previous circumstance, he was aware of his inability and lack of knowledge, and he proclaimed his trust in God! God answered his cry for help in a miraculous way! “*Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s.*” Early in the morning, Jehoshaphat gathered his army and urged them to have faith in God. When they arrived at the battlefield, they found that the Lord had already won the victory!

Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego were three men who refused to bow before anyone or anything but God! When they refused King Nebuchadnezzar’s order to bow down, they told the king, “*O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up*”(Daniel 3:17-18) Because of their disobedience, the king threw them into a blazing furnace. The king immediately saw that they were not harmed. Daniel 3:26-27 says, they came out of the fire that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed.

Paul repeatedly prayed for others, especially the individual churches with whom he was working. In Ephesians 3:14-21, while Paul was in prison, he prays for the believers in the church at Ephesus. We learn that we are in a spiritual battle with Satan, so we must pray for our own spiritual well-being to maintain our strength and focus in praying for others. Are your prayers filled with requests for others? Prayer warriors have heart for God, heart for prayer, heart for people, heart for Christ’s church. Therefore, we pray continually and trust that God answers each prayer according to His perfect will and in His perfect timing, just as all of God’s ways are perfect.

The Bible contains many commands to pray for our leaders—national and local, secular and religious. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:1–4, “*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth*” God told the Israelites in exile to pray for Babylon: “*Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper*”(Jer.29:7) Romans 13:1 says, “*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God*” Paul requested prayer “*for all the Lord’s people*” and for himself that he would speak the gospel boldly.(Eph.6:18–20)

Prayer is one of the main disciplines of the Christian faith. In prayer, we are drawn into deeper dependence upon God and learn more of our need for him and his grace. And it seems the Bible makes special mention of praying for those in positions of authority. Such authorities include government officials and pastors, church elders, school principals, employers, and the like. Praying for them makes practical sense. Our leaders can affect the conditions we live in and have an impact on our families, our churches, our workplaces, our cities and countries. When those in authority are obeying the will of God, it is easier to “live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” When evil men are in authority, our prayers for them are just as needed. So how should we pray for our leaders? First, if we are uncertain that they know Jesus, we should pray for their salvation. But whether or not our leaders are Christians, we should pray that God will guide them as they guide us. We should pray that they be wise and discerning and surrounded by helpful advisors. We know that God has placed our leaders in authority over us, and we can ask Him to use them as He will. We should also pray for their protection.

When praying for pastors or ministry leaders, we can pray for them to have strength in the midst of spiritual warfare and to remain encouraged in the Lord. We should mention our leaders before God in prayer and ask God to empower leaders to honor him with their lives, and to use their leadership to benefit their followers. Pray for protection from temptation and for delivery from all kinds of evil. Pray for God’s will to be done in bringing spiritual growth in leaders. Pray that they would preach the word of truth, preparation and delivery of sermons. Pray for their pastoral work, that they would encourage and counsel the flock with wisdom and discernment.

In all of the battles, defending our views, or pointing out differences, we have to ask ourselves one question? Have we prayed about it as much as we’ve talked about it? God never leaves us to fend for ourselves, wrestling with worry, consumed in fear or tempted towards hate. He reminds us He is with us and will help us. He reminds us He hasn’t lost control, but has a plan, and His purposes will prevail. There’s power through the Spirit of God. There’s great power in uniting together, turning our hearts towards Him, and praying on behalf of our Church.

From the very beginning of the church, Christians have gathered to pray.(Acts 4:24;12:5;21:5) What is the result of such meetings of the Church for united prayer? Church history shows willingness of God to hear such prayers and to answer. Christian must know how to pray privately; the Church must know how to pray together. Church was born in the upper room. *And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.* Here were all disciples present together used for prayers. They prayed with one mind and one heart, it includes praise, worship, thanksgiving, adoration, confession, intercession. They had to wait, in fulfilment of the Lord’s promise that the Holy Spirit would come. And for ten days were gathered in the place of united prayer, until the heavens were opened and they were all “filled with the Holy Spirit”(Acts 2:4) Pentecost marked the formation of the Church, the body of Christ. In many respects, this eve-of-Pentecost prayer meeting was a model one, and it will help us to note some of its characteristics mentioned in Acts 1:14. The first result is true fellowship with and in the Lord, what togetherness Christians experience when they meet in the upper room! The second result is guidance in the administration of the Church. With such praying the work of God will go forward and the will of God will be accomplished. The third result will be the release of the power of the Holy Spirit, outpouring of the Spirit of God. After this every prayer meeting, experience all God’s children need to know His filling and empowering. We do have to wait for the Holy Spirit to empower us for special service, that He may fill us with His power and make our service for Him effective.(1 Corinthians 2:4) In the public preaching of the gospel, and power in the lives of God’s people, enabling them to show forth the Lord Jesus in their daily walk and witness. The Spirit of the Lord will soon put him to flight, where the people of God know how to pray through, the powers of darkness will be held back.

Prayer meeting is that believers encourage one another to endure. As we “carry each other’s burdens,” we fulfil the law of Christ. God wants His people to encourage, support one another in loving fellowship, mutual honesty, confession as we pray for and with each other. Prayer meetings bring revival; rejoice in the presence of the Lord.

A prayer meeting is a time of value as believers seek an intimacy and quiet communion with God at His throne. It is a time of unity with fellow believers in the presence of the Lord. It is a time to care for those around us as we share their burdens. It is a time when God manifests His love and desire to communicate with those who love Him. And let us not neglect our meeting together(fellowship), encouraging one another as you see the Day approaching!