



BATTLE PLAN FOR PRAYER

Commitment to Prayer Guidelines

I will briefly review some guidelines that have helped me, and direct you to some other sites which I am finding very helpful and practical.

Years ago, I was taught to order my prayer after the "**ACTS**" method of prayer, which stands for :

1. **Adoration** - Praising, worshipping God, for Who He is
2. **Confession** - Asking God to cleanse us from sin
3. **Thanksgiving** - Believing, acknowledging God's grace
4. **Supplication** - Our specific prayer requests

Adoration - The first, and, most important Element is *always begin prayer, by getting our heart, soul, mind, and strength fully focused on our GREAT BIG GOD* ; our problems will soon look NOT very big in comparison. This is the **Adoration** stage : it always comes first. This is essentially practicing Jesus' command to *"take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* [\[Mat 6:31-33\]](#) The kingdom Jesus refers to here, is our heart's surrender to Him as King, ie., acknowledging Jesus as our Lord, Savior, our Good Sheppard [\[John 10:11\]](#), [\[Ps 23:1\]](#), our faithful High Priest who continuously intercedes for us in heaven [\[Hbr 4:14-16\]](#) [\[Rom 8:34\]](#), acknowledging His Father as our heavenly Father, "my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in Whom I will trust" [\[Ps 18:2\]](#), etc. In other words, acknowledge God for EVERYTHING He is to us, and focus our thoughts on Him alone. By temporarily pushing our specific requests out of mind, and first focusing on God Himself, and our relationship to Him, we offer the Lord time to comfort us by His Holy Spirit, to convince us that He hears us, and that He is able and willing, to deal with the requests we would bring before Him [\[Mat 6:8\]](#). Beginning prayer with Praise and Adoration is a powerful way to get focused on God. A few minutes of quiet meditation in God's Word beforehand, will help tremendously, at this initial stage of **Adoration**, and sometimes even short, exhorting sermon bits are helpful (the "[Elijah U](#)" link above supplies a little of both).

Confession - Next element is the Confession stage, where we purposely seek the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin, that we might ask God for forgiveness, and trust Him to cleanse us by the blood of Christ [\[1Jhn 1:9\]](#) ; We do this so that our prayers will not be hindered by sin. *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear [me]."* [\[Ps 66:18\]](#) See also [\[Ps 139:23-24\]](#), [\[Mat 6:12\]](#), [\[2Chr 7:14\]](#), [\[Ps 51:17\]](#).

Thanksgiving - The next element is Thanksgiving, that is, acknowledging that all the blessings come from God alone, plus believing, and receiving these blessings. When I reach the Thanksgiving stage, I begin to "put on the full armor of God" [\[Eph 6:10-17\]](#), while thanking the Lord for all that He has already done for me in Christ [\[Eph 1:3\]](#). If you are not familiar with God's armor, here's [a brief overview of the Armor of God](#). For an in-depth look at each piece of armor, use these excellent links from [Koinonia House Online](#) (the folks behind the [Blue Letter Bible](#)) :

[The Armor of God: Our Quest for Truth](#)
[The Armor of God: The Breastplate of Righteousness](#)
[The Armor of God: Footwear For the Big Race](#)
[The Armor of God: The Shield of Faith](#)
[The Armor of God: The Helmet of Salvation](#)
[The Armor of God: The Adequacy of our Helmet](#)
[The Armor of God: The Sword of the Spirit](#)

Supplication - NOW we are ready to ask God for specific things. Now we are standing in the power of His might. [\[Eph 6:10\]](#) Now is the time for Supplication. Immediately after describing the Armor of God [\[Eph 6:10-17\]](#), Paul directs us to be "*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints*" [\[Eph 6:18\]](#) This is where God's armor ultimately triumphs, it is how we wrestle against spiritual wickedness in high places. This is the ultimate use of the armor. Standing "*in the power of His might*", we must pray "*in the Spirit*". We must pray within a state of full faith and awareness of God's work in Christ for us, that His Spirit would lead us into extraordinary victory in prayer. For more on Prayer, and its relation to the armor of God, try the [Koinonia House Online](#) link, [The Armor of God: Our Heavy Artillery](#).

Now, the first thing to ask God for is that He would fill us to overflowing, with the Holy Spirit [\[Luke 11:13\]](#), [\[Acts 1:4-8\]](#), [\[John 7:37,38\]](#), [\[Eph 5:18\]](#), to help us absolutely focus our complete attention on Him. [\[2Cor 10:3-5\]](#) We are asking for a "Spirit led" state of prayer. We are now ready to "pray in the Spirit". We are now fully in the presence of God.

Now begin to make your requests known to God. Just start expressing what's on your heart to Him. You will notice that, once we are in God's presence, in this manner, that He begins to grant us faith to ask Him, for greater things than we ordinarily would be inclined to ask. We have entered the presence of the One for Whom nothing is impossible, and suddenly, everything seems possible! He in fact, begins to guide our prayer, by His Holy Spirit. "*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*" [\[Rom 8:26\]](#)

While praying in the Spirit's power, don't be surprised if such times before His throne often get emotional. We are breathing in God's love, the atmosphere should get at least a little charged up. Most often it will be joyful, but sometimes, it may be in profound burden, and even mourning before the Lord, pleading for heartfelt supplications. In fact, these "groanings which cannot be uttered" are called by Paul elsewhere "travail", a descriptive term related to a woman giving birth, and the sounds that come from her at that time. It can denote deep pain and anguish of soul, as well as great rejoicing before the Lord. Bearing in mind that God is a God of order, that the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet [\[1Cor 14:32-33\]](#), and that one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is self control (KJV: *temperance*) [\[Gal 5:22-23\]](#), just quietly trust the Spirit to lead us into all truth [\[John 16:13-14\]](#). In other words, we should be able to receive the Holy Spirit's leadings, or even His manifestations in prayer [\[1Cor 12:7\]](#), [\[Acts 13:1-4\]](#), while refraining from such emotional responses that might attract more attention to man than God.

The order of the ACTS method is crucial, for two reasons. First of all, we need to make sure this experience of God's presence is purely Biblical, inspired by His Word, led by His Spirit, and not merely our own self stirrings. The second reason is more subtle. Over the years, I've noticed that we often are so burdened by problems and trials, and so focused on the specific needs we would bring before the Lord, that our prayer time becomes "needs centered", rather than God centered. Our prayer seems more like whining, or even like impatiently ordering fast food at the drive-thru window. We are actually being self-centered, rather than God-centered. Rather than the Holy Spirit leading our prayer, it's more like us trying to order God around with prayer. Rather than reverently listening for God's agenda, we merely present Him our agenda. In this state of mind, we often miss the full impact of the truth that God LOVES us, and wants to answer our prayer, and "*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?*" [\[Rom 8:32\]](#). The key phrase here is "with Him", that is with Jesus. That is why the ACTS method starts with our attention on God. That is why Jesus taught us in the "Lord's Prayer" to start by acknowledging God as our Father. I've found that these key elements stand or fall on this first key, that is, getting our attention focused on God alone. A deeper relationship with Him should be our first purpose in prayer. [The Kneeling Christian](#) wrote :

"Prayer is, however, much more than merely asking God for something, although that is a very valuable part of prayer if only because it reminds us of our utter dependence upon God. It is also communion with God -- intercourse with God -- talking with (not only to) God. We get to know people by talking with them. We get

to know God in like manner. The highest result of prayer is not deliverance from evil, or the securing of some coveted thing, but knowledge of God. "And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God" (John xvii. 3). Yes, prayer discovers more of God, and that is the soul's greatest discovery."

From the Lord's Prayer, [Andrew Murray](#) also points out that this approach truly gives honor and glory to God :

"Hallowed be Thy name.' There is something here that strikes us at once. While we ordinarily first bring our own needs to God in prayer, and then think of what belongs to God and His interests, the Master reverses the order. First, Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will; then, give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us. The lesson is of more importance than we think. In true worship the Father must be first, must be all. The sooner I learn to forget myself in the desire that HE may be glorified, the richer will the blessing be that prayer will bring to myself. No one ever loses by what he sacrifices for the Father. This must influence all our prayer"

In summary, let each time we pray, be first and foremost, a time of "seeking Jesus Himself, as our personal King", and of "returning to our First Love" [\[Rev 2:1-4\]](#). The Holy Spirit will then direct our prayer, we will expect great things from God, and He will accomplish His grand purpose in us [\[Phil 1:6\]](#), [\[Phil 2:13\]](#), [\[Luke 12:32\]](#), [\[1Cor 1:5-8\]](#), [\[Eph 3:10\]](#), [\[John 14:12-14\]](#)

Here are some more links that may help :

[Prayer inspiring quotations](#), from great saints who have walked with Jesus, often put me on my face before God in an instant. Many sites are loaded with these (just search for "prayer quotes"). This link is to our "Elijah U" feature at justpray.org. Personally, I like to simply click on the "Random Quote" button, till something pops up that either overwhelms me with God's love, or convicts me to my knees about my own prayerlessness.

[Andrew Murray's 31 day intercession booklet devotional](#) , written somewhere around the turn of the last century.

[The Audio Bible Online](#) (so often distracted, sometimes if I just listen to God's word, it helps me focus on Him)