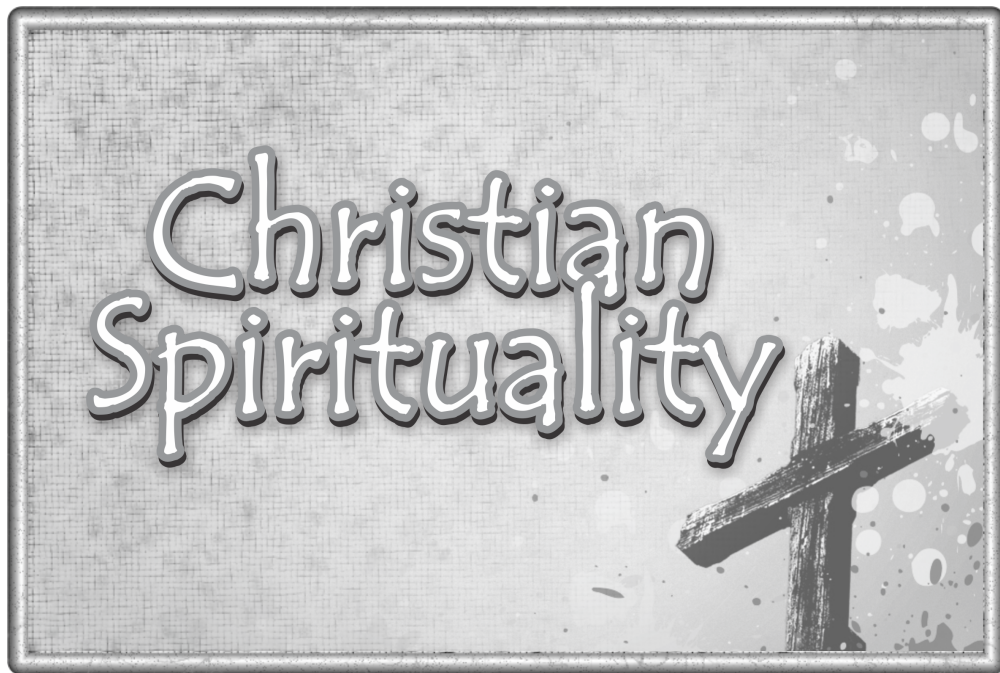


Spiritual Disciplines:

Prayer



How to Experience Intimate Communion with God

By Dr Derek Morris
(Used with permission, adapted and expanded by
Shandrell Penniken)

I. The Discipline of Prayer

*Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.*¹

F. "Lord, Teach Us to Pray"

With your learning partner consider the following passages of Scripture: Luke 11:1-4 and Matthew 6:5-13. What do they teach us about prayer? Take notes in the space below.

G. The Importance of Prayer

1. Lessons from the life of Jesus

Jesus was committed to a life of prayer. Mark 1:35; Luke 5:15-16; Luke 6:12; Luke 11:1.

Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer... His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Savior of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.²

No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer!³

2. Strength for the conflict

Satan is enraged at the sound of fervent prayer, for he knows that he will suffer loss.⁴

Satan leads many to believe that prayer to God is useless and but a form. He well knows how needful are meditation and prayer to keep Christ's followers aroused to resist his cunning and deception.⁵

Satan knows better than God's people the power that they can have over him when their strength is in Christ. When they humbly entreat the mighty Conqueror for help, the weakest believer in the truth, relying firmly upon Christ, can successfully repulse Satan and all his host.⁶

H. If We Believe in the Importance of Prayer, Why Don't We Pray More?

1. We have become preoccupied by concerns of secondary importance.

Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he *invents every possible device to engross the mind.*⁷

Read and discuss Luke 10:38-42 and the above quotation. What is Satan using to engross **your** mind and keep you from prayer? Make notes in the space below. Discuss this when you meet with your learning partner.

2. We were never taught **how** to pray.

Our training did not prepare us to be men and women of prayer. The focus was on information rather than spiritual growth. In contrast, we read concerning the Schools of the Prophets:

A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were the students taught the duty of prayer, but they were taught how to pray, how to approach their Creator, how to exercise faith in Him and how to understand and obey the teachings of His Spirit.⁸

The instructors were not only versed in divine truth, but had themselves enjoyed communion with God, and had received the special endowment of His Spirit. They had the respect and confidence of the people, both for learning and for piety.⁹

I. In Search of a Model for Prayer

1. The Lord's Prayer: A Model for Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

Focus Upon God

"Hallowed be Your Name"

- Praise God for His character
- Praise God for His works
- Praise Him for what He is doing in your life

"Your Kingdom Come"

- Accept Christ as Lord and Saviour of your life, i.e., ask Him to set up His kingdom in your heart
- Endeavour to be an agent for the spreading of His kingdom
- Pray that God will set up His kingdom in the lives of others, i.e., intercede for others
 - Family / Friends / Church / Nation

"Your Will be Done"

- Lay out my plans before the Lord. Determine to obey God's will as it is obeyed by angels in heaven, namely, swiftly & with great joy
- Pray for the reign of evil to end and for God's heavenly kingdom to be established

Present Your Needs

"Give us this day our daily bread"

- Present specific physical needs before the Lord
- Claim His promises to provide for those needs (see Psalm 37:25; Isaiah 33:16; Psalm 37:19, Romans 8:32)

"Forgive us our debts"

- Confess specific personal sins and sins of your family
- Claim His promises of forgiveness, cleansing and healing

"As we forgive our debtors"

- Pray for someone you are struggling to forgive. Think of ways to do them good, and then carry them out

"Lead us not into temptation"

- **Paraphrase:** Help us that while going through temptation, we will not get to the place where our hearts are drawn away from you
- This prayer is a surrender to God's guidance, asking Him to lead you into safe paths. It is a call for you to close every avenue by which the Tempter will gain access to your life

"Deliver us from evil"

- Accept power from God through the anointing of the Holy Spirit
- Put on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:12-18)

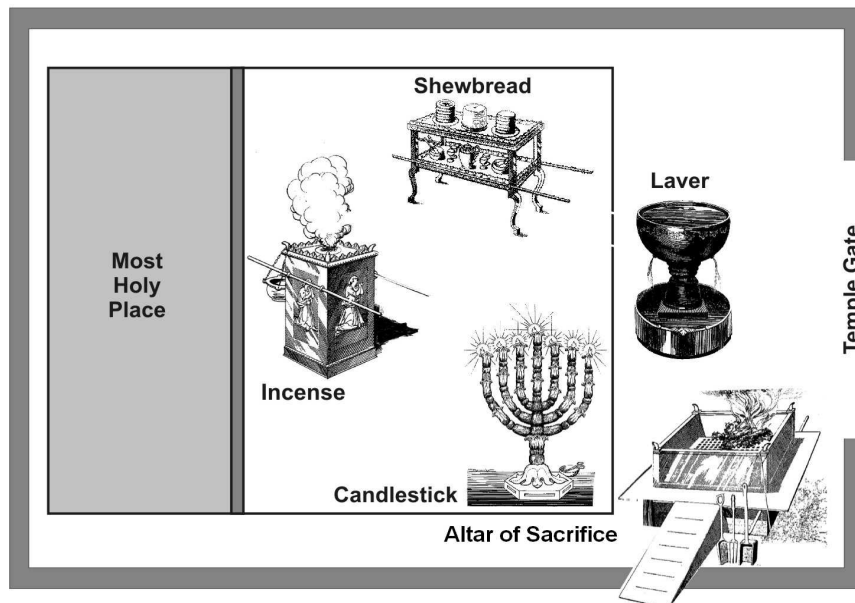
Focus Upon God

"For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

- Conclude by giving praise and glory to God
- Trust in His abiding presence and live for Him that day

2. The Sanctuary: A Model for Prayer (taught by Carol Zarska)

The purpose for the sanctuary was that God may dwell among us (Exodus 25:8). The central fact of the sanctuary is that God wants to be with you and me! Praying through the sanctuary brings us into the presence of God that He may dwell in us.



Sanctuary Gates – Enter with praise – Psalm 100:4; 50:23

Brazen Altar – Confession – 1 John 1:8-9; Psalm 51:2-4; Proverbs 28:13

Brazen Laver – Cleansing from sin – Psalm 51:2; Ezekiel 36:25; Washing through the Word / Listening to God – John 15:3; Ephesians 5:25-27; John 17:17

Lampstand – Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22-25; My witness to others – Matthew 5:14, 16

Table of Shewbread – Strength for the day – John 6:35; Psalm 68:35; Supplying of needs – Philippians 4:19; Put on the whole armour of God - Ephesians 6:10-18

Altar of Incense – Intercession for others – Luke 1:10; Philippians 1:3-4; Romans 1:9

Ark of the Covenant – Experiencing intimate communion with God – Hebrews 10:19-23; Psalm 16:8, 11; Full surrender and vulnerability to God – Psalm 139:23, 24. Live the rest of the day in this apartment, i.e., practice the presence of Jesus wherever you go.

3. A-C-T-S: A Model for Prayer

A = Adoration

Adoration is to adore God, to worship Him, to praise Him for who He is – our Creator, our Sustainer, and our Redeemer (see Isaiah 57:15; Revelation 5:12)

C = Confession

Confession allows you to clear away the things coming between you and God, which are displeasing to Him. All of us have sinned, but “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

T = Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving. Each moment God is blessing us, so every minute we should be able recall the wonderful things that God has done for us, and the gifts that we have been given. Thank Him for the blessings (see Psalm 100:4)

S = Supplication

Supplication or **Intercession.** Finally, we come to ask God for our needs (see Philippians 4:19; Romans 8:32) and the needs of others (Luke 18: 1-8; 15:3-7). Pray for others, pray for the world’s needs, and pray for your own needs too.

4. Encountering God in Prayer: A Model for Prayer

This model, adapted by Juanita Kretschmar in her work with the New York City Van Ministry, provides a tremendous opportunity for personal healing and restoration:

- a. Ask the Father for the covering of the Holy Spirit bringing the presence of Jesus. Claim the blood of Jesus over all sin. Ask for angels to guard you, since He has promised. Ask Him to make sure that no other influences or thoughts will be allowed to disturb, that He will protect.
- b. Worship the Creator, Redeemer, King, etc.
- c. Invite Him to search your life for a revelation of hidden sin. Allow Him to take you back to childhood if necessary. Take time to be attentive and listen.
- d. As conviction comes to your mind of thoughts, acts, cherished "rights" such as anger, rebellion and resentment, or experiences that in the presence of the cross are sin, be specific, call it sin, and ask for forgiveness. Accept forgiveness and thank Him aloud. (Your ears need to hear your own voice expressing confidence and praise.)
- e. Ask for a deeper repentance. Since it is a gift, thank Him, whether you feel anything or not.

- f. By your own free choice, tell your Heavenly Father you give Him permission to remove the sin and sense of guilt or condemnation that came with the sin. Let God know you are willing to allow Him to place the burden you have been carrying on the shoulders of His Son. Accept Jesus' desire to release you from this guilt. Christ wants to do this for you. Be sure to express thanks aloud.
- g. Ask God what He has for you in exchange. What characteristic of Jesus is He waiting to give you? What gift of guidance or insight is He making available? Take time to be attentive and listen.
- h. Let God know you will accept that gift (whatever thought, word, or picture He brings to your mind). Be sure to thank Him aloud.
- i. Repeat the process as desired. Enjoy His presence. Praise Him.
- j. At the time you are accepting gifts from God, if He has just impressed you of specific instances of sin, you may want to ask what help He would have sent if you had turned to Him fully in that earlier moment of temptation. Or you may ask what Jesus would have done in your place. He may give you delightful insights.
- k. You may want to ask Him at the final moments of this specific prayer if there is anything or anyone else He wants you to pray about or for, or if there is any particular instruction He wants to share with you, etc. Take time to be attentive and listen.
- l. Be sure to praise Him aloud as you end the time of prayer. You'll want to. He's a wonderful God, and a marvellous, generous, loving Friend.

E. Prayer Possibilities

- 1. **Psalm 2:8** – “Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession.”
- 2. **Jeremiah 33:3** – “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”
- 3. **Ephesians 3:20** – “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us...”
- 4. **Matthew 7:11** – “How much more will your Father who is in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him.”
- 5. **Mark 11:24** – “Whatever things you ask when you prayer, believe that you receive them and you will have them.”
- 6. **Matthew 18:19** – “If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.”
- 7. **1 John 5:14, 15** – “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

F. Outline how you would like to improve your prayer life?

What time would you like to meet with Jesus daily?

How much time would you initially like to spend?

What mechanisms will you put in place to ensure that your prayer time does not get off track?

My Prayer Commitment: I commit to spending _____ minutes in prayer every day at _____ (time) to deepen my spiritual experience with God.

Signed

II. Endnotes

1. White, *Steps to Christ*, pg 93.
2. Ibid, pg 93-94.
3. White, *Desire of Ages*, pg 362.
4. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol 1, pg 295.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid, pg 341.
7. White, *The Great Controversy*, pg 519.
8. White, *Education*, pg 47
9. Ibid, pg 46.

For a complete bibliography of this devotional series, see the last module, viz., **Spiritual Disciplines: Scripture Memorization**