



GROWING OUR FAITH THROUGH PRAYER

Prayer! There are so many books *about* prayer, *types* of prayer, *where* to pray, *ways* to pray, *scriptures* to pray... The list goes on! The Bible contains wonderful prayers. So does the hymnal. What prayers were you taught as a child? Have you taught them to your children?

Jesus often went away to pray -

- In the morning while it was still very dark, He got up & went out to a deserted place, & there He prayed. Mark 1:35
- After saying farewell to them, He went up on the mountain to pray. Mark 6:46
- They went to a place called Gethsemane; & He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”
- He gave the disciples a model for prayer. Mark 14:32
- He prayed for us while He was on earth & still does today. (John 14:16-27 & John 17.) Jesus gave us an Advocate to turn to for help, encouragement, answers, support, comfort, etc. No matter what we go through in this life, if we belong to Jesus, He is always praying for us.

Paul was a proponent of prayer, encouraging us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) & by singing “psalms & hymns & spiritual songs...singing & making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times & for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:19-20).

Dr. David Jeremiah said, “Prayer – it is easy to do & yet so often we fail to pray to God unless we are in a place of despair or trouble. When we neglect to pray, we miss the tremendous blessing that comes from daily conversations with our Creator...God not only loves you with an incomprehensible love, but He is also always available, always listening, & always ready to hear from you.”

Stewards always seek God’s guidance. Philippians 2:13 says, “For it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will & to work for His good pleasure.” What is God’s good pleasure – for us to grow spiritually. Generosity is an indication of our spiritual growth through prayerful time with Him.

What do you want to say to God today? *Listen!* He’s speaking to you, too!

Talk with God! Grow your faith through prayer!

Praying like Paul...

Paul encouraged all to *pray in the spirit* which some refer to as *praying in tongues*. This is *not* a tool of the devil, as some imagine. Read some of Paul’s authoritative counsel on praying in the Spirit:

- For those who speak in a tongue do not speak to other people but to God; for nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:2.
- Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves (in the faith). 1 Corinthians 14:4.
- Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unproductive. What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also. 1 Corinthians 14:13-15.
- I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 1 Corinthians 14:18.
- So, my friends, be eager to prophesy, & do not forbid speaking in tongues. 1 Corinthians 14:39.

If you desire to grow your faith through prayer, seek this gift. It is available to all who are filled with the Holy Spirit. Remember these instances cited in The Acts of the Apostles:

- Acts 2:4. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit & began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.
- While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the Word. The circumcised believers who came with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues & extolling God. Acts 10:4-45.
- When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, & they spoke in tongues & prophesied. Acts 19:6.

Praying in the spirit opens us to God’s generous spirit in us because our spirit communes with His Spirit! It enables us to hear more clearly all God is calling us to do with our time, gifts, talents, other resources & witness.

Let us grow our faith through prayer & seek a generous spirit!