

Remnant Life Church  
August 3, 2025  
**What Prayer is and What it is Not**  
Ephesians 6:18

Everybody, including those who have never set foot in a church knows what prayer is

- It is common element of our everyday vernacular
  - “You don’t have a prayer”; “That was on a wing and a prayer”; “You had better pray he doesn’t find out”
- But for a Christian that word has a very different meaning
  - And understanding the importance and necessity of prayer is a challenge for many Christians
  - Many of us grew up with prayer as a natural part of our everyday lives
    - At meals
    - Before bedtime (remember kneeling next to the bed as a boy)
  - Prayer is often used as a safeguard to the day

The Morning Prayer – Dear Lord - So far today I have done all right. I haven’t been unkind, spoken against anyone in anger, haven’t been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or over-indulgent. And I am very thankful for that... But dear Jesus, in just a few minutes, I’m going to get out of bed. And from that point on, I’m going to need a lot more help. Amen.

- Of course, as our walk with the Lord grows, we begin to understand the deeper meaning and significance of prayer
- When prayer becomes an intricate, natural part of our daily lives we can then walk in a place of personal relationship and communion with God that will impact our lives every day.
- Consider the words to the familiar song by Joseph Scriven written in 1855

*What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear? What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.*

Joseph M. Scriven, What A Friend We Have In Jesus (1855).

- We start young with prayer
  - Listen to these children’s prayers submitted in a Sunday School Class
    - Teacher asked them to write down a prayer they prayed recently that was important to them
    - Read list
  - We laugh at what a child prays for but there is something very good they are learning
    - Pray about everything

- Pray from your heart
  - *Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. (Prov. 22:6)*
- But prayer does not come easily to everyone
  - What do I say to God?
  - Praying out loud in public is especially hard but something I feel is vitally important for every Christian

Listen to Paul's instructions following his teaching on the armor of God...

**Eph 6:18** - *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

With that in mind we can consider what prayer is and what it is not...

1. **IS** – Speaking directly with God
  - i. When Jesus died, the need for a priest to mediate between you and God was removed because the final, ultimate blood sacrifice was paid
  - ii. The tabernacle God told the Israelites to build in the desert at Mt. Sinai was the forerunner of the temple (**Ex. 25-27**)
  - iii. The tabernacle remained even after they entered Canaan (the promised land) until the reign of King Solomon began
    1. The temple itself was a 90' long, 30' wide, and 45' high
    2. The building was surrounded by a walled courtyard comprised of an inner and an outer court
    3. Completely destroyed twice
      - a. Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC (**2 Kings 25**)
      - b. Romans in 70 AD
  - iv. Within the temple were distinct areas (**1 Kings 7**)
    1. Great outer court allowed the people to come and bring their sacrifices
      - a. This is where Jesus would have driven out the money changers
    2. The upper or inner court held the huge altar for the people's sacrifices to God presented by the priests
      - a. There was also a porch where the priest would prepare himself to enter
    3. The Holy Place – this contained the golden lamp stand, altar of incense and the tables of show bread as well as other items
    4. The veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies
      - a. The Ark of the Covenant – (originally held)
        - i. 10 commandments
        - ii. Aaron's staff that budded
        - iii. Jar of manna
      - b. Only the priests could enter the holy place

- c. Even the high priest could not enter the holy of holies except once a year on the Day of Atonement
    - v. The veil was present to separate Holy God from a sinful people
    - vi. When Jesus died the penalty of being separated from God was paid
  - b. *For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, (I Tim. 2:5)*
  - c. Many of us need to “unlearn” what we have thought about prayer from the past – special times; only in church; etc...
  - d. Prayer is anytime, anyplace, any circumstance, any length of time about anything.
- 2. **IS NOT** – A Bargaining Session
  - a. Many try to make deals with God through prayer
    - i. To bargain means to offer something to another person who does not have what you do in exchange for something you want
    - ii. What does God not have?
  - b. How many of you have done this?
  - c. *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. (Duet. 7:9)*
  - d. “Faithful” ITOL (*Pistos*) – shown to be worthy of trust
    - i. We don’t bargain with God because we trust Him in faith
- 3. **IS** – A Powerful Weapon for Every Aspect of Your Life
  - a. *"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt. 26:41)*
    - i. Prayer enables you to be able to battle temptation
    - ii. And be victorious
  - b. *Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)*
    - i. Prayer gives you the wisdom to know when to flee from sinful circumstances and environments
  - c. *Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. (James 5:13-14)*
    - i. We are speaking to the omnipotent, all-powerful God of the universe maker of heaven and earth!
    - ii. Prayer takes you into the very presence of God’s love and power for your life
- 4. **IS NOT** – A Celestial Vending Machine
  - a. Prayer is not dropping in a spiritual coin to receive our desired answer
  - b. We are to bring the concerns, desires and content of our lives to Him
  - c. *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (I Peter 5:7)*
  - d. How do we bring them to Him?

- i. In prayer that is seeking His will
  - ii. It is the condition of your heart that aligns your prayers to His will
  - iii. We must desire what only what He wants
- e. God is not at our beck and call to fulfill our orders
  - i. He is loving, kind, and generous
  - ii. But He is God!

## 5. IS – A Christian's Lifeline

- a. When do I pray?
- b. Consider the times these prayers were offered and we see how important prayer is
  - i. Isaac prayed and asked God to allow his wife Rebekah to conceive a child (**Gen. 25:21**)
    - 1. We bring the desires of our heart to God
  - ii. Moses prayed while in confrontation with Pharaoh (**Gen. 8:30; 10:18**)
    - 1. We pray to God as our source of strength
  - iii. David prayed for God to cleanse his heart (**Psalms 51:10**)
    - 1. We pray to ask forgiveness for our sins
  - iv. Daniel prayed to God three times a day (**Dan. 6:10**)
    - 1. We pray to give thanks to God for the blessings of our lives
  - v. Jonah prayed to God from inside the belly of the fish (**Jonah 2:1**)
    - 1. We pray in times of distress and trouble
  - vi. Jesus goes off to pray and is recorded as praying more than anyone else (**Luke 5:16**)
    - 1. Jesus, the perfect example of life, knew that only through prayer could He fulfill His Father's will for His life
    - 2. How much more than should we?

## 6. How do I pray?

- i. With a pure heart
  - 1. Tell God what you desire but trust Him for what happens and know that it is best for your life
  - 2. Am you willing to not get what you want because you trust God for what is best?
  - 3. Will you abide by the answer you receive?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
    - c. Not Yet
- ii. In an all-encompassing sense of gratitude and humility that bathes every prayer you pray in the knowledge of the awesomeness of God