

## **PRAYER INFORMATION**

### **What is Prayer?**

In the beginning, when God created people, He created us to be in relationship with Him. However, sin entered the world and interrupted our relationship with God. In His grace and mercy, God continues to extend the invitation to us to be in relationship and communicate with Him. The author of Hebrews describes this relationship and communication:

**Hebrews 4:16 (NLT) | “So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”**

“Coming boldly to the throne of our gracious God” is communicating with God. This communication is what we call prayer. Prayer is authentic conversation with God. It’s taking time with the Lord to make a holy connection with Him. It’s taking a step back from, slowing down, or pausing our daily life to be still in the Presence of God.

**James 4:5 (NLT) | “Come close to God and God will come close to you.”**

When we pray, we’re communicating what is on our hearts and minds with God. When we pray, we invite Him into our lives and seek His voice and His perspective on a matter. It is these moments with God that cultivates our relationship with Him. Prayer is the active pursuit of the voice and presence of God in our lives.

### **Why should we pray?**

We pray because we’re called to pray (Philippians 4:6-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

We pray because Jesus did and assumes that we will (Matthew 6:5-8).

We pray because Jesus taught us to pray (Mathew 6:9-13).

We pray so we can be close to God – and experience the love, peace, and joy that comes from being in His Presence. (Philippians 4:6-7)

### **How do we pray?**

Prayer is not a science – there are no exact ways we must say things for our prayers to be heard and answered. The Lord promises that He will hear and answer our prayers. However, there are many acronyms to help guide a time of prayer. One example is PRAY.

#### **P is for pause and praise**

Before diving into a time of prayer, it’s important to pause, take a deep breath, and quiet our minds to pursue the Lord. This can look like saying to the Lord, “Lord, how should I pray today? What do you want to talk about today? Lead me in prayer today.”

Praise is the time we take to thank God for who He is and what He has done. This can be accomplished through worship music or just talking to the Lord and completing the sentences, “God, you are...” or “Thank you, God, for...”

#### **R is for repent and reflect.**

Repenting is an opportunity for us to ask the Lord what mistakes we have made – what ways have we sinned, and to make up our minds to do what is right. We learn what we have done wrong and we turn from that way to the way God has for us. It is sometimes helpful to read Psalm 139:23-24 and open your heart to what the Lord may bring to your mind:

**“Search me, O Go, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”**

Reflect on scripture. In this step, we would read a passage of scripture two times. The first time, read the entire passage. The second time, read the passage line by line or verse by verse and ask the Lord to speak to you about who He is and who you are based on the passage. Or maybe you notice a promise to trust, a command to obey, a truth to embrace a warning to hear or an encouragement to rest in.

**A is for ask.**

This is the time we speak to the Lord – and ask Him for what we need. If you have taken time to reflect on a passage of scripture, this is the moment to pray about what the Lord has brought to your mind as you read His Word. Speak to the Lord openly and honestly about everything that is on your mind. This is how you invite God to give you His perspective on what is going on in your life and allow Him to give you the peace of His presence. In some cases, He will share some wisdom for the way forward.

**Y is for yield.**

To yield means to surrender control of the situation or people to God, knowing that He will work things out for our good and His glory. This is the moment, we say, “Yes, Lord. Let it be so” or “Amen.”

Now for a bit of advice – you will only feel comfortable praying the more you pray. Praying is just you talking to God about what is on your heart or about what you read in His Word. The enemy (Satan) doesn't want you to pray and will do everything to discourage you – He'll make you feel uncomfortable, try to convince you that God isn't listening and doesn't care, or make you believe that you don't have the time. You'll have to push through these feelings, but I can guarantee one thing - any time you choose to spend on prayer and pursuing the face of God - taking the time to know His heart, and being still in His Presence will change you and your perspective. Prayer helps us see ourselves for who we are. Prayer helps us see our situations for what they are and where God is in them. Time spent in prayer and in the Presence of God will lead you to pray more.