

The Elements Of Prayer

This series of articles is designed to help us learn to appreciate the great blessing of prayer and to teach us how to pray effectively. In this article, we will seek to set forth the scriptural elements of prayer.

First, prayer is an adoration of praise. It is a way of magnify God. In Matthew 6:9, Jesus begins the model prayer by saying, "Pray, then, in this way; O Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name." But what makes prayer worship? Since worship is an expression of love for and devotion to God, prayer which recognizes Him; which appeals to His love, mercy, grace, and power; and which shows a reliance on Him and the need to communicate with Him is surely worship. It exalts God as the object of our praise, the recipient of our love, and the source of all blessings. In turn, God displays His providential care and love for His children by hearing and answering their prayers. In 1 John 5:14-15, the scripture says, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." As an example, we see the prayer of the disciples after Peter and John had been released from prison in Acts 4:24-31.

Second, prayer is a petition. Petitions include pleas for one's needs as we see in 1 John 5:14-15. It also includes supplications. In Philippians 4:6, Paul says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Also in Ephesians 6:17-18, Paul tells the brethren in Ephesus, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints." Petitions include confession of sins and pleas for forgiveness as we see in 1 John 1:9-2:2. We see an example of this in Acts 8:14-24. Ezra 9 also contains a prayer of confession of sin (Ezra 9:6-10:1). The prayer of David in Psalm 51 is an acknowledgement of his sin and a plea for forgiveness of it especially in the first four verses.

Third, it is a thanksgiving. Prayers should be characterized by thanksgiving for blessings received as we see in Philippians 4:6. The Christian should be abounding in thanksgiving. In Colossians 2:6-7, the Bible reads, "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude." Also, in Colossians 4:2, Paul says, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." There is so much we have to be thankful for. From the food we eat, clothes we wear, our jobs, family, friends and so much more. I think about the hymn "Count Your Blessings." The chorus reads, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one by one; Count your many blessings, see what God hath done; Count your many blessings, Name them one by one; Count your many blessings, see what God hath done." Let us never forget the greatest blessing that is His own Son, Jesus Christ our Savior, without whom we would have no hope of

salvation. He truly freed us from the bondage of sin. He is our hope, our light, our strength, and our song!

Finally, prayer is an intercession. The Greek word translated intercession in the New Testament is *enteuxis*. It is “a petition ... it is a technical term for approaching a king, and so for approaching God in intercession” (Vine, 607). Intercessions are pleas for others. In 1 Timothy 2:1, Paul tells the young preacher Timothy, “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.” We see that Paul is seeking the presence and hearing of God on behalf of others. Again, we can look at Simon in Acts 8:24 where he asked Peter to pray for him.

I want to leave you with this passage in 1 Timothy 2:1-4, which says, “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” This is what we should all pray for ... for the salvation for all.

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