

PRAYER

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One of the most important things for a new believer to learn is how to enter into the relationship with God that has been made possible through the new birth. It doesn't happen automatically. The bridge has been constructed between God and man through the blood of Jesus; however, crossing that bridge is something that the new believer must learn for himself. If we do not establish meaningful fellowship and communion with God, then everything else will ultimately wither and die. No matter how excited we may be about faith, prosperity or healing, we must first learn to establish the fellowship and relationship with God that provides the basis for all these things. If we don't, our zeal and enthusiasm will be short lived and we won't experience any success in our Christian walk.

Recent moves of the Spirit - the healing revival in the fifties, the Holy Spirit or charismatic movement that began in the sixties and what has more recently been called the faith movement which began in the seventies - have been intended by the Lord to bring an awareness of Christianity to areas previously neglected. These things that the Lord has wanted to emphasize because Christianity has, to varying degrees, lost sight of what he would have for us in these areas. Unfortunately, during these times when the Holy Spirit places an emphasis on certain messages, some of the fundamentals are often overlooked.

I can remember my excitement just a few years ago about faith (I'm still excited about it); however, I also remember some of the unfortunate by-products that can result if we're not aware of that emphasis. We can become so single-minded on "...faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God," and meditating, confessing and acting that we sometimes lose sight of the fact that there are basic fundamentals that need to be in place if faith is going to work - prayer is one of those things.

The very basis for any spiritual endeavor is prayer. Without prayer - whether you are discussing healing, faith or any other glorious subject - it will never come to pass. We must remember that Mark 11:24 is talking about prayer: "...whatever things ye desire, when ye PRAY..." So prayer must be in place. We have to be knowledgeable about the subject of prayer and be proficient in prayer if we're going to realize any of the things that God wants us to have in this life.

A good analogy of how prayer works would be to visualize a train carrying the promises of God from heaven to earth - bringing things from the spiritual realm to the natural realm through the vehicle of faith. The boxcars, which make up the train itself, would be representative of our faith. The cargo they carried would be God's promises, which we see in His Word. As we step out and believe in our hearts - when we pray - then we receive those promises. The tracks or the rails that the train must run on would be analogous to our prayer life - the hookup that enables our faith to move between the heavenly realm and the earthly realm. So the prayer life is fundamental and basic to anything that we receive from God. Again, Mark 11:24 is very specific. It says "...when you PRAY..." Prayer provides the medium for our faith to travel across.

If new believers were taught to go to God with their problems from the beginning, the body of Christ would save a lot of wasted time that is presently spent on counseling. It's something that usually happens by default. Someone gets born again, filled with the Holy Ghost, and we're anxious to be available to help him. What happens, very often, is that a new believer who has a problem calls on us because we've become his "big brother" in the Lord, and we counsel him, try to give him direction or help him work his problem out. What we should do for him, however, is go to prayer with him. Teach him to go to the Lord with his problem - teach him to pray - instead of spending time trying to

counsel him. I'm not saying that there isn't a place for counseling. There is an important place for counseling in the body of Christ; however, prayer should be the first place we turn a new believer to.

Kenneth Hagin said these same things on a recent tape of one his messages on this subject. When someone comes into his office for counseling, his response to them is to say, "Let's get down on our knees and take it to the Lord in prayer." When they've finished praying, he asks them if they received their answer. If the person says no, he tells them they need to spend more time in prayer. If new believers are taught to look to God for their answers, their prayer life will be established from the onset, enabling all other parts of their spiritual walk with the Lord to succeed.

The essence of prayer is this: God can't do anything unless we ask Him to. If you think back to the point in your life when you were just saved or had just come into the knowledge of the Lord, your naive assumption was that God had everything under control - He had everything handled and worked out. God is the creator of this universe, so you assume He had it all handled, and all you needed to do was work out a few things. That is wrong thinking. God doesn't have it all handled. God is not in control of this earth to any greater an extent that we allow Him to control it through our lives.

It was God's intent that His creation, Adam, exercise the dominion that He delegated to him, but Adam gave it to the devil. That's why satan is called the god of this world. He's the one who exercises control in this earth. So God exercises control in the earth only to the extent that we allow Him to. That is why He can't do anything unless someone asks Him to, and that is why prayer is an absolute must! It is so basic and so fundamental to everything we do as Christians that we sometimes lose sight of the importance of it. God cannot move beyond the place where He is invited to move by you and I. We can now see how vitally important prayer is.

Let's begin our study of prayer by looking at Ephesians 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." The Amplified Bible reads, "... with all manner of prayer..." Other translations read, "...with every kind of prayer..." What I want you to see more than anything else in this verse of scripture is that there are many different kinds of prayer, with different rules and laws for each kind. Christianity, in general, has lumped all the different types of prayer together and simply chosen one at random when they needed to pray. This is one of the main reasons that people fail to get answers to prayer and then become discouraged in their prayer life. They try for a few weeks or a month, and because they don't see many manifestations to their prayers, they quit praying.

One of the main reasons they are not seeing manifestations to their prayers is that they are using the wrong rules for different types of prayer. Kenneth Hagin uses an example of sports and games having different rules one from another. The rules for football are different from those for baseball, track and ice hockey. You don't hit home runs on the football field, and you don't throw touchdowns on the hockey rink. You don't use football rules to play baseball - that won't work. In the same fashion, there are rules for certain types of prayer that we are not to confuse with other types of prayer.

You must use the right rules for the kind of prayer you're involving yourself in if you expect it to work. A good example of this would be when you hear people say, "I pray, If it's God's will, because that's the way Jesus prayed." Jesus only prayed that way one time in a prayer of consecration. You cannot use that phraseology or that kind of wording for the prayer of faith. If you do, it will render it ineffective the moment you speak the words. If you pray, "If it be thy will," in the prayer of faith, it becomes a prayer of consecration - it does not belong in the prayer of faith.

Furthermore, the prayer of faith is not intended to give you control over another person's life. The prayer of faith says, "...Whatever things YOU desire, when YOU pray, believe that YOU receive..."

It's talking about YOU. It's talking about changing things that pertain to your will, things you can exercise your will over. God is not going to impose Himself on someone's will, and He is not going to allow you to impose yourself on another person's will in prayer. We often confuse those rules that apply to the prayer of faith with intercessory prayer and find ourselves inadvertently trying to control some other person's life through intercession.

We need to identify exactly what rules apply to what type of prayer. The thrust of this teaching therefore, will be two-fold: 1) to identify the different types of prayer that we see in the Word, and 2) to discuss some of the principles that govern each type of prayer. Our purpose isn't to be extremely comprehensive in this teaching, but rather to motivate the new believer to pray and to give him the general direction he needs. A great deal could be taught about every single type of prayer, but the purpose of this teaching will be to give general direction and motivation in the area of prayer.

The first type of prayer that we'll look at is the **prayer of petition** - the prayer that is designed to change things. It's probably better known as the prayer of faith. Mark 11:23 says, "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." This is the scriptural basis for operating in faith. Reading on in verse 24, we see that it is a prayer that Jesus is talking about: "Therefore, I say unto you, whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

I've had occasion to counsel many people, either directly or indirectly, who have become frustrated with the faith message because they have been believing for something and yet have not pursued it in prayer. They read Romans 10:17, "...faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God," so they study - get the Word down on the inside of them - and confess and act on it. If it isn't taken to the Lord in prayer, however, nothing is going to happen. The basis for believing that you receive the things you desire is through prayer.

The prayer of petition is always to be based on God's revealed will in His Word. It is never to be prayed, "If it be thy will." You find a promise in the Word of God, and that is the basis for the prayer of faith. As you get this down into your heart and believe that promise is for you - you can envision it coming to pass in your life - then you go to the Lord in prayer and pray in faith. Then it will come to pass. Jesus said that you must believe that you receive and you shall have those things that you desire when you pray.

Secondly, let's look at the **prayer of consecration**. Luke 22:41-42 says, "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." This is the prayer of consecration - the commitment or dedication of our life to God's use. That is exactly what Jesus was doing. He said that this is hard on the flesh. This isn't something that we really relish doing, but we pray, "Lord, my priorities are such that I desire to do what you want me to do, not following after my own will."

We should pray the prayer of consecration every day of our life. It isn't something that we pray once and then forget about it. We need to submit our will to God's will on a daily basis in prayer, committing or dedicating our way to the Lord. If we don't do it on a daily basis, we'll find ourselves veering off on the tangent of self-interest rather than doing what God wants us to do. What we pray will become what we want instead of what God wants. So this should be a routine part of our prayer life - "Lord, whatever you have for me, that's what I want."

The prayer of consecration is the prayer wherein we use the term, "If it be thy will." The reason that many people get confused when praying the prayer of consecration is they take this terminology and

try to apply it to the prayer of faith. They say that Jesus prayed that way. However, the prayer of faith is based on God's promises, and we know what His will is from the Word in that regard. Again, as prayer relates to our life and the submission of our will to His, we need to use the prayer of consecration we looked at in Luke, Chapter 22.

The third type of prayer is the **prayer of commitment**. We're going to look at a few scriptures that deal with this type of prayer. In Matthew 6:25, Jesus said, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" In the next several verses Jesus goes on to expand on this and then summarizes it in verses 33 & 34: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself..."

We read next in Philippians 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." The word "careful" literally means anxious in the Greek. We're not to be anxious for anything. This verse is literally saying, "Don't be fearful, don't let anxiety enter in, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

The last scripture we'll look at is 1 Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." We're instructed to cast all our care upon Him. The purpose of the prayer of commitment is very simple - to keep you free from the anxiety and fear that will literally strangle the Word of God in your life.

We need to pray the prayer of commitment on a regular, daily basis. If we don't pray the prayer of commitment on a regular basis, the cares and anxieties of life will enter in and strangle the seed of the Word that is attempting to sprout in our heart - seed that will produce the response we desire from the Lord. This is one of the things that Jesus talked about in the parable of the sower - thorns growing up and strangling the seed of the Word of God - and that is exactly what will happen if we allow the cares of this world to enter into our life. The Lord has given us the means of dealing with the cares - through praying the prayer of commitment.

I've counseled people who have said, "I can't get rid of this care." Yes, you can or God would not have told you to cast your care upon Him. You can get rid of your anxieties. You can quit worrying. You can get rid of those cares that strangle the Word in your life. It is making a decision to give it to the Lord. That is the purpose of the prayer of commitment - to give those cares to the Lord, to cast them upon Him, to free yourself from them - so your prayer of faith will work, so you will be an effective intercessor, so you have a spiritual basis for receiving the blessings of God in your life. The prayer of commitment is vital.

The fourth type of prayer is **the prayer of praise and worship**. It is classified in the Word as a form of prayer and is simply the coming to God in prayer for the purpose of loving Him and being in His presence - not asking Him for anything. I know this has a special place as far as God is concerned. It would be no different than if one of your children came to you just to love you, to enjoy you, to sit on your lap because they love you and want to be with you. That has to have the same effect on the Lord as it would on us if one of our children were to do that, as opposed to them coming to you and saying, "Dad, give me another \$10 or \$20 or "I need some gas in my car tonight." If the only time you saw your children was when they wanted some money, then you could easily understand how special it must be to the heart of God to have someone come to Him solely for the purpose of being in His presence, to love him. The impact that the prayer of praise and worship has, very often, is absolutely spectacular because it moves God so strongly in our behalf. We can see an example of this in Acts, Chapter 16, where Paul and Silas were thrown into jail. It says in verses 24-26, "Who,

having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."

This is the way the Lord responds to a pure heart of love. They weren't coming to Him moaning about their circumstances. They weren't trying to figure out why the prayer of faith didn't work. They were in prison with their feet in the stocks; yet, in spite of their circumstances, they expressed their love and faith in God. They entered into His presence with praise, and "...there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed." What a powerful thing to have happen, and it resulted simply from the heart motive of wanting to be with God.

We see also in the Word of God that the prayer of praise and worship is one of the major sources of joy in the believer's life. If you want to have the joy of the Lord manifest in your life, spend part of your prayer just worshiping and being in His presence. We can see this in Luke 24:50-53: "And he led them out as far as to Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." So the prayer of praise and worship is coming to God just because of who He is - to love Him and be in His presence. It can have spectacular results as well as filling your heart with joy.

The fifth type of prayer is the **prayer of agreement**. Matthew 18:19 says, "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven." The principle that governs this type of prayer underscores the power of unity and harmony among Christians. The biblical principle that I'm referring to is that one can put a thousand to flight and two can put ten thousand to flight. God is saying to us that if we walk in the unity, harmony and agreement that He intends us to walk in, then the power will be manifested in our lives to a greater degree than we're able to comprehend. We'll be ten thousand times more effective if we walk in agreement with our brother, sister or spouse than we will be if we walk alone. So you can imagine the effect of the entire church coming into agreement.

Unity and harmony are so important to the Body of Christ. That's why the devil's primary thrust in everything he does is to create division. It doesn't matter what tool or weapon he uses - what kind of deception he uses - the end result he's after is to bring division between you and someone else. His ultimate goal is to bring division to the Body of Christ, because if he can do that, he can conquer. The reverse is also true. If he can't bring division - if unity and harmony prevail - the power that flows is beyond anything we can comprehend. That is the principle that Matthew 18:19 works with.

When we pray the prayer of agreement, we cannot be casual in choosing a prayer partner. Very often, we read Matthew 18:19 and say, "All I have to do is find someone to say that they will agree with me on this particular subject and that will do it." Then we wonder why the prayer of agreement doesn't seem to work. The Amplified Bible sheds more light on this particular verse: "...if two of you on earth agree (harmonize together, together make a symphony) about - anything and everything..."

The principle is that you need to be praying with someone whose basic viewpoints are the same as yours - who agrees on everything, as you do. It isn't good enough to find a prayer partner who says, "Oh yes, I'll agree with you for a return on your giving." You need to know they are of the same persuasion as you regarding the scriptures. That's one of the reasons the Bible says that we are to fellowship with like-minded believers - so that power and agreement are available to us when we need a prayer partner. It takes someone who is in basic agreement with you on all points, not just on

the subject you are touching on. So don't be casual in selecting your prayer partner if you want the prayer of agreement to work.

The prayer of agreement is such a powerful tool. It is basically a double-barrel prayer of faith. God's provision here is that if you are not to a place yet where you can really believe for a particular thing that you have need of in your life, then He says, "That's o.k., we'll take care of the situation. You go lock shields of faith with another believer and you'll receive the answer you need." So select your prayer partners carefully and you'll have a powerful weapon or tool to use in prayer.

The sixth type of prayer is **intercessory prayer** or prayer for others. That is what intercession means - taking someone's place, standing in the gap. We all have this ministry, because it is the ministry of Jesus and we are one with Him. That is the principle reason we are all called to intercede.

In Hebrews 7:25, we see one of the many descriptions of the present day ministry of Jesus: "Wherefore, Jesus is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for every believer. This is His present day ministry, but we often have the perception of Jesus sitting up in heaven taking on all of this activity by Himself. We forget that we're the Body of Christ in the earth. Now, if we are the ones who are to take the message of salvation to the world, to preach the gospel to the unsaved, to lay hands on the sick so they'll recover - what makes us think that we are exempt from being intercessors as well. The fact of the matter is that a good portion of the intercession that Jesus makes for you and I - for the Body of Christ in general - is going to come through you and I.

So we see that our ministry in the realm of intercessory prayer is an extension of Jesus Himself. We see it again in I Timothy 2:1 "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." We are to intercede "first of all" - before we do anything else, "for all men" beginning with those in authority, because it moves the powers of darkness away.

Don't confuse intercessory prayer with some sort of God-given ability to change the will of another person. That's not the purpose of it - that's the way it frequently is perverted by the devil. It happens when the motivation behind the prayer is not love. Then it becomes a controlling thing where you find people praying that a certain person will change to conform to their perception of what he should be like. They may pray that a certain individual will do this or do that, or they may pray that God will move one person out of a certain place and move another one in. I'm sure that if you've been around charismatic circles for any length of time, you've heard prayer directed in exactly that fashion. That is not intercession - that is a perversion of intercession that enters in because the motive behind the prayer isn't love.

If love is the motive behind your intercession, the satanic powers will be moved away from that individual so they can then exercise their will free of demonic influence. That isn't to say they will always exercise their will as you would like them to, but they will be free to exercise their will free of demonic influence. That is the purpose of intercession.

Praying the prayer of intercession will not only benefit those you pray for, but will provide personal benefits as well. God will turn your captivity, just as he did for Job. As you are faithful to pray and intercede for others out of a heart that is motivated by love, you'll suddenly find yourself free from the areas the devil has held you captive in. So the personal benefits are there, and they are significant.

Again, if your heart motive is right and you intercede for others out of a heart of love, God will be moved to do mighty things in your behalf.

The seventh type of prayer is **united prayer**. This is coming together corporately as a group of believers and praying together. It's based on the principle of unity and agreement. Acts 4:24 says, "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, who hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, all that in them is." They continued to pray a united prayer in verses 25-30, and we see the result in verse 31: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

The result of united prayer is often spectacular because of the power that is resident in unity, harmony and agreement. God is going to use this in this day and time to pull down major strongholds over cities, states, government and nations all over the world. I believe we are going to see that one of the things that typifies this end time is the coming together of large numbers of Christians in united prayer, praying in agreement to pull down strongholds that have long reigned on this earth.

The eighth and last major type of prayer that's discussed in the Word is **prayer in the Spirit**- praying in tongues. I Corinthians 14:14,15 says, "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it, then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also."

We can read more concerning prayer in the Spirit in Romans 8:26-27: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself (Himself) maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." "Infirmities" means our own inabilities or weaknesses. In other words, there are times when we don't know what to pray. We don't know in our natural mind what the prayer needs are, but we have a burden or a desire to pray. What do we do then? We pray in the Spirit. We need to yield to the Holy Spirit at these times, pray in tongues and know that the perfect will of God is being prayed. Even on the occasions when we don't know what to pray, God has made provision for our prayer life. He's given us the ability to pray in tongues - to pray in the Spirit - so the perfect will of God will be prayed, even when we don't know what to pray. All we need to do is yield ourselves to it.

Once again, the eight types of prayer that we've looked at are: the Prayer of Faith, the Prayer of Consecration, the Prayer of Commitment, the Prayer of Praise and Worship, the Prayer of Intercession, the Prayer of Agreement, United Prayer and Prayer in the Spirit. They all blend and flow together. If we will avail ourselves of each of these types of prayer, we will have a full prayer life and have the spiritual foundation that will enable the Lord to do in and through our lives what he desires.

There are a few general principles we need to remember as we engage in the different types of prayer. God is not legalistic, but He does expect us to learn the Word and begin using it. So we need to know these principles.

The first principle we need to know is that we are to pray to the Father. We hear many people pray to Jesus. John 16:23,24 says, "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." You may have heard it taught that there are certain things you should pray to Jesus for; however, the Word specifically says that we are to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. I don't see any exceptions to that in the Word. We don't pray to Jesus, but we pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. This is a basic principle we need to incorporate in our prayer life.

Another principle is that we are to give thanks to the Father in the name of Jesus. This is important because a thankful heart opens the way for an effective prayer life. We need to have an attitude of thanksgiving when we come before the Lord. Psalm 100:4 says that we enter into his presence through the gates of thanksgiving.

We enter into his presence with a thankful heart and a thankful attitude. So we need to have an attitude of thanksgiving. How many times do we hear people say, "Thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus." It isn't wrong to be appreciative to Jesus for what He did for us on the cross, but the Word makes it clear that it is to the Father in the name of Jesus that we give thanks. Ephesians 5:20 says, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is a principle that's to be employed in all of the different types of prayer that we've covered - the principle of binding and loosing. Matthew 18:18 says, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." I've heard it taught that this is a separate type of prayer in itself, but it is not. It is a principle that is to be employed or utilized in any of our prayer activity. You can bind and loose in the prayer of faith. You can bind and loose in intercessory prayer. You can bind and loose in the prayer of agreement. You can take authority over the devil. You can bind him. What you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and what you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. This is an important principle that we need to employ in our prayer life.

In James 5:16, we see that "...The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Righteousness will cause you to have an effective prayer life. It is a prerequisite for experiencing an effective prayer life. Righteousness simply means that you are not living in sin. No one has "arrived" yet, but we can all apply the blood of Jesus to our lives, simply by confessing what sin we may have or know of. That's all that is required. Once you've done that, you can enter into the throne room of God with boldness. Boldness will be a result of right standing with God, of that righteousness being manifest in your life. You can come before the throne of grace boldly, and that is one of the things you need to do to have an effective prayer life.

Fervency is another necessary ingredient to have an effective prayer life. It is a principle that produces answered prayer. Again, James 5:16 says, "...The effectual, FERVENT prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Fervency means to go to the Lord with your whole heart. Don't go to Him with traditional, habitual, routine prayers. There are some good prayers in a denominational prayer book, but the thing that is wrong with them is they are not coming from the heart. You're simply reading something repetitively from a book. If your prayers are repetitious and said unthinkingly, you may as well not even pray.

Fervency is a prerequisite to answered prayer. That means that it comes from your heart and is done with all of your heart. When you go to the Lord, let it be with all of your heart. Speak to him from your heart, then be specific. Throughout the Word - when Jesus prayed, when Paul prayed - they were always specific. We have a tendency to get a little impatient with our prayer life and say, "Bless it Lord," and then move on to the next subject. We need to be fervent and specific if we want God's response.

Lastly, I believe there is considerable benefit in putting prayer first on your list each day. That's not to say you can't pray at night or during the day. Contrary to that, the Bible says to pray without ceasing. You're to be in an attitude of communion with God throughout the day. You can use your prayer language extensively throughout the day. You can pray under your breath constantly in tongues. You can walk in that prayerful communion with God throughout the day - that is walking in the Spirit.

I do believe however, that there is an important principle in getting up in the morning and going to God before you do anything else - getting direction for your life from Him. What sense does it make to go to Him at the end of the day for direction? It's as if you went to your employer at 4:30 in the afternoon and said, "What do you want me to do today?" Then it's too late.

You need to go to the Lord first thing in the morning in prayer, establishing a communion link with Him. Romans 11:16 says, "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy..." If you give God the first part of your day in prayer, then the rest of the day will be separated unto Him. You'll have His will and His plan manifest in your life for that day.

The key to the whole subject of prayer is recognizing its importance - not letting it get lost in all of the other exciting subjects we find in the Word of God. There are many other things to get excited about in the Word, but we need to keep it foremost in our minds that everything must have its basis in prayer. Then we must pursue that relationship with God that's established through prayer.

If believers or new believers, who are hungering and thirsting after God with all their hearts, are confused by the different types of prayer and principles of prayer, they need to be encouraged to keep seeking God. He will respond and will begin to shed light into their hearts regarding how to pray. In time, the things we've covered concerning prayer will begin to flow naturally in their lives.

When you go to the Lord in prayer, you can blend all of these types of prayer together. As a new believer, you may need to outline these things. During the first year of my new life in Christ, I used a confession sheet that I quoted from memory. God knew where I was, and He met me where I was. As time passed, however, I began to flow in these things.

Using my private prayer time as an example, I find that I go to the Lord first with a prayer of praise and worship - to love Him, to exalt Him for who He is and just be with Him. From there, it flows into a prayer of commitment - casting my cares on Him for the day. I cast over on Him anything I feel I'll be tempted to become anxious about during the course of the day. Then I flow into the prayer of consecration, saying, "Lord, I want what you want for me today, and I am yielding to you this day." From there, I flow into praying for specific needs. This seems to be the time for the prayer of faith - to make a petition of Him. Then I'll intercede or pray for others and their needs - the ones that the Lord has put on my heart. Through all of this, I pray in tongues periodically. There will be areas I feel impressed to pray for, but I really don't know what to pray, so I pray in the Spirit. Then if there are some things my wife and I want to get into agreement on, we'll pray the prayer of agreement together. All of these types of prayer simply flow together. You don't need a 15-minute prayer of consecration, a 10-minute prayer of agreement, a 15-minute prayer of intercession, etc. Let it flow by the Spirit from one to another. If we flow in these components of prayer and all these different areas of prayer then we'll see the fullness of God manifest in our life. The temptation is to get sidetracked on one type of prayer - for instance, to intercede and do nothing else. No, we need all of these types of prayer flowing in our life. Each one is vital. Nothing will work without all of them blending together. As we pray all of these different types of prayer, we will have the spiritual basis for God to do miraculous, supernatural things in our life.