

Living the Christian Life Successfully series!

A Bible, History, Faith, and Mission Course for New Adventist Believers

Lesson 2—Regular Prayer

The breath and life of the soul is our connection with God through prayer. So, how can we have a more committed, faithful, and effective prayer life? Have you perhaps been tempted to not pray? Have you tried to pray and not been sure how to do so effectively? In this lesson we'll be studying the prayerful life of true and earnest believers who've lived before us, and the blessings of God that have followed. We will be learning how to pray and to live as God's faithful ones from every age of time have done.

1. **What counsel did the Apostle Paul give to the Christian brothers and sisters in Thessalonica?** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) *Note: We should pray always and give thanks unto the Lord for His goodness and mercy towards us.*

2. **What are some of the examples that we have in the Bible of men of prayer and faith?**
 - a. **What is the life example of Daniel?** (Daniel 2:17,18; 6:10; 9:3,4; 10:3,12) *Daniel was a busy statesman, but he was never too busy for God. He would not compromise his prayer time with God for anything. When there was a crisis or challenge in Daniel's life, he took it to the Lord in prayer. When his enemies commanded him to stop praying, he refused to listen. When the time of the Jews' stay in Babylon (and Persia) was nearly ended, Daniel prayed a prayer of repentance and healing for him and his people. Sometimes Daniel even joined "fasting and prayer" as these two may go together in a powerful combination at times (ref. Matthew 17:21).*
 - b. **What kind of regular daily prayer life do we see David seeking to follow in his devotion to God?** (Psalm 55:17) *Note: And David was also called "a man after" God's own "heart" (Acts 13:22).*
 - c. *As we noticed in our last lesson, Jesus also was very much a man of prayer. Morning and Evening Jesus could be found praying—pouring out His heart to our Heavenly Father (ref. Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:22,23). Jesus instructs us to "watch and pray" (Luke 21:34-36).*
 - d. **Were Peter and the other Apostles of Christ found to be praying often? Did they live a lifestyle of prayer (depending upon God for all things)?** (Acts 10:9; 3:1)
 - e. **What about the Gentile man Cornelius? Was he a man of continual prayer and faith to God?** (Acts 10:1,2) *He followed the injunction which Paul gives us, to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).*

3. **The Early church was a praying church:**
 - a. **They prayed at Pentecost** for the Holy Spirit, for consecration to God, and for Evangelism—and God blessed them (ref. Acts 2:1-4)
 - b. **The church had regular prayer meetings together** (Acts 2:42).

- c. **The church prayed together during Crisis**, like when Peter was put in prison (Acts 12:4,5)
 - d. **The church prayed together at farewell events**, like when they said goodbye to Paul (Acts 21:4,5). They prayed together on the seashore out in nature. God's people were not afraid to kneel and pray together out in the open. They knew "whom they had believed" (2 Timothy 1:12).
4. **Not only do we want to make continual prayers to the Lord, but how should we pray more effectively?** Christ gives us the principles in Matthew 6:5-15; then He connects with his teaching on prayer, the activity of fasting, v.16-18; these two things have a tendency to go together).
- a. **Christ teaches us that we are never to pray for "show" or display as some type of praiseworthy religious form** (Matthew 6:5,6). **Pray in secret** with the Lord, and He will reward us openly with many spiritual blessings, etc.
 - b. **Christians are not to pray with "vain repetitions" like the heathen do (v.7,8)**. We are not to just mindlessly repeat the same old words over and over again. The Lord doesn't need to hear all that. We must pray intelligibly—God is a being of super-intellect. We do not need to insult him as if He couldn't hear us the first time.
 - c. **Christ teaches us "how" to pray (v.9-15)** Jesus says we can pray in "this manner."
 - i. We are to **remember the Holy God we are talking to, as we enter prayer** (v.9)
 - ii. We can **pray for His will to happen** and for His kingdom to come, etc. (v.10).
 - iii. **Pray for our real, daily needs (v.11)**. Prayer is like opening the heart to God as to a friend. Be real with God in your communication. Prayer must come from the heart—it is not about some kind of mindless and vain repetitions that were merely memorized and recited word for word. (You can notice also these things mentioned are things which we ought to pray for as our day is beginning; not at the end, after the day has already been lived, but before it even began!)
 - iv. **Pray for forgiveness of sin and for a forgiving heart towards others—** forgiveness and a transformed character (v.12).
 - v. **Pray for the deliverance from sin (v.13)—**for character perfection, and for strength to walk strongly with the Lord and to not stumble or fall from the path of righteousness.
 - vi. **Close by praising the Lord and remembering His awesome glory!** (v.13).
 - vii. Forgiveness and fasting are also connected with prayer (v.14-18).

Is it your desire to always live a continual life of prayer and devotion to God? _____