

## Teaching Children to Pray

Presented by Pastor Ron Elwardt

### Introduction

*The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.—SAMUEL CHADWICK*

### Body

#### 1. What is prayer?

Definition:

Prayer Quotes (All taken from Tim Keller's Book, Prayer)

A. Prayer is the only entryway into genuine self-knowledge. It is also the main way we experience deep change – the reordering of our loves. Prayer is how God gives us so many of the unimaginable things he has for us. Indeed, prayer makes it safe for God to give us many of the things we most desire. It is the way we know God, the way we finally treat God as God. Prayer is simply the key to everything we need to do and be in life.

B. He (Paul) does not see prayer as merely a way to get things from God but as a way to get more of God himself. Prayer is striving to “take hold of God” (Isa 64:7) the way in ancient times people took hold of the cloak of a great man as they appealed to him, or the way in modern times we embrace someone to show love.

C. Though prayer is a kind of artillery that changes the circumstances of the world, it is as much or even more about changing our own understanding and attitude toward those circumstances....Through prayer, which brings heaven into the ordinary, we see the world differently, even in the most menial and trivial daily tasks. Prayer changes us.

D. What is prayer, then in the fullest sense? Prayer is continuing a conversation that God has started through His Word and His grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with Him....The more true his knowledge of God, the more fruitful his prayers became, and the more sweeping the change in his life.

E. Christian prayer is fellowship with the personal God who befriends us through speech. The biblical pattern entails meditating on the words of Scripture until we respond to God with our entire being,

saying, "Give me an undivided heart, that...I may praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart." (Ps 86:11-12).

F. Conversation with God leads to an encounter with God. Prayer is not only the way we learn what Jesus has done for us but also is the way we "daily receive God's benefits". Prayer turns theology into experience. Through it we sense his presence and receive his joy, his love, his peace and confidence, and thereby we are changed in attitude, behavior, and character.

#### Summary of Observations

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#### 2. Why is prayer important?

A. 2 Kings 19:14–19 Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. <sup>15</sup> And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said: "O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. <sup>16</sup> Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. <sup>17</sup> Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands <sup>18</sup> and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. <sup>19</sup> So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone."

B. 1 Chronicles 29:10–19 Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. <sup>11</sup> Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. <sup>12</sup> Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. <sup>13</sup> And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. <sup>14</sup> "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. <sup>15</sup> For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. <sup>16</sup> O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name

comes from your hand and is all your own. <sup>17</sup> I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you. <sup>18</sup> O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you. <sup>19</sup> Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision.”

C. Nehemiah 1:4–11 As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. <sup>5</sup> And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, <sup>6</sup> let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned. <sup>7</sup> We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. <sup>8</sup> Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, <sup>9</sup> but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’ <sup>10</sup> They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. <sup>11</sup> O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.” Now I was cupbearer to the king.

Nehemiah 2:4 Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven.

D. Acts 4:24–31 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, <sup>25</sup> who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “ ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’ — <sup>27</sup> for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup> to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. <sup>29</sup> And now, Lord, look upon their

threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, <sup>30</sup> while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” <sup>31</sup> And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

What do the following Scriptures add about the importance of prayer?

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Psalm 62:8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.  
*Selah*

Philippians 4:6–7 ...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*Summary: Prayer should always interest Christians. Prayer is the very life-breath of true Christianity. Here it is that religion begins; here it flourishes; here it decays. Prayer is one of the first signs of conversion (Acts 9:11). Neglect of prayer is the sure road to a fall (Matthew 26:40–41). Whatever throws light on prayer is for our soul's health. J.C. Ryle*

3. What are the types of prayer?

A. "A" stands for A\_\_\_\_\_ =

Hebrews 13:15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

B. "C" stands for C\_\_\_\_\_ =

Psalm 38:18 I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.

C. "T" stands for T\_\_\_\_\_ =

Ephesians 5:20 ...giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Chronicles 29:13 And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.

D. "S" stands for S\_\_\_\_\_ =

Ephesians 6:18–20 ...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,<sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,<sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

4. How do we learn to pray? OR How do we teach children to pray?

A. We learn it through \_\_\_\_\_.

In Luke 11:1 it says, "Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to prayer, as John taught his disciples."

Some ideas may include:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B. We learn it through \_\_\_\_\_.

*Keller: It is therefore essential to the practice of prayer to recognize what Peterson calls the "overwhelming previousness of God's speech to our prayers". This theological principle has practical consequences. It means that our prayers should arise out of immersion in the Scripture. We should "plunge ourselves into the sea" of God's language, the Bible. We should listen, study, think, reflect, and ponder the Scriptures until there is an answering response in our hearts and minds. It may be one of shame or of joy or of confusion or of appeal – but that response to God's speech is then truly prayer and should be given to God.*

5. What are some ways we can teach children to pray?

A. London Bridge Prayer:

Oh my Lord, I want to pray

Want to pray

Want to pray

Oh my Lord, I want to pray for....

My daddy

My Pastor

The President....

B. Hot Potato Prayer –

C. Musical Chairs Prayer –

D. Prayer Walk –

4 Stations: 1.

2.

3.

4

E. Prayer Cards (see template) –

F. Prayer Journal – (see template).

G. Prayer Poster (ACTS) –

H. Circle Prayer –

I. Prayer Starter Cards –

Prompts include: 1. Lord, help me with... 2. God, forgive me for.... 3. Please help me do better when I .... 4. Please help my friends and family, especially.... 5. God, you created me to know, love and serve you. Our Father ... 6. God, you are... 7. Please bless... 8. God, thank you for... 9. Jesus, I ask you that... 10. God, sometimes I feel... 11. Jesus, help me be like you in... 12. Father, help me to know that you....

J. Prayer Wall –

K. Paper Chain Prayers –

Color coding: (White = adoring God; Red = confessing sin, I am sorry; Yellow = thanks; Blue = supplication for other people; Green = supplication for the world; Pink = prayers for your growth in Christ, faithfulness to God...).

L. Lego Prayer Station –

Examples: A. Different colors represent different kinds of prayer (see paper chain idea for color associations). B. Build a school or church and pray for each. C. Use the figurines (police, firemen, teachers...). Place them on the cross and pray for them. D. Use the accessories to pray. For example: flowers can remind us to thank God for being the Creator of all things. E. Use several bricks to represent your family. Place them on the cross and prayer.

Note: As this is a prayer station you can have a morning of prayer and use many of these prayer activities as prayer stations.

## **Conclusion**

Defeat awaits a non-praying Church. Success is sure to follow a Church given to much prayer. The supernatural element in the Church, without which it must fail, comes only through praying. More time, in this busy bustling age, must be given to prayer by a God-called Church. More thought must be given to prayer in this thoughtless, silly age of superficial religion. More heart and soul must be in the praying that is done if the Church would go forth in the strength of her Lord and perform the wonders which is her heritage by Divine promise. E.M. Bounds

## Prayer Starter Cards

Lord, help me with...

God, forgive me for...

Please help my friends and family, especially...

Please help me do better when I ...

God, you created me to know, love and serve you. Our Father...

God, you are...

Please bless...

God, thank you for...

Jesus, I ask you that...

God, sometimes I feel...

Jesus, help me be like you in ...

Father, help me to know that you...