

THE ESSENTIALS OF PRAYER – ELM NOV 1995

Prayer is referred to hundreds of times in the scriptures.
Understanding how to go about it is most useful
and important to those who want talk to God.

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped lectures given between 1977 and 1997 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., formerly the Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

To pray means to entreat, to call upon, to ask, to cry out to, or to demand even; or also to acknowledge God's Greatness, Power, and to praise Him although that is not required, but certainly desirable. There are certainly many aspects to the ways we can talk to our Father in heaven. He can and will supply our every need according to His will, not to our will but to His will.

It is interesting to note that a principle applies over and over again all through the scriptures. The Bible shows that human beings consistently choose to do the exact opposite of God's wishes and go counter to those which Jesus Christ new expanded spiritual principles that He brought to us with the 'New Law'.

Matthew 6:5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues (assemblies, ecclesias, or 'churches' as the word is usually incorrectly translated) and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

It really is so very sad that around the world, 'churchianity' flies in the face of this instruction. The Jews of the country of 'Israel' flock to the 'wailing wall' to bob and pray seemingly endlessly for all to observe their religious fervour.

Jesus says, this is how to pray to your Father in Heaven:

Matthew 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Matthew 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

In many services held in the places of 'churchianity' prayers are endless vain repetitions. Some religions recommend to use of beads and other devices to act as an aide-memoir to help them. Some 'Heathens' (nations) build prayer wheels and other mechanical devices that can deliver endless 'prayers' into the ether just by turning a handle!

If our children fingered beads as they spoke to us, or kept endlessly repeating the same thing over and over again, we would not appreciate that. Neither does God appreciate mechanical prayers. He wants us to talk to Him like a responsible adult child.

Jesus says, this is how to pray:

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Our **Father**, we are to address God in a very personal and intimate manner to where He is living now, in Heaven. On earth we humans know that a child's relationship to its father is, or should be, a very close personal one. Remember that God's will is that every part of His creation will reproduce 'after its kind'. God follows this in respect to His physical children, we are gods, and one day are to become completely like our Father in every way with bodies composed of Spirit like our Heavenly Father is.

Our physical position when praying is not mentioned as an issue. The issue is that we talk to our Father, our Heavenly "Abba" or Dad whenever and wherever we are, and regardless of whether we are walking, standing, kneeling, sitting, or lying down, He hears us.

Matthew 6:10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth (and in my life), as it is in heaven.

Remember that this model prayer was addressed to people who did not have the Holy Spirit. They were not yet 'begotten', since Jesus had not yet died and been resurrected. We know that God will bring His Kingdom to pass, and we who are in Christ will be part of it, so for us simplistically to ask routinely for it to come is not necessary, except that we yearn for it to come as quickly, but as God wills.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

This issue of God's **will** is the most important aspect of this part of Christ's teaching. God's will is a fact, a principle that never changes. Many principles will come and go, but God's Will shall always prevail, as He is in charge, and everything is going according to His plan, in the world, and in our lives. It may not always seem like it, but this is a fact. Pray to understand His will in our lives, and in the world and be in willing conformity to that will.

Colossians 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Matthew 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

Our Father knows what we have need of before we ask for it. God responds to an 'attitude of gratitude'. Many hunger in this world, but why is that their prayers, if indeed they pray for food, do not appear to be answered. Mankind cannot fly in the face of every rule of Godly conduct, cannot break every physical and spiritual law imaginable, and still expect the automatic blessings of plenty.

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

We owe everything to God our heavenly Father, and quite a lot to our earthly parents and all the other people in our lives as well.

Matthew 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Forgiveness is a God-quality that we have the capacity to feel and express, and it is imperative that we maintain an attitude of forgiveness in our hearts, especially towards those who treat us badly. Surely this is one of the hardest aspects of Christ's law for us to follow. It is so very difficult for us to remain in a forgiving frame of mind when dealt with unfairly, aggressively, or cruelly. But to be forgiving is a requirement of those who would be in Christ.

However when we slip up on living according to any of Christ's standards, as we both do and will do, we are instantly forgiven, and even the memory of our slip is forgotten. Just as imperfect humans we forget the peccadilloes of our little children, God forgets ours.

Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation (trials), but deliver us from evil (the evil ones): For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Ask not to be lead into trials, but still ask according to His will, as sometimes trials are necessary to keep us on track. Ask for the wisdom to see the reason for trials, and for the ability to grow through them, and acknowledge that we truly know and understand that God is in control of our lives for our good.

We acknowledge that God's Kingdom, His power and His glory are for ever. And when we are praying, it is as well to pray in the name (in the authority) of Jesus Christ, for it is His authority, and because of Who He Is, not ours that enables us to be heard of the Father. Our authority is Jesus Christ, we have little of our own.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name (by my authority), that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

When those who are "in Christ" pray, we are talking to God the Father through Jesus Christ who is sitting at the right hand of the Father. Spiritually speaking, we are also sitting "in Christ" at the right hand of the Father. God listens to His Firstborn Son, and because we are IN His Son, therefore He listens to you and me also.

When we pray, remember we are petitioning our Father, not as babies or infants, but as intelligent, educated children, with the realization of who I am or who we are, children of God in a one-to-one relationship with no need for any other mediator but Christ.

There is nothing wrong as we understand it to show an "attitude of gratitude" directly to our Elder Brother for all He has done for us. We have the fact in our minds that when we talk to Jesus Christ sometimes in our prayers, we realize that we are talking to the Father as well anyway!

The notion of the Trinity held by many is a Satanic device, and by design presents the Trinity as a closed number excluding anyone else. The Holy Spirit is NOT an entity, it is the POWER of God in action.)

The actual Trinity consists of God the Father, Jesus Christ His Firstborn Son, and Me. (and of course, **you** who are reading this, and eventually every other human being who has ever lived.)

No, this is not blasphemy. It is the reality of the structure of the God Family. We need to know and understand who we really are, and what our potential actually is.

1 John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that **believe** on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know** that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

We CAN know, have confidence, and even prove what God's will is for us as an individual.

1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we **ask any thing according to his will**, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

So long as what we asked for is according to His Will.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may **prove** what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I know why I am here on this earth, to become a fully born child of God. I know what God's will is for me: that I have eternal life and will become a fully fledged member of His Family.

B Look in a mirror, tell yourself that you realize that you are a child of God, believe it. Believe in God's Firstborn Son and you have the guarantee of salvation and eternal life. Acknowledge that I (you) have a role to play and fulfill during my (your) time on earth.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 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. 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

1. The 1st essential of prayer is to pray that all is according to God's will.

All our trials and tribulations are for our education, and to develop spiritual maturity. It is God's will that evil exists in this world as well as good, and He is in charge, and everything is going according to plan. We who understand the Plan are greatly privileged to be able to glimpse our future, and to know things which our forebears would have loved to know had they been aware of these things. We are all going to come out WINNERS – big time, and this IS the will of God.

Jesus Christ asked His Father three times not to have to go through that excruciating experience of being tortured, flogged and hung on the tree of crucifixion, and left to die. But each time, Jesus said, "Thy will be done."

Matthew 26:39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. Matthew 26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Christ knew what he was doing, and that God was having Him doing it for us who were to become His brethren.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow (human beings), he also did predestinate (planned and destined) to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Matthew 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

That is few at this time, but eventually it is God's will that all men be saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

2. The second essential of prayer is for it not to be a ritual or a ceremony in any way. Those who pray in this manner have their reward. If a child came to its father endlessly repeating the same requests, do we think that the father would be well impressed?

Time and place and length are not issues. Pray anytime, in any place, as long or as short as you are moved to, but without any outward sign to others that you are doing so. The Holy Spirit can and does lead us to be in more frequent contact with the Father and Jesus Christ under all circumstances of life.

3. The third essential of prayer is to know who you are, a firstborn child of God, then you will have no problem saying “Thy will be done.”

Mark 16:19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

We are “in Christ” and so, in type, are already with Him on the right hand of the Father. All we have to do, so to speak, is look over our left shoulder, and there is the Father and Christ with short hair, looking like men, with arms, legs and a torso made of spirit. Not green smoke or some blob of ethereal matter, but solid spirit bodies.

We need to realize who we are. We, who have the Holy Spirit are not like other people who do not at this time. We need to appreciate that we are Firstborn Children of the Living God.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

People in the world do not recognize who we are, and that is not a problem. They may find us ‘different’, but not understand why, and there is little point in our attempting to explain unless they specifically ask, and then with meekness and humility give them an answer. But do not expect them to understand or ‘get it’ at all. It will just sound strange to them.

Realising who we are, picture the scene, then pray as a respectful child, as if I am talking to Them right there.

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

These are the essentials of prayer.