

# Foundations Lesson #2

## Prayer

Prayer is communing with God and talking to God, and it is the most important discipline of the Christian life. Nothing you can do will benefit you more than prayer. God is eager and delighted to meet with us as we come to him in prayer. In learning to pray we can study the Bible, read books, or hear messages, all of which is good. But the only real way we can learn to pray is by praying (Colossians 4:2 / Romans 12:12).

### I. Reasons to Pray

- There is natural law and the will of man. God will change these in answer to prayer.
  - Acts 12:5-11 / II Kings 20:11 / Luke 23:12 / Proverbs 21:1
- We are called to be change agents. As we pray, God will change people and circumstances to conform to His desires and plans, which are always best.
  - Matthew 7:7-8 / II Kings 13:4-5 / Acts 9:40 / Acts 16:25-26
- We serve a God who has an insatiable appetite for intimacy with us, and we pray in order to satisfy His heart. This is the **most important** reason we pray.
  - Luke 22:15 / Revelation 21:3 / Ephesians 5:31-32 / Exodus 34:29

### II. Scriptural Terms Describing Prayer

- seeking (emphasizes the treasure being sought)
  - Isaiah 55:6 / I Chronicles 16:11 / I Chronicles 22:19 / Jeremiah 29:13 / Hebrews 11:6
- drawing near (emphasizes the existing distance and the available nearness) [also: "come"]
  - Zephaniah 3:2 / Jeremiah 30:21b / Hebrews 7:19, 10:1, 10:22 / James 4:8
- asking (emphasizes verbal communication)
  - Matthew 7:7-8 / Matthew 9:37-38 / Matthew 18:19 / John 14:13-14

### III. Practices and Principles of Prayer

- thanksgiving – Philippians 4:6 / I Timothy 2:1
- praise – Luke 10:21 / Psalm 145:1-2
- worship – Luke 2:37 / John 4:21-23
- confession – Nehemiah 1:6-7 / Daniel 9:4-5
- persistence – Luke 18:1-8 / Luke 11:1-10
- faith – Matthew 21:22 / Mark 11:22-24 / James 1:6-7
- fervency – Psalm 63:1
- making requests specific – Mark 10:51
- being in harmony with God's will – I John 5:14-15 / John 15:7
- confidence – Hebrews 4:16
- in the Holy Spirit – Ephesians 6:18 / I Corinthians 14:14-15

- listening – Ecclesiastes 5:2 / Psalm 46:10
- praying in secret – Matthew 6:6
- early – Matthew 6:9-11 / Mark 1:35
- time spent – Luke 5:16
- while doing other things – I Thessalonians 5:17

#### **IV. Hindrances to Prayer**

- sin, iniquity – Isaiah 59:1-2 / I Peter 3:12 / Ezekiel 8:17-18
- unforgiveness – Mark 11:25 / Matthew 6:14-15
- for the sake of public reputation – Matthew 6:5-6
- for the sake of personal pleasure – James 4:2-3
- vain repetitions – Matthew 6:7-8
- not treating others properly – I Peter 3:7
- undisciplined thoughts – II Corinthians 10:4-5

Since the matters of knowing God's word and drawing near to God in prayer are so incredibly important, all believers are encouraged and exhorted to spend at least one hour every day dedicated to Bible reading and prayer – and nothing else. The Lord is worthy of our time and our undivided attention.