

PRAYER

1. What prayer is

Prayer is first and foremost fellowship with God.

This is something amazing, that a human being can have fellowship with God, that she has access to the throne of God, and that she can claim his attention. There are high people in our countries with big influence, but not just anybody can obtain an audience with them. Many are refused and has to settle with watching them from afar, or on TV. If they ever would obtain an audience, the time is often very much limited depending on the shortage of time. Imagine what privilege we have, that you and me can come before Him, who is the most important person in the universe. You can come any time you want. You can come without having prepared the meeting for weeks. You can come just like you are. You don't have to think that you are taking His time, and therefore have to be short. You can be in His presence as long as you want.

Maybe you are wondering how you should pray and what to pray for and so on. But prayer is talking to God, from your heart and from your love relationship that you have with him. When you meet a dear friend who you have great confidence in, you are not thinking too much on what to say. You are just rejoicing over the fellowship and friendship that you have.

You can come to God as to your Father

The best is that you can come to God as to your Father. You can spend time with him, tell him all what you are thinking of and tell your innermost and secret desires for him. He will not be gossiping and he wants to give you more than everything what you desire. His joy is to make you happy and to fill you with peace and hope for the future.

Do you long for a successful prayerlife? Take time to fellowship with God as your father. Invest a lot of time to get to know him.

Jer. 32:41

Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.

When you get to know his character and his great love, it will give you faith that he really wants to give you that which you are praying for.

Without faith you will not receive. In order to please God you have to believe that he is and is rewarding those who seek him.

Hebr. 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

God is not first an "emergency station" where you go in time of an emergency and then don't seek him until next time you are in an emergency. God wants you to seek him for his own sake. He longs for your whole life.

In the small details of life you will learn how to trust in God. Soon you realize that it's not hard to believe for bigger things. You are able to receive everything that you are praying for. He is willing to give it to you. Without effort your faith has grown, and it's not difficult to receive the "impossible" from God.

Without prayer you will not reach the success that God has for you. You can be skilled in many different ways and equipped for ministry, but without prayer there will be no or little fruit.

God wants you to bear much fruit. God is interested in results. He wants you to be effective and successful. That's why he has given you such great promises in connection to prayer.

Joh. 15:5-8, 16

5. I am the vine, you are the branches, He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

6. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

7. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

8. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so that you will be My disciples.

16. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

2. Prayer changes our countries

The most important thing for us as believers is to pray. One who can affirm this is pastor Cho. David Yonggi Cho is pastoring a church in South-Korea. He started his church in 1958 with just a handful of believers.

At that time the country was very poor and people were suffering. Most of them were buddhists. Very few were Christians. I want to quote a passage from his book, "*Prayer – the key to revival.*"

"When I started as a pastor in 1958, I travelled to Dae Jo Dong, a poor area outside Seoul. I put up a second-hand armytent from USA and started preaching. I remembered how I almost lived in the tent and spent many nights in it in prayer. During our cold korean winters I sometimes covered myself with blankets and spent many hours in prayer, close to the pulpit. Within a short time-period, more than fifty people were gathered to spend whole nights in prayer. That's how my ministry started.

It was during this pioneering period of my ministry that I learnt how to pray.

If your heart is longing for souls that have to be saved and for your nation to turn to God, then a prayerlife is a requirement.

Not only in our church, but in most of the churches in Korea, the prayer starts at 5.00 o'clock in the morning. Usually we pray for one or two hours. After our time of prayer, our daily routine starts. Since prayer is the most important part of our lives, we have learned to go to bed early. On Fridays we spend the whole night in prayer. Many of our visitors are surprised to find our church full of people during these nights."

Yonggi Cho started his church 1958 in an armytent. Many nights he was praying in the tent. Often he was hungry because he didn't have any money to buy food. But God started to bless the church and Yonggo Cho. Signs and wonders started to take place. 1961 they were able to start building a temple for the church. The church started to grow more and more.

Today 49 years later the church has about 700 000 members. From this church other churches have started. People say that about 40 % of the population of Seoul now is saved. The country has risen out of poverty and destitution and is a successful country. The church has always made prayer a priority. A spirit of prayer rests over the church.

Because of this, the church is the biggest church of the world. Many in the government and other high officials in the country are members of the church.

By prayer this church has totally changed the spiritual climate of the whole country. God is no respecter of persons. If God could by prayer change South-Korea he can also change your country.

A pastor from the States asked Cho:

- What is the key to your success?

Cho answered:

- Pray and obey. An answer with a big truth.

We pray for our families, relatives, cities and countries. God often answers us by giving us instructions. That's where we have to obey.

2 Chron. 7:14

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and heal their land.

3. How to pray

I want to give you some practical tips regarding prayer.

It doesn't matter if you are praying with folded hands, if you bow down, close your eyes, or not. It's all about your heart's attitude and trust in him. I always pray in the morning for a long time. By doing that I start the day in a right way.

If you have a lot to do, prayer is a necessity. Don't think that you will succeed if you because of shortage of time, don't have time to pray. The more I have to do, the more I need to pray. Pastor Cho, with the largest church in the world, and a very busy man knows this fact. He says that when he has been praying for a long time, the work is done. The day will be blessed with the power of God. You are able to take the right decisions, you are sensitive in your spirit, you are able to hear the Lord talk more clearly, and in that way you receive help how to handle things.

When I pray in the morning I usually follow a certain routine. It helps me to stay focused. But don't make this into a law; feel freedom and find your own way of praying.

I start by praising and thanking God: I thank him because I'm saved, I am righteous, that I can come before his face without condemnation. Usually I thank him for the different names that God is (read about God's characters), that he is my personal doctor, my provider etc.

Then I usually pray for myself so that I can be sensitive to his voice and do everything he wants me to do. If I am not right, how can I help others to walk right before God? Then I pray for the best wife of the world, that God will lead her, and give her strength for the day, etc. Then I pray for my children and their husbands/wives and our eight grandchildren, that they all will be the Lord's disciples.

The next area of my prayer is our church, our city, our region, our country, and then everything that God has placed on my heart: Iran. You can say it's like rings on the water, which starts with me and my family and ends with the world.

Then I am open to whatever God puts on my heart to pray for. I finish up by just thanking him and praising him. Sometimes I sing in the Spirit (more about the Holy Spirit in another subject).

At this point I feel so refreshed by God and His presence. About one hour or more has passed. Now I am ready to face the different things of the day with his presence in my life. In no way, this is something that I have to do to feel that God loves me. But I want to pray, because I love him so much that I don't want anything else than spend time before his face.

When you are newly saved it might feel impossible to pray for an hour. And God does not require that. Start where you are. In the beginning you might start with ten minutes. Good, do that. God sees your honest heart. Don't forget that! It's not what you do that counts, but *who you are*. You are something; God's beloved child.

You will grow in your prayerlife when you pray. To develop a strong prayerlife you cannot only have a knowledge in theory, you will learn by putting it into practice.

Psalm 42:1-2

- 1. As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God.*
- 2. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*

Corporate prayer

If you have a possibility to meet other Christians and pray together, this is a great strength.

Mt. 18:19

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

Agree on a prayer request. Pray together until you feel the victory.

Encourage one another, give testimonies of answers of prayer.

(More in another course about housechurch meetings.)

4. Praying without ceasing

In Luke 11:5-13 and Luke 18:1-8, Jesus shares a great secret to answers of prayer. It's about our attitude that we should have, to see our families, our cities and our countries be changed. It's about praying without ceasing (not giving up).

Luk. 11:5-13

5. And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

6. for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

7. and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'?

8. I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

9. *So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*
10. *For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*
11. *If a son asks for bread, from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?*
12. *Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?*
13. *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

Let's study more closely what Jesus is saying:

1. First, the man who is asking for bread is a friend to the one who has the bread. We cannot come before God as a stranger. He is our covenant partner (see the bloodcovenant). He is our Father and he is anxious to give us everything that we need.

2. Secondly, we are not only asking bread for ourselves. The man Jesus is using as an example, got a visitor in the middle of the night and had nothing to offer. In the Middle-East people are so hospitable that they cannot think not to give anybody some food, regardless of what time it is. In our daily life we meet people who are hungry for more of God. It might be for salvation or deliverance of drugs. You might meet people in deep poverty and misery, or they might be very sick etc.

We have nothing in ourselves to give them. We need "the bread" from God.

3. Thirdly, the time is late. All shops are closed. There is no other place where these hungry people can go to get help, salvation, healing and deliverance.

Only we as God's disciples have the ability to meet the needs in this dying world.

If not, who will? Humans have tried in different ways. Some have thought that other gods are the solution. But very soon they have realized that it's not the truth. Only Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

If we are not doing it - who will? If not now - when? The hour is late.

4. Fourthly, you maybe feel that the door to God is closed, but it can be opened. We know that when we are praying God will open it. Even if the door seems to be closed right now, you have to believe that God who is behind the door will open, if you don't give up and don't stop to pray.

5. Finally, an attitude of intensive desire needs to be developed in a person to persevere in prayer. The man who asked for three bread was afraid of losing his honor. Then it would be better to be dead. In the Middle-East they say that they lose their face. When you lose your face you lose your honor. Therefore the man was very desperate. God wants us to have this desperate attitude. God appreciates that. He wants our attitude to be that we refuse anything else than to get what we need to be able to give to a hungry world.

Don't accept failures, poverty or Islamic oppression. Knock on heaven's door, cry to God and he will give you what you ask for.

Luk. 18:1-8

1. *Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,*
2. *saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.*

3. *Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'*
4. *And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,*
5. *yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"*
6. *The Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.*
7. *And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?*
8. *I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*

5. More about prayer

We will close this subject with some bible scriptures about prayer and some short comments to those.

John 14:12-14

12. *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.*
13. *And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*
14. *If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*

Jesus always means what he says, otherwise he would not say it. This verse has incredible promises. Receive it in faith, pray boldly and you will have it.

Mark. 11:22-25

22. *So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.*
23. *For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.*
24. *Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*
25. *And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."*

Mountain stands for an impossible situation. To say, is to speak to the problem. In prayer you can command "the mountain" (the problem) to be cast into the sea, at the same time you believe it. (Faith has entered your heart by fellowshiping with God and by reading his word).

Notice in verse 24 that we first believe before we see it manifested. That is faith. When we have prayed in faith and cast the problem in the sea, we know that we have it, even though it's not yet manifested. But it's already ours. It's like you have ordered something that later will be delivered. You have it, but not yet in your hand. Therefore praise and thank God for the answer of prayer before you have seen it manifested.

This is the prayer of faith.

Jer. 29:11-13

11. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

12. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

13. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Phil. 4:6-8

6. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7. and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things.

God tells us not to be anxious. It's one thing to have problems, but we shouldn't become anxious for our problems.

What should we do then with our problems? (Regarding health, economy, the regime etc)

Tell God about them. "Yes, but he already knows?", you might say. Of course he does. But he wants us to ask for a change, because God doesn't just walk into our daily life without asking in the first place. He wants to know what you want. If we are not praying, we will not see a change. And you are the one that ought to pray. God hears your prayer as much as mine or somebody else that is praying.

You pray by supplication and prayer. Then you give thanks that God has heard your prayer. Then the wonderful takes place, that even though the problem is not visibly gone, you can in faith receive peace in your heart. You are now not anymore looking at the problem, but have your focus and your thoughts on Jesus and walk in peace instead of in anxiety. After a while you will see that the problem is not there anymore.

Pray for your government

1 Tim 2:1-4

1. Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,

2. for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

4. who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Pray for your government, even if it's not a good one. When Paul wrote this, all the confessing Christians were persecuted by the roman government. Pray like it says, that a change will come so that you may live a quiet and peaceable life.

Mt. 5:44

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

Let God deal with those who harm you. Pray for them and let God be the judge. We are not called to revenge, that we leave to God. How is it possible to love those who are our enemies, you might think? Through God's love you can pray that he will help you to forgive those who hurt you. He will give you a heart of love to those who don't deserve it. When Jesus hung on the cross, he cried: "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.*"

Luk. 23:33-34

33. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

34. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

Joh. 3:17-21

17. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

21. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

Fil. 4-7

4. I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers,

5. hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,

6. that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7. For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

James 1:5-8

5. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

7. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

8. he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

1 John 5:13-15

13. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

14. Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Prayer

There is so much more to say about prayer. But we will in grade two and three go through more things about prayer.

If you want, you can send questions about prayer or other subjects through our website and we will try to answer them.

If you want, you can answer these questions and e-mail the answers to us through our website: www.nejat4u.com/english

We will then correct the exam and then send you the result by e-mail.

When you have made all the subjects in the bible school you are able to get a certificate which shows that you have completed the course, and done the different tests.

Greetings,

Your Pastor and friend.

Exam

1. Prayer is first of all fellowship with God. Yes No
2. How many years did it take for pastor Yonggi Cho to see the church grow from a handful of believers to about 700 000?
- A. 42 years
B. 65 years
C. 46 years
3. Where can you find the following quote from the Bible? *“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and heal their land.”*
- A. 1 Tim. 2:1-4
B. 2 Chron. 7:14
C. 2 Chron 14:7
4. Is it possible to pray to God and get answers when you are riding a bike?
- Yes No
5. Where can you find the following quote from the Bible? *“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*
- A. Luk. 11:9-10
B. Luk.18:7
C. 1 John 5:13-15
6. Should we love our enemies and pray for them? Yes No
7. Does God want to answer all prayers? Yes No