



CHRIST'S COMMISSION FELLOWSHIP

Los Angeles

Dgroup Discussion Guide
August 17, 2014

Knowing God through Prayer

Word:

Jeremiah 33:1-3

While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him a second time: ²“This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it—the LORD is his name: ³‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’

What is prayer?

Prayer is simply talking to God. No flair. No technicalities. No special formulas. Just talking. We have been confined to a preset formulated prayers, to a set of do's and don'ts when it comes to praying. But prayer is actually just talking to God. . . nothing else. However it does not stop there – Prayer is also listening to what God is telling you to do.

Prayer is conversation with God; the intercourse of the soul with God, not in contemplation or meditation, but in direct address to him. Prayer may be oral or mental, occasional or constant, ejaculatory or formal. It is a “beseeching the Lord” (Ex 32:11); “pouring out the soul before the Lord” (1Sam 1:15); “praying and crying to heaven” (2 Chr 32:20); “seeking unto God and making supplication” (Job 8:5); “drawing near to God” (Ps 73:28); “bowing the knees” (Eph 3:14). Prayer presupposes a belief in the personality of God, His ability and willingness to communicate with us, His personal control of all things, and of all His creatures and all their actions.

To simplify: Prayer is a conversation with God – I speak to Him and He speaks to me.

So how does God talk to us? God can talk to us in three ways:

1. Through the Bible
2. Through godly people – your discipleship group
3. Through events and circumstances
-although we are free to make our choices, we can escape the consequences of our godly choices.

Jeremiah 33:1-3 says ***While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him a second time: ²“This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it—the LORD is his name: ³‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’***

God spoke to Jeremiah and He commanded him to bring a message to the king. Jeremiah just wanted to obey God but because of this he was arrested. And then the Lord spoke to Jeremiah a second time and God tells Jeremiah “*call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*” This shows us that prayer is ordained. The beauty of prayer is that when we converse with God, He has promised to answer.

Abraham was called by God, was asked to leave his home and was promised a son and that he would be the father of a great nation. Abraham obeyed not because he saw the immediate fruits of God's promises but because he was in constant conversation with God that his faith grew. It was in this constant conversation with God that Abraham knew more and more of God and his faith grew deeper. As his faith was tested, it was strengthened. He remained focus on God, followed where God led him and trusted in God's faithfulness. Even when God asked him to sacrifice his son, Abraham did not question but continued to obey. It was by faith that Abraham knew that God would fulfill His promises through Isaac. Hebrews 11:1 defines **faith** as “***now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.***” When you see things happening then that is no longer faith, faith is believing in the things you have not yet seen. We have been constantly encouraged to walk by faith and not by sight. Unfortunately our first

impulse is to be proud and we would rather not ask. Other times we just go ahead with our plans without waiting for God's answer and just tell God to bless our plans.

Prayer is the antidote of uncertainty. When we are unsure of what is happening in our lives, unsure of what tomorrow brings. . . instead of worrying, just pray.

Jeremiah 29:4-13 ***"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."*** ⁸Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ***"Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. ⁹They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD.*** ¹⁰This is what the LORD says: ***"When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹²Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart"***

God was commanding the Israelites to pray for Babylon and for its welfare. This was a command that the Israelites did not immediately understand -- the Babylonians were their enemies, they had taken the Israelites captive and yet God was telling them to pray to the Lord for Babylon. Often when placed in a similar situation, we tend to complain and not trust God in His plans for us. God had also warned them about the false prophets who have come to cause doubt and stir confusion. . . but God's instructions to them was to settle down in Babylon and multiply. He promised that after 70 years He will return them to the Promised Land. This was God's promise to them --- God is continuously at work. He is always in control. All we have to do is to talk to Him, converse with Him, and listen to Him.

This is God's promise to us even today -- that if we seek Him and call upon Him, He will answer. He only asks that we ***Be still and Know that He is God*** (Ps 46:10). The only way for us to be still is to come to God in prayer.

What are the benefits of prayer?

1. Prayer brings PEACE.

Philippians 4:4-7 ***Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

2. Prayer brings PROVISION.

Matthew 6: 9-13 ***"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.¹⁰ 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.¹¹ 'Give us this day our daily bread.¹² 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]"***

God is commanding us to pray for our provision. . . He tells us to pray for our daily bread, not monthly or yearly. He wants us to depend on Him daily.

3. Prayer brings PROTECTION.

Ephesians 6:13-19 ***"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for***

all the Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel"

When we came to Jesus Christ, we also enlisted in His army. This is the armor of God for our protection against the world and the glue to this is PRAYER.

Prayer is conversing with God. . . all we have to do is talk to God and His promise is that He will reveal to us great and mighty things, things that we do not yet know. When we pray, God replies. . . When God replies what then do we do? Whatever the answer is – whether it is a Yes, No, or wait. . . this is the testing of our faith. How do we respond to God's answer to our prayer constantly reminding ourselves that we have a BIG God and even though our faith is small it doesn't matter – let us continue to obey in faith. And as we obey, our faith is growing. . . and we draw closer to God.

There are emergency bible numbers that we can dial when we are at a loss. . . the most important of these is John 3:16 which is God's declaration of love for us.

Even before we decide to call upon God, he already reached out to us in love. . . declaring His love for us by giving up His only Son to be payment for our sins. It is through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that we are able to call out to the Father every time we need to. It is through Jesus that we can call God our Father. . . and only through Jesus that we can find our way home to Him.

Works: Journaling task

1. How is your prayer life? Have you really spent time with God in conversation – or has it been a monologue?
2. When was the last time that we really spent time with God and listened to His message to us?
3. During the times that we spend time with God in prayer – what are we saying? What are the reasons why we pray?
4. When was the last time we spent time in prayer just thanking God for His love and for Jesus?

EMERGENCY BIBLE PHONE NUMBERS

When in sorrow call John 14
When men fail you call Psalm 27
If you want to be fruitful call John 15
When you have sinned call Psalm 51
When you worry call Matthew 6:19-34
When you are in danger call Psalm 91
When God seems far away call Psalm 139
When your faith needs stirring call Hebrews 11
When you are lonely and fearful call Psalm 23
When you grow bitter and critical call I Corinthians 13
For Paul's secret to happiness call Colossians 3:12-17
For understanding Christianity call II Corinthians 5:15-19
When you feel down and out call Romans 8:31
When you want peace and rest call Matthew 11:25-30
When the world seems bigger than God call Psalm 90
When you want Christian assurance call Romans 8:1-30
When you leave home for labor or travel call Psalm 121
When your prayers grow narrow or selfish call Psalm 67
For a great invention/ opportunity call Isaiah 55
When you want courage for a task call Joshua 1
For how to get along with fellow men call Romans 12
When you think of investments & returns call Mark 10
If you are depressed call Psalm 27
If your pocketbook is empty call Psalm 37
If you are losing confidence in people call I Corinthians 13
If people seem unkind call John 15
If discouraged about your work call Psalm 126
If you find the world growing small and yourself great call Psalm 19
For dealing with fear call Psalm 34:7
For security call Psalm 121:3
For assurance call Mark 8:35
For reassurance call Psalm 145:18

When you want salvation:

Call John 3:16-17

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

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

Emergency numbers may be dialed direct. No operator assistance is necessary.

All lines to Heaven are open 24 hours a day!

Feed your faith and doubt will starve.