



CHRIST'S COMMISSION FELLOWSHIP

Los Angeles

Dgroup Discussion Guide
August 24, 2014

Knowing God through Prayer part 2

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.’*

Prayer is a conversation between God and us. . . and if we converse God, and we are reminded in Joshua 21:45 “**not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.**” Unlike us, God keeps His promises.

Why should I pray?

Psalms 139:1-6 “*You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.* ³ *You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.* ⁴ *Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.* ⁵ *You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.* ⁶ *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”* God knows everything, even before we ask he already knows what we are praying for – Why then should we pray?

Prayer is for our benefit. It is an acknowledgement of our dependence on God. We go to God in prayer so that He will reveal to us the things we need to know.

Prayer is commanded. 1 Timothy 2:8 says “**Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.**” This is our God. Unlike dictators or autocrats will simply tell you what to do but the God we serve encourages us *Speak to Me, talk to Me.* . . . and how do we do this? Through prayer.

We pray in different positions, but God is not concerned with the position of our body. . . He is more concerned with the position of our hearts. In Exodus 17, we see the story of Israel’s battle with Amalek. Moses told Joshua that he will be stationed on the hill as they fought. When Moses hands were raised, Israel prevailed but when his hands were down Amalek prevailed. So Aaron and Hur supported his hands so that they were raised until sunset and the Israelites won the battle.

We too, need other peoples support when we pray. This is the reason why we pray for each other and with each other. It is very encouraging to us when we know that others are praying with us. Luke 18:1 says “**Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.**” In whatever situation we may be in and we are starting to struggle and lose hope – we must pray even harder so that we do not give up. God is not yet done and has not revealed all His plans to us. Always keep in mind that our God is big, bigger than any problem. He knows all things, sees all things.

Jesus also tells us through Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 “**Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.**” It is a reminder that in everything – whether we have answered prayers, whether our prayers are not answered, or whether we have problems. . . we must always rejoice. This

commandment is given because God knows that we have difficulty to be constant in our prayers, in giving thanks and rejoicing. The only way that we can remain constant in our rejoicing, the only way we can pray unceasingly and the only way we can continually give thanks is when we have a deep vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Without a personal relationship with Jesus Christ we cannot even begin to imagine what it would feel like to rejoice in everything and to be thankful in all circumstances.

Paul echoes this again in Ephesians 6:18 ***“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints”***. When the Bible teaches us to pray at all times – this means that we should pray in every occasion, whether we are happy or sad. We should bring everything to God in prayer. The apostle Paul modeled this. In Colossian 1:9-10 he says ***“for this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*** Not only that, the apostle Paul also asked that the church pray for him. He says in Ephesians 6:19 ***“and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.”***

When we have a personal relationship with Jesus even when we do not know what to pray for the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf. Or if the only thing you can say is “God I’m hurting” , God still listens. Romans 8:26-27 says ***“in the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.”***

Even Jesus himself prayed. In John 17:1-2 it says ***“Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.’”*** Jesus prayed for himself and He prayed for us. In verse 20 it says ***“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may be one; even as You Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”*** This should encourage us to pray. . . even until today Jesus is still praying for you, interceding for your prayers. Jesus is our advocate and continue to do so. . . but we have to communicate with Him, we have to pray.

Many men in history have emphasized the importance of prayer:

Martin Luther *“I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.”*

Martin Luther King Jr *“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”*

George Muller *“It is not enough to begin to pray, nor to pray aright; nor is it enough to continue for a time to pray; but we must pray patiently, believingly, continue in prayer until we obtain an answer”*

These statements merely reiterate what the Bible is teaching us – that without prayer it is impossible for us to exist. Prayer should be as essential to our life as breathing. The Christian life is impossible as it is, we have only the grace of God to depend on. . . but how can we depend on His grace if we do not pray to Him, if we are not in communication with Him. God gave us a very powerful tool to live in the Christian life – it is PRAYER. To live without praying is like living without breathing.

In Genesis 32, we see the story of Jacob wrestling with God. Jacob was in prayer because he was going to home and was about to meet his brother Esau. That night Jacob was wrestling with God and would not let go until he received God’s blessing. . . and so from then on his name was changed from Jacob, which meant supplanter to Israel which means wrestled with God. Likewise when we begin to pray, to commune with us we can expect that change is bound to happen.

In Daniel 9:20 -23, we are given a glimpse as to God’s timing when He answers our prayers. Daniel was praying, he was confessing his sins and the sins of the people . . . and in verse 23 it says ***at the beginning of your supplications***. The answer to Daniel’s prayer was sent at the beginning of his prayer. This should serve as an encouragement to us – before

we even say our Amen, God has already sent his answer. The only way we will know the great and deep mysteries of God is if we pray.

When we pray, we should BOW.

B – Believe in Faith

James 1:6-8 *“But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”*

Much like Abraham, we must pray and believe in faith. And in his discourses with God, his faith grew. James also says **“You do not have because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”** So if you are praying for something, make sure that your motives are pure and godly.

O – Obey Immediately

Exodus 14: 15-16 *“ then the Lord said to Moses, ‘ why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land.”*

When we pray, we must obey God’s leading immediately. We cannot hesitate and procrastinate, we must rush to do God’s bidding with full confidence and believing in faith.

W – Will of God, not Ours

1 John 5:14-15 *“ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”*

When we pray we should also be ready to surrender to God’s will and not insist on our will. Entrusting to Him knowing and believing that His has great plans for us. Let us not fall prey to the temptation to put God in a box and forcing our choices as part of His plans for us.

Our best position when we pray . . . we should BOW.

Works: Journaling task

When we pray – do we BOW? What is our attitude when we come to God in prayer? What is the condition of our heart? Are we surrendered to Him? Do we come to commune with Him? Or do we end up in a monologue?