

# 1997-1998 Women's Bible Study Study Guide on Prayer

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Many ideas and questions were taken from:

Discovering How to Pray by Hope MacDonald

Outline for Lessons on Prayer, a syllabus by Professor H. Hanko

The Secret of Communion with God by Matthew Henry

Becoming a Woman of Prayer by Cynthia Heald.

## LEARNING TO PRAY

1. What is your definition of prayer?
2. Why do we need to pray? Give several reasons, not benefits, why we should pray. Psalm 50:14-15, Psalm 116: 12-19, I Thessalonians 5:16-18, Luke 11:9-13  
Matthew 7:7-8, Psalm 27:8, Psalm 25:14
3. What are some benefits of prayer?
4. Why is it often difficult for us to pray? Romans 8:26-27, Ephesians 6:10-12
5. Who or what keeps you from praying?
6. What is the only way you will ever learn to pray?
7. Can prayer make difference in the life of the one who prays?  
Psalm 118:5-6    Luke 11:13    Daniel 9:20-23  
Psalm 138: 3    Joel 2:32    James 1:2-6  
Lam. 3:57    I John 1:9    Philippians 4:6-8
8. Can prayer make a difference in the lives of those for whom you pray?  
II Chronicles 7:14    Philippians 1:9-11    I Thessalonians 3:10-13  
Ephesians 1: 18-19    Colossians 1:9-12    II Thessalonians 1:11-12  
Ephesians 3:14-21    II Timothy 1:3    II Thessalonians 2:16-17  
Hebrew 13: 20-21
9. Can prayer make a difference in the physical world?  
I Chronicles 4:10    Matthew 6:11    James 5:13-18  
Psalm 65:2,5    Proverbs 30:7-9    Acts 16: 25-26
10. Can prayer make a difference in God's work of redemption?  
Matthew 6:10    Acts 1:13-14    Matthew 9:36-38  
John 17:9-11,15-21    Ephesians 6:19-20    Revelation 3:20-21  
Colossians 4:2-6
11. Q & A 116 in the Heidelberg Catechism speaks of the necessity of prayer. Can a person be a Christian and not pray? Can a person not pray and be saved? Can a non-believer truly pray?

## TYPES OF PRAYERS – BRIEF AND PRAYERS OF WORSHIP

Brief prayers are those prayers that we say to God in a moment, a quick prayer, a natural turning to God during the day as we relay our feelings, happiness, hurts, and disappointments. It is a constant awareness of the presence of God. Brief prayers are an important part of our Christian life, but we cannot live on them. They must be grounded upon the foundation of our prayers of worship and intercession.

1. What does it mean to pray without ceasing? I Thessalonians 5:17
2. In what ways will God be more accessible for you, moment-by-moment, if you pray brief prayers? Are there more benefits of brief prayers?
3. Are brief prayers insufficient in themselves? Why? What type of prayer should be the foundation of our prayer life?
4. Is the Lord's Prayer considered a brief prayer? Can you find examples of brief prayers in scripture?
5. Do we really pray when we rattle off memorized prayers?

Prayers of Worship are prayers when we spend time alone with God. They involve prayers of meditation, confession, thanksgiving, intercessory, protection, and prayers of faith.

6. The Bible often tells us to "wait on God" in reference to prayers of worship and intercession. Examine the following verses carefully to discover in what areas you should wait on God and how your waiting will effect your walk with God.  
Psalm 62:1   Psalm 27:14   Psalm 25:21   Psalm 40:1-3   Isaiah 40:31  
I Timothy 6:13-16   Hosea 12:6   Acts 1:4

## MAKE TIME TO PRAY

In Mark 1:32-35 we read of Jesus rising up early to pray. If Jesus needed to spend time alone in prayer, how do we possibly think we can get along without it?

1. Why do we pray so little?
2. Is prayerlessness a sin? James 4:17
3. How much time do you spend in prayer each day or week? How much time do you think is necessary to develop a growing relationship with God?
4. What kind of time do we so often give to God? How can we increase this time spent with God?
5. Do you substitute activity for God instead of having a relationship with God in prayer? Luke 10:38-42
6. What was the first priority in the lives of Moses, Daniel, David, and other great people of God? Find texts to show evidence of this.
7. What should your highest calling in life be, according to Hosea 6:6? Why?
8. Is prayer a privilege? If so, who or what makes it a privilege?
9. What motivates you to make anything a part of your life? Matthew 5:6

### HINTS FOR MAKING TIME TO PRAY:

1. Choose the best time for you.
2. Be consistent and set a regular time.
3. Be realistic: start with small amounts of time and gradually increase your prayer time.
4. Measure your objectives...check your calendar after you pray each day or keep a prayer notebook.
5. Set your goals with someone else, if possible, to provide motivation, accountability, and encouragement.

## BE STILL AND KNOW

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

Amid the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, how often do we take time to pray? This does not mean the short prayers uttered before and after meals or even the quickie as we send our children off to school. It does not include our silent prayers that we are thinking about as we enter the freeway on our way to work or as the family is tucked into bed at night. Among the countless hours spent with our families and others, where does God place on the list? Do we spend as much time talking to Him as we do talking to others?

It is important to set our mind on the right track as we spend time communing with our Lord. We should find a place that will allow us to be alone, to be quiet, so we can focus on being with God. A place where God’s Word is readily available, where we can sit or kneel with the Lord. As important as it is that we spend time by ourselves and with others each day, it is more important that we spend time with God, talking with Him, and using the means He has given us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

1. Read Hebrews 9:1-8 and Hebrews 10:19-23 and explain the biblical basis for coming into God’s presence. How can this be used to set our mind right for prayer? What part of the tabernacle are we entering into when we pray?
2. How important is kneeling during prayer? Find some scripture references that speak of various postures during prayer. (Job, Daniel, Ezra contain a few) Does kneeling help us take on a childlike reverence for our Father?
3. Must we close our eyes and fold our hands during prayer?
4. Is it important to pray aloud in our personal devotions? I Samuel 1:13. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?
5. Is it acceptable to use “you and your” instead of “thee and thou” in personal devotions? How about in public?
6. Is it enough to simply read a portion of the Bible and meditate on it? Are there benefits to just sitting still and waiting for God to speak or come to us? Is lighting a candle during prayer a good practice?
7. What does Matthew 6:6 mean when it refers to “thy Father, which is in secret”? Is God waiting for us to enter into our closet? Is it acceptable to pray any place that we choose? Find some scripture passages that relate to this.
8. What may we pray for in our personal devotions? What should we pray for in our personal devotions?

## A PRAYER OF PROTECTION

As you sit down to devote time to God, it is important that you say a prayer of protection that the busyness of the day will not crowd your thoughts and take away your time with God. The devil never works so hard as when you are getting ready to pray. As prayer is one of his strongest enemies, our greatest ally, he will do his best to get us to put it off until tomorrow and not pray, as we ought. If we are not focusing wholly on who we are praying to and what we are praying for, our prayers will not be effective and the devil has won this battle.

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-13, Acts 9:36-43, and Acts 12:1-17. These passages illustrate the impact that people can have with the power of prayer. Isn't it wonderful to find out that someone has been praying for you! What an impact it will be to our children and families when they find out that we have specifically said prayers to God for them!

1. Who do you pray to?
2. Each time you pray, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are intimately involved in your prayer time. Examine the following verses to help further understand their involvement.
  - a. What type of relationship do you have with the Person to whom you pray? What difference will your relationship make when you remember you are praying to your Father? Galatians 4:6 John 16:23 Matthew 6:6-10  
Romans 8:15 2 Chronicles 6:4
  - b. What do these verses tell you about the name of Christ? What do you think it means to pray in Jesus' name? John 16:24,26-27 Romans 8:34  
Ephesians 3:11-12 John 14:13-14
  - c. Do any of us know how to pray, as we ought? In what way does the Holy Spirit help you pray? Do we need to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in prayer or is he automatically there? Romans 8:26-27 Ephesians 2:18  
I Cor. 14:16 Ephesians 6:18 Hebrews 7:23-25 Jude 20,21  
I Cor. 2:9-16
3. Are prayers of protection for ourselves and for others are mentioned in the Lord's Prayer? Can you give references that encourage these types of prayers?

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4. Is it the woman's place to pray a prayer of protection for others?
  
5. Some people believe that it is not the woman's calling to pray in such a way, rather it should be left to the men of the church. What do you think about women's prayer groups or "Mom's in Touch"? Should this be encouraged? Is it biblical?
  
6. Is there a place for prayer chains, prayer rooms, or community prayer meetings?
  
7. In order for us to pray without the interference of the Devil, we must focus our minds on only our Lord. Read Matthew 17:1-8 and Romans 8:15. Are you able to see no one, save Jesus only? What does it mean that we can say "Abba, Father"? Is this one of your goals in your devotions and are you able to cry, Father, my Father?

## PRAYERS OF MEDITATION AND WORSHIP

Psalm 62:5-6 "My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense, I shall not be moved."

An important part in our prayer life must be time for worship and meditation with God. As you prepare your heart and mind to pray you will find the Holy Spirit beginning to work, bringing you the confidence that you are in the presence of the living God. He will fill you with a sense of peace, strength, and reverence, allowing God's love to fill your heart so you can share your thoughts with Him in complete trust. This is what produces a heart full of praise and joy, which is necessary for worship.

1. Look up the definitions of "worship and "meditation" in various Bible dictionaries and in a dictionary and compare the definitions. Is it possible for us to truly worship in our devotion time or is this something that is only done in church on Sunday? Read Judges 7:9-15.
2. The Psalms are full of worship and praise to God. Make a note of several reasons, found in scripture, why God is to be worshipped and meditated upon. Why is He so great and what has He done for you that make Him so worthy?
3. It might be helpful here to list several of God's attributes in your prayer journal. When you pray, you can examine how He expresses these attributes to you. What will happen in your life and in your relationship with the Lord when you begin to pray this way?
4. Why is it so important to pray "Hallowed be thy Name?" Read Jeremiah 9:23-24. What do we say to people who want to worship "My God in my own way?" Is there more than one way to worship God?
5. How is it possible that we come before God with boldness and yet with humbleness and humility? Some people would say that our faith is not great enough to come boldly before God. Ephesians 3:12      Hebrews 4:16  
Hebrews 10:19 I Kings 18:41-46      I Peter 5:6      James 4:10.
6. Does praying in Christ's name have anything to do with coming boldly to God?
7. Read Psalms 134,135,138,145-150. Make a note of some specific area in which David praises God. How will a prayer of worship and meditation help you during the difficult and the easy times in your life?



## THE COVENANT FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

To wait on the Lord...to live a life of desire towards him, delight in him, depend on him and be devoted to him. Taken from The Secret of Communion with God by Matthew Henry.

1. How does God speak to us today?
2. Does God ever speak to us directly?
3. Read Psalm 61:2 and 63:1 and show how these verses speak of prayer as consciously entering into God's presence. Find three more passages that can be interpreted as entering consciously into God's fellowship.
4. Prayer is a conversation between God and his people. In view of this, how important is listening in prayer?
5. When you attentively listen to a person, what do you communicate to them? How do these things relate to your relationship with God?
6. Read John 14:21...What condition must you meet to be able to hear God? How did David, Moses, and Abraham meet this condition?
7. How do we pray and then stop worrying? I Peter 5:6-7, Phil. 4:6-7

## PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

I John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1. Read Psalm 32:1-8, Proverbs 28:13, and Psalm 38:1-6. What do these verses tell you about the consequences of unconfessed sin? What is the result of confession?
2. What should we ask forgiveness for?
3. List some ways that sin has destroyed our relationships (marriage, friendships) and the world around us.
4. How does unconfessed sin effect our relationship with God?
6. During confession, what should your attitude be toward sin? Matthew 4:17. James 4:8-10, 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, Matthew 5:4
7. What is the meaning of "to repent" in your own words?
8. What is the nature of sin according to Romans 6:23 and Galatians 6:7-8? Does the word "death" in Romans 6:23 mean more than just physical death?
9. How should we confess our sins? Is "forgive my sins for Jesus sake Amen" enough?
10. What do the following verses say about the result of confession? Isaiah 43:25, Isaiah 61:10, Isaiah 44:22-23, Philippians 3:13-14
11. Three things happen when we confess our sins to God. We are forgiven, we are comforted, and we are encouraged to "go and sin no more". How do we see this in our everyday lives?
12. When we are forgiven, why is it so important to forgive one another? Colossians 3:13-15, Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 6:12,14 and Matthew 18:21-35

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13. Read Psalm 51. This is the confession David made after his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah.

a. Write out this psalm in your own words.

b. Briefly explain what this psalm teaches you about confession.

13. Add a Confession of Sins page in your prayer journal.

## PRAYERS OF FAITH

Read I Kings 18:21-40

1. One of the requisites of prayer is that we come in faith. This means that we come firmly believing that God will give us that which we ask. In fact, to doubt this makes our prayers unacceptable. What does this say about our prayers?
2. How can faith with humility and boldness be harmonized, especially when we are faced with infertility, terminal illness, lifelong disabilities, or any other situation that seems hopeless?
3. How can we learn to pray according to God's will?
4. How can we pray according to God's will without thinking or telling God how to answer our prayers?
5. When God answers us, how might we see his answer? Has anyone experienced this when making a big decision?
6. How important is God's word when it comes to praying according to God's will?
7. When we pray "Thy will be done", we must watch and wait for signs to lead us on the right path. Have you ever experienced this?
8. Is it always true that we can come boldly to God? Are there times when we hardly dare to come to God in prayer? If so, what is the cause of this hesitancy?
9. Are there any passages in scripture, which address themselves to such fearfulness and hesitancy? What about the parable of the prodigal son? Luke 15:11-32.
10. The prayer of faith is often used for intercessory prayer. Read the following verses carefully and list the specific area of need of which Paul prays for concerning his friends. Ephesians 1:15-19                      2 Corinthians 13:7-9  
Philippians 1:3-6                      Philippians 1:9-14                      Philemon 1:4-7
11. What are the most important areas you can pray for concerning your friends? Explain.
12. Read I Kings 18:21-40 again in the light of Deuteronomy 28:12. Elijah claims a promise when he prays this prayer. What promises do we have that we can claim when we pray in faith? How should we do this?

## GOD'S ANSWERS

Many times we pray to God and expect God to answer ASAP and make it a yes! God answers all our prayers even while we are yet speaking. Isaiah 65:24. The answer might not be our idea of the correct answer. It might be a yes answer, a no answer, a trust answer, or a wait answer. We must learn how to offer prayers to God and believe our sovereign God will answer them in His time.

1. In Mark 11:24, what three things must we do?
2. How does believing God will answer your prayers change your attitude when you pray?
3. Read Philippians 4:6-7. What does Paul teach us in verse 6 about how we are to pray? What does verse 7 say about how God answers?
4. Do you ever doubt that God will answer your prayer? How can we keep the Devil from putting these doubts in our minds?
5. Read Luke 11: 5-13. What does Jesus teach us about our Father?
6. Read the following texts, record the prayer requests, and then record the answers.
  - a. Genesis 24:12-20:
  - b. I Kings 3:3-14:
  - c. John 11:1-6:
  - d. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10:
7. Make an Answered Prayers page in your prayer journal. This will show you how often God does answer prayers without us realizing it!

## PERSEVERING IN PRAYER

We must persevere in prayer as he has commanded us in His word. If God does not immediately answer us, we must examine our prayers and ourselves. Are our prayers according to the requisites of true prayer? Are we walking in sin? Is it truly God's will?

1. Read Luke 18:1-8 and write down Jesus' teaching about prevailing in prayer.
2. Hannah's prayer is a beautiful example of devoted prayer. Read I Samuel 1:1-18 and describe her situation and persistence.
3. It may seem puzzling offering the same request again and again. Why does God want us to keep petitioning Him?
4. What should our attitude be when God does not grant our petitions? Rom. 8:28
5. When God take His time in answering us, how persistent can we be? Are we bringing God's wrath when we pray persistently, as the Israelites complained to Moses for food when God sent only manna? Are we trying to rush God, as Jacob was when he obtained the birthright?

# PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

Read and study Psalm 116

Additional texts: Luke 17:11-16, Acts 27:35, I Thessalonians 5:18, Psalm 50:14-15, Philippians 4:6-7, Ephesians 5:20, Psalm 100:4, Deuteronomy 8:10

1. In Q & A 116 of the Heidelberg Catechism, it says that prayer is the chief part of thankfulness to God. Why is this?
2. How are we to be thankful for all things? (Sickness, loss of a loved one, a family or church member falling into sin)
3. Review Psalm 116:12-13. There are times in our lives that we are so thankful that words cannot express our total thankfulness. How can we express this to God?
4. Why are prayers of thanksgiving important?
5. Can a prayer of praise to God be an expression of thankfulness? How?
6. Can a petition be a prayer of thankfulness? How?
7. What results do we see in our lives from our thanking God?
8. Should we thank God for specific things?
9. What specific things are you thankful for?
10. If we close our prayers with thanking God, how would this help our attitude for that day?
11. Start a Prayer of Thanksgiving page in your Prayer Journal.

## COMMUNAL PRAYERS

1. Families must pray together. Is it wrong for the wife to lead the family devotions? What about children? What should be the content of the family prayers?
2. Read I Peter 3:7b. Husbands and wives should pray regularly together. How could prayers of husbands and wives be hindered?
3. What is the best way to teach our children to pray? What prayers do we teach them?
4. Very often schools require children to pray in the classroom. Is this a good or bad practice? Discuss.
5. What can we say in favor or against silent prayer in the worship service? What should be the content of these prayers? Should non-confessing children pray at this time too?
6. What is our part in congregational prayer? Is it proper to say your own prayer while the minister is leading us into God's Sanctuary while praying for us?
7. How can we make prayers in assemblies (Bible studies, catechism) easy to follow, in order to keep all those present interested?
8. Communal prayers should be of Praise and Thanksgiving...but in meetings, they should be petitions of all those present and suitable to the occasion. Give examples of this.
9. What can be done to alleviate fright and nervousness when leading others in prayer?



## THE LORD'S PATTERN OF PRAYER

I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

Psalm 116:1-2

Jesus answered his disciple's request by giving them a comprehensive pattern of prayer. Read and study Matthew 6:9-15.

1. "Our Father" What do you think is the significance of this opening address?
2. "Which art in heaven" Why do you think it is important that we acknowledge that He is in heaven?
3. "Hallowed be Thy name" Define the word *hallowed* and how it applies to our heavenly Father.
4. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" Rephrase this petition as an expression of your desire to participate in it's fulfillment.
5. "Give us this day our daily bread" What so you think "daily bread" means, and why are we to ask for it one day at a time?
6. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" Why do you think Jesus links God's forgiveness of us with our forgiveness of others? Matthew 6:14-15
7. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" Rewrite this petition in your own words.

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8. “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen” Look back over the preceding phases you have just studied. How does this closing statement sum up the Lord's Prayer?
  
9. This prayer model given by Jesus is brief but profound. How would you summarize the key characteristics or elements of the model that provide a pattern for how God desires us to pray?

This lesson was taken from Becoming A Woman Of Prayer by Cynthia Heald.