

EXERCISE:

Read the four Bible passages below and answer the four related questions.



Acts 1:12-14, Acts 2:42,



Acts 4:23-31



Acts 6:3-6



Acts 8:17, Acts 16:18, Acts 28:8

What do you learn about prayer in the four stories?

Read the stories and write down what you learn about how the disciples pray.

What do you know about the lives of those praying?

What are the results of prayer in these stories?

Acts describes how the apostles continue without the physical presence of Jesus, but with the Holy Spirit.

Do you see a difference in how Jesus prayed and how the apostles prayed?

You will need to take a look at some of the stories from the Gospels.

In which way and to whom is something said in prayer?

Read all the passages through again and write down for yourself how and what is prayed.

To whom are they talking, God, satan or someone else?

Is it difficult for the people to carry our Jesus' commands? If yes, why, if not, why not?

Handwriting practice area with horizontal dotted lines.

Jesus spoke about the importance of prayer, do you want to learn that too?

 *Luke 11:1-13*

1. Is there a word from God for me personally in this text?
2. Is there a promise from the Father for my life?
3. Does Jesus ask me to do anything?
4. Decide to act upon this and ask Jesus to help you with this.

Going deeper

What does Jesus say about prayer and what example does he set?


 *Matt 6:6*

- A) In this text we read the most important aspect about prayer which Jesus demonstrates. We read many times that Jesus also did this. Prayer is having a relationship with God the Father. Relationship means spending time together and sharing your deepest secrets with each other. Talking together, laughing, crying, being quiet. You can do everything with God the Father. He longs for you to open your heart to Him.
- B) We also see that Jesus, in the time which He spent with His father, listened to what He had to say to Him. Jesus mentions this regularly; He does nothing unless the Father first shows Him.

Jesus teaches the disciples that prayer is talking to God and that it is not about external manners.

For example, praying with your eyes open or shut. He says nothing about your position, whether you have to stand or sit or lie or about the place you have to pray.

Jesus shows us that it is about regularly spending time with God and preferably alone, in a quiet place. Jesus too shows us that it is not about some ritual but a living relationship. Just as with someone who you want to get to know personally, you take time and give each other attention.

 *Luke 6:12, 22:39,41*

Difference OT and NT

In the OT we see that the people of Israel were mainly occupied by rituals, amongst others in the temple. We do read that God spoke but this normally happened by means of a prophet. Many prayers were said. Often that was to ask God for something. Especially if they were in need they would cry out to God. Or if they were happy they would thank God.

Jesus demonstrates something different. He shows that God the Father now lives in our hearts by His Spirit and wants to communicate with us, no longer just through the prophets! Jesus shows us that prayer is:

- A) Honouring God the Father, thanking Him and making known our daily needs.



Matt 6:7-14

- B) Personal contact with God the Father. Jesus speaks with the Father, the Father speaks with Jesus.



John 17:20-23

- C) Receiving authority to do what God asks. After Jesus had been with God in prayer, he receives authority. He prays and speaks in a commanding way both to the storm on the lake and when healing the sick or driving out demons.



Mark 2:5, Mark 4:39, Mark 6:40-44, Mark 7:29,30

How do Jesus' disciples pray?



Acts 4:23-31

The disciples know that they have now received authority from the King (Luke 9:1,2). In Acts the disciples do what Jesus commanded them to do. They preach the gospel and heal the sick. They however get arrested, are made captive and are asked to stop preaching the gospel.

In our text it is apparent that they do not take any notice of this. They enter straight into prayer.

- Every part of life is discussed with God the Father
- They pray one in heart
- They use scriptures from the Bible; remind God of His promises
- They know what their task is, who their enemy is and ask for strength to do what is asked of them
- Signs and wonders follow
- They do not ask God to change the situation but for God to lead them in the tough circumstances

Paul's prayer for the believers

What are the most important points of Paul's prayer?



Eph 1:15-22



Eph 2:4-6

When we pray we come in to contact with God the Father. We get to know Him and through this we get to know ourselves better. Sometimes that can be hidden from us; it is like a treasure which has been hidden away. Only when you start spending time with God the Father, when you talk to Him, will you discover the treasure inside yourself.

Example

When I started dating my wife I did not know her that well. I knew what she looked like but by talking to her I started to get to know the person she really is. When we got married and started living in the same house, our communication changed completely and was much deeper. Through our conversations and the time we spent together, things started to surface in me which I had never seen in myself before. It was as if she was bringing out the best in me. That is how it is with God. When we start talking with Him, and He talks with us, the best comes out in us and you will begin to see the things He has placed in you, your inheritance.

EXERCISE:



Consider how you have been thinking about prayer recently. Maybe this is a good moment to look back at everything you have written in your prayer book. Are there certain moments which are very precious to you?



Ask God for the same things Paul prays for the believers in Eph 1:15–22 and Eph 2:4–6. Pray that your heart will be opened to the knowledge of Jesus. Ask the Father if you may see who you are in Jesus. Ask the Father to show you what authority you have been given by God.



Talk together with your mentor about prayer. What have been the special moments? Are there any points you still find difficult when you think about them? Pray together for a fruitful prayer life.

Going deeper 2

What does Jesus find important regarding prayer?





Matt 6:7-15

- 1) It is not about how many words are spoken
- 2) We pray to God the Father
- 3) We revere God's name
 - a. We regularly read that the believers praise God for who He is. In some places in the Bible, songs are sung in which God's name is honoured. This is often called worshipping God.
 - b. Holy means: set apart for God or dedicated to God. Jesus talks about true worship happening through the Spirit and by speaking out the truth about God (John 4:23,24)
 - c. In the churches founded by the apostles they sing a lot about God. People make new songs inspired by the Spirit.
 - d. God longs for your spontaneous worship, even your own made-up songs for Him. It is just as with lovers, they enjoy writing songs or poems for each other in which they talk about their love and say lovely things about each other.
- 4) Your kingdom come and your will be done
 - a. Here we see Jesus' desire emerge. He really wants us to hear God's voice and do His will. Then the Kingdom of God and his righteousness will come. Doing God's will brings peace and joy.
 - b. If you pray you can seek God's will for your life in every single situation. Sometimes you ask for something and you receive a thought straight away, sometimes you hear nothing. Write your question down and keep coming back to God with it, until it becomes clear to you.
 - c. Do not only discover what God thinks about your life but also how you can serve him in his kingdom. What plan does God have for your life? Let your prayer continually be: "Your kingdom come in my life, in my situation!"
- 5) God the Father finds it important to provide us with the basic necessities of life. You can simply ask for these. Everyone needs food and drink. In this prayer you see that this is also important for God.
- 6) Forgiveness is key in your prayer life. Receiving forgiveness and forgiving others is mentioned here by Jesus.
 - a. Jesus links answers to prayer with forgiveness (Matt 6:13-15)

- b. Jesus emphasises unified prayer. If there is unity of heart between people then this will influence the outcome of our prayers. (📖 Matt 18:15–20)
 - c. Jesus tells us that our hearts must be pure. When you pray it is important that you know that you are forgiven by God. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the things for which you need forgiveness. Confess and receive forgiveness (James 5:13–15) (1 Joh 1:7–9)
- 7) Jesus knows that many of us in our old lives made wrong choices. If we live with Jesus, it might be that old temptations from our previous life rear their ugly head. Even the world in which we live as Christians is full of temptations. In areas such as pride, money, power, sex, knowledge, hobbies and so on, we can be tempted to make choices which are not good for us. We can choose outside of God's will. Jesus knows this and teaches us to pray that we will not be led into temptation and thereby caught in the grip of the evil one.
- a. Jesus taught the disciples to use the name of Jesus when being tempted or tried. We also know that we can overcome the enemy by believing in the power of Jesus' blood. (Rev 12:11)
 - b. When we pray in the name of Jesus, we connect ourselves with the power which was in Jesus. The power of His spirit is in us and makes us more than conquerors.

EXERCISE:

 Try to regularly make time to go through the 7 points of prayer. Take time to read each point and try to pray it through. Be creative.
Try to learn these points as a model for your prayer times.

 Discuss with your mentor how the prayer times are going. Tell them what is going well and where you have difficulties.