**Basic Prayer Theology**

1. **Introduction**

* Prayer is developing friendship with God, learning to keep company with him on a day to day basis (abiding and remaining in him).
* Prayer is the conversational part of the most important love relationship in our lives
* Prayer is intimacy with God that leads to the Fulfillment of his Purposes accomplished by his Power and For His Glory
* Prayer is dependence on God, John 15:5
* Intercessory Prayer: Standing in the gap on behalf of God’s purposes for people, situations and places on earth. When we pray according to God’s will and for his renown his activity increases on the earth. He is always responding.
* Prayer doesn’t change God’s will, but it does accelerate it. In prayer we remind God of his promises and ask with the answer in mind.

John 15:7–8 (ESV), “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

I John 5:14-15, “And this is the confidence that we have toward 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 that we have asked of him.”

* Primary motivation behind whey we pray is that He is ‘Worthy to Be Sought’ Rev. 5:8-9

1. **Prayer culture of the Bible**

* The Bible is a prayer book.
* There are many commands to pray in Scripture (250approx.)
* Much of Scripture is prayer-direct address to God (10percent approx.)
* The tabernacle and temple were ‘houses of prayer’
* Sacrifices were enacted ‘prayers’
* Priests were intercessors (standing in the gap)
* The lives of the OT saints were saturated with prayer

Enoch, Job, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Daniel, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.

* Psalms were Israel’s Prayer Book

Intercessory Prayer “Standing in the gap… pleading for mercy,” Ezekiel 22:30, Daniel 9, Zechariah 12:10, Isaiah 64:1-4, Numbers 14:13-19, 25:10-13, Exodus 33 – Show us Your Glory

Ezekiel 22:30 (ESV), “And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and **stand in the breach** before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.”

Jeremiah 29:7 (ESV), “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and **pray** to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

Daniel 6:10 (ESV), “When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.”

Isaiah 62:6–7 (ESV), “On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, 7 and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth.

1. **NT Culture of Prayer**

* Jesus, above all modeled and taught prayer

-18 references to Jesus praying

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” Mark 1:35

“Jesus often withdrew to lonely places prayed” Luke 5:16

“Jesus went out into hills to pray, and spent the night praying to God.” Luke 6:12

“Because Jesus ever lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” Heb. 7:24-25

-8 recorded prayers of Jesus

“At various occasions in his life; in the desert, for little children, feeding the 5000, return of the 72, raising of Lazarus, the last evening with his disciples, Gethsemane, on the cross…”

-14 teachings of Jesus on prayer:

“persistence in prayer, agreement in prayer, faith in prayer, humility in prayer, prayer and obedience, forgiveness a pre-requisite, prayer for harvesters, prayer for enemies, showy prayers condemned, the temple, ‘a house of prayer’ prayer needed to cast out demons, prayer ‘in his name’ promises to ask-ers”

* Jesus called his Father’s House(temple) to be a ‘house of prayer for all nations’ Isa. 56:7, Matthew 21:12-13. He did not say a house of teaching, house of programs, but a house of prayer - place of communion, and fellowship with the Triune God of Grace.
* Jesus gave us his model for Prayer - Reverence (Worship) – Father’s Name, Response (His Kingdom Come and Will be Done), Relational and Resource Needs (Be our provider and forgiveness with others), and Readiness (ready for battle – temptation, and devil)
* **Jesus’ last talks on prayer**

God’s work and activity is released as we ask Him to do his work! Pray is not just for the work, it is the work!

Ask - Jesus asks us to ask him or his Father

Right Way to Ask – In his Name

Assurance of our Ask – I will do it!

John 14:12-14, “Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it!”

John 15:7-8, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

John 15:16 John 15:16 (ESV), “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”

John 16:23–24 (ESV), “In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

* **Power of Agreeing Prayer – Keys of the Kingdom**

Matthew 18:18–19 (ESV), “Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven”

* **Jesus connected prayer with mission**. Matthew 9:35-38, Luke 10:2

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

* **Jesus connected night and day prayer with releasing justice**

“Men should always pray and not loose heart….and will not God give justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night” (Luke 18:1-8).

1. **The Prayer Culture of the New Testament Church**

* Prayer was a key factor in their explosive growth. The Personal lives and meetings of NT were saturated with prayer (Acts 1:13, 1:24-25, 2:42, 3:1, 4:24-31, 6:4, 7:59-60, 8:15, 17, 9:4-6, 9:40, 10:2-4, 9, 31, 12:5, 12, 13:3, 14:23, 16:13, 16, 16:25, 20:36, 27:35, 28:8, 2 Tim 2:1-4)
* The NT church was **Devoted** to prayer.

6x ‘devoted’ proskartereo/proskarterein is used (3 patterns in Acts, and 3 commands in epistles, literally means diligently occupied with, to persist in, or ‘constantly’

Jeremias writes, “When Paul says that he prays, “Continually,” “without ceasing”, “day and night” and “always,” we are not to think of uninterrupted praying but of his observance of the regular hours of prayer. The phrase “to be constant or devoted instant in prayer” (proskarterein, Rom. 12:12, and Col. 4:2) is to be understood in a similar way, for proskarterein here means “faithfully to observe a rite” (as in Acts 1:14, 2:46, 6:4).[[1]](#footnote-1)

-Upper Room, “these…were all continually **devoting** themselves to prayer.” Acts 1:14

-Early Church “**devoted** themselves…to prayer” Acts 2:42 It was one of the four marks of the Jerusalem church(apostles teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers)

-Leaders/Elders “**devoted**’ themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word” Acts 6:4

-Roman Christians commanded to be ‘**devoted** to prayer” Romans 12:12

“**Devote** yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful” Col. 4:2

-Ephesian believers to ‘pray **devotedly** for all the saints” Eph. 6:18

* Paul called the church to pray FIRST (priority, time, resources) in the gathered assembly and it is considered good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior.

“**First of all, then**, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions of authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior” (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

* NT believers heard God speak to them through prayer. Acts 10:2-4, 9, 31, Acts 13:2-3
* In two places prayer was associated with fasting in Acts. Acts 13:2-3, 14:23
* Prayer is linked to miracles in the book of Acts. Acts 9:36-43, 12; 16, 28:8
* Praying the Word of God (sword of the Spirit) is our great weapon in spiritual warfare.

“take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” (Eph. 6:17-18).

* Desperate Prayer often brings breakthrough – Deomai (Acts 4:29-31, Matthew 9:38, Romans 8:26-27)

“Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:26-27).

* The Apostle Paul prayed in his personal life as our example and challenged us, “follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ”

-He was constantly in prayer (12 direct passages)

-He prayed faithfully for his congregations (11 passages, 30 verses) I Th. 5:23, Eph. 3:14-19, Phil. 1:3, 4, 9-11, Col. 1:9-11, Eph. 1:17-19, etc.

-He humbly depended on the prayers of others (6x’s) Rom. 15:30-31

**Prayer Evangelism and Societal Transformation**

* God’s desire that all be saved, I Tim. 2:1-5, Revelation 5:8-9
* Psalm 2, “Father Give your Son the nations as his inheritance”
* Pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send forth laborers into the harvest fields. Matt. 9:35-39
* Pray for the Welfare of the City, Jeremiah 29:7, 2 Chron 7:14-15, and Luke 18:1-8, 1 Timoth 2:1-2
* As they prayed together, the Lord shook a building with the power of prayer, shook believers with the power of the Spirit, and shook a city with the power of the gospel! Acts 4:29-31

**Keys to Growing in Prayer**

* **Pray the Bible Out loud to God Everyday (Scripture-fed Prayer)**

*- Praying the Word, Jason Hubbard - Experiencing Life and Power through Biblical Meditation, Dennis Fuqua - Fifty-Seven Words that Change the World, Darrell Johnson - Acts 6:4 Fellowship – Dan Henderson - Change the World School of Prayer, Dick Eastman*

* **Join a weekly prayer time: Best way to learn how to pray is to pray consistently with others**

1. Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*(Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), pg. 71 78 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)