Prayer

Intro: Prayer is a wonderful subject. This is a subject that is of supreme importance, that can be discussed from many aspects. In this lesson I want us to notice a few things about prayer. One thing we will not discuss, just mention, is the importance and need of prayer. 1 Thes. 5:17 “Pray without ceasing.” I believe that all realize that need.

I. TO WHOM AND THROUGH WHOM WE PRAY
   A. We are to direct our prayers to the Father.
      1. We are instructed to pray to the Father.
         a. John 15:16 “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”
         b. Eph. 5:20 “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”
         c. Col. 3:17 “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
         d. Mat. 6:9 “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”
      2. We are instructed not to pray to Jesus.
         a. John 16:23 “And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.”
         b. We often hear people praying to Jesus, especially at the prayers for the Lord’s Supper.
   B. We are to pray through Christ.
      1. John 16:23-24 “And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”
      2. John 15:16 “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”
      3. 1 Tim. 2:5 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”
      4. We need to mention the fact that our prayers are in the name of Christ.

II. PURPOSE OF PRAYER
   A. Give praise to God.
      1. Mat. 6:9 “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”
      2. Rom. 15:9-11 “And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. 10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. 11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.”
      3. When praying we are to glorify and praise the name of God.
   B. Give thanksgiving to God
      1. Eph. 5:20 “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”
      2. Col. 3:17 “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
C. Make petitions to God
1. Mat. 7:7-11 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 7For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 8Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 9Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 10If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”
2. John 15:7 “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”
3. Phi. 4:6 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

D. Make intercession for others
1. 1 Tim. 2:1-2 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”
2. This would include:
   a. Other Christians; Eph. 6:18 “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”
   b. Gospel preachers; Acts 4:29 “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,”
   c. Sinners to accept the Gospel; Rom. 10:1 “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”
   d. The sick and poor; Jam. 5:14-15 “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”
   e. Our enemies; Mat. 5:44 “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”
   f. Rulers; 1 Tim. 2:1-2 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”
   g. All men; 1 Tim. 2:1 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;”

E. Make confession to God
1. This is dependant upon our repentance.
2. Acts 8:22 “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”
3. 1 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.”
4. We cannot confess sins that are in the future.

III. For What Are We To Pray
A. Anything
1. Food; Mat. 6:11 “Give us this day our daily bread.”
2. physical infirmities; 2 Cor. 12:7-9 “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh,
the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 7For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 8And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

3. **Wisdom; Jam. 1:5** “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

4. For whatever we want
   a. **Mark 11:24** “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”
   b. **John 14:13-14** “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”
   c. **1 John 5:14** “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:”

B. **We can ask amiss; Jam. 4:3** “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”
   1. What is it to ask amiss?
   2. To consume upon our pleasures.
   3. Anything that will be used for selfish purposes.
   4. We can pray for anything and everything if the purpose or motive is to better do the will of God, if it is not for that purpose then it is asking amiss.

C. **For God’s will to be done.**
   1. **Mat. 26:39** “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”
   2. **1 John 5:14** “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:”

IV. **PRACTICAL MATTERS REGARDING PUBLIC PRAYERS.**
A. **Learn to speak up**
   1. Enunciate your words.
   2. Take your time, don’t talk to fast.
   3. **1 Cor. 14:15-16** “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 16Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?”

B. **Be brief.**
   1. You do not have to talk all day long.
   2. “Prayer should edify, not petrify.”
   3. “Prayer’s to be immortal does not have to be eternal.
   4. Yet, say what needs to be said.

C. **Do not’s.**
   1. Make announcements
      a. We pray to God, He knows, not man.
      b. Leave announcements for the announcements.
2. Preach a sermon.
   a. Again we pray to God not man.
   b. Leave sermonizing for the preacher.

3. Tell someone off.
   a. It is not the time or place.
   b. If you have an ought against your brother then go to him personally.

4. Pray for personal matters.
   a. Public prayers should be kept public, reserve private matters for private prayers.
   b. Do not mean do not be specific.

D. Be sincere.

Conclusion: It is my desire that these few points will help us all in our prayer life, both public and private. Let us go from here and “Pray without ceasing” (1 The. 5:17).