

pray first



Northwoods Family,

John Wesley (1703-1791) was a great man of God who was used to bring revival to America and to plant hundreds of churches. He said, **“God does nothing but in answer to prayer.”** It’s an awesome thought that, I believe, accurately captures what the Bible teaches about the power and importance of prayer, along with the place it should occupy in our lives.

Thus, I want to intentionally call us in these days to become a people of prayer. Let’s adopt as our rally cry in every situation: **“Pray First.”** No matter what is going on around us, whether good or bad, let’s determine to pray before we act. Many times people act first and then when the situation doesn’t turn out as they had hoped, they want God to bail them out. But prayer should be our first response, not our last resort.

However, understanding the importance and necessity of prayer is not enough. In order for it to become a part of our lives, it needs to become something we look forward to doing. I’m convinced most people don’t enjoy prayer because they have never been taught how to pray. That’s where this simple prayer journal can help. It is designed not only to offer you some simple guidance in developing your prayer life, but also to bring joy into your time with God. When you discover the beauty of daily conversation with Him, you’ll experience a closer walk with God and a deeper sense of His daily presence in your life.

Once you learn how to pray, prayer will become a natural part of your everyday life. And then...

- Before the day begins—
- Before you go to bed—
- Before you go to work or school—
- Before you send that text—
- Before you eat, drive or travel—
- When bad things happen—
- Before bad things happen—
- In every situation—PRAY FIRST!

And you’ll likely discover that prayer changes everything!



Pastor Cal Rychener

A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER

How do we make prayer a part of our everyday life? We can learn from three things that Jesus did...

*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)*

A CERTAIN TIME

Jesus got up very early in the morning to spend time with His Heavenly Father. In order for prayer to work, we should do the same. Make a daily appointment with God and keep it.

A CERTAIN PLACE

Jesus had a prayer place. Your prayer place needs to be an undistracted environment where you can pray out loud and perhaps have some worship music playing in the background.

A CERTAIN PLAN

Go into your prayer time with a plan. If it changes that's fine. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave His disciples a prayer outline. We call it the Lord's Prayer. This outline along with several other tools are available in this booklet.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray. . ." (Luke 11:1)

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" (Matthew 6:9-13)

1. CONNECT WITH GOD RELATIONALLY:

"Our Father in heaven..."

God loves for us to call Him our Father. Establish your intimate relationship with Him and thank Him for the relationship you have with Him.

"You have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15 NLT)

2. WORSHIP HIS NAME:

"Hallowed be Your Name..."

What are His Names?

The Lord is my Righteousness – He makes me clean (Jeremiah 23:6)

The Lord is my Sanctifier – He has called me and set me apart
(Leviticus 20:7-8)

The Lord is my Healer– He heals all my diseases (Exodus 15:26)

The Lord is my Banner of Victory – He has defeated my enemy
(Exodus 17:15)

The Lord is my Shepherd – He speaks to me and leads me (Psalms 23:1)

The Lord is my Peace – He is my peace in every storm (Judges 6:24)

The Lord is my Provider – He supplies all of my needs (Genesis 22:14)

*"God's name is a place of protection—
the righteous can run there and be safe." (Proverbs 18:10 MSG)*

3. PRAY HIS AGENDA FIRST:

"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."

God's priorities:

- Saving the Lost
- Growing His people/His Church
- Helping the hurting and healing the sick
- Guiding those in authority – parental, spiritual, governmental, workplace
- Bringing our lives into alignment with His will

"He will always give you all you need from day to day if you will make the Kingdom of God your primary concern." (Luke 12:31 TLB)

4. DEPEND ON HIM FOR EVERYTHING:

"Give us this day our daily bread..."

Ask God for what you want and need, and then trust Him for the answer.

"I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!" (Psalm 121:1-2 NLT)

5. GET YOUR HEART RIGHT WITH GOD AND PEOPLE:

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors..."

Ask God to check your heart and motives. Receive His forgiveness for any area that He brings to mind. Forgive anyone who has offended you in any way. You can even forgive people in advance.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

6. ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE:

"And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one..."

Take your stand against the enemy and fight the good fight of faith. Every lie that the enemy has told you should be replaced with the truth of God's Word. (See prayers on pages 7-9)

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12)

7. CONFESS YOUR FAITH IN GOD'S ABILITY:

"For yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever."

End your prayer time by reminding yourself of God's ability. Return to praise and make your faith declarations:

- **Thank you Lord that you're in control!**
"Yours is the Kingdom"
- **Thank you Lord that nothing is impossible for you!**
"Yours is the Power"
- **Thank you Lord that you reign victorious!**
"Yours is the Glory"

"Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you" (Jeremiah 32:17)

PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE DEVOTIONAL

This is a great prayer outline mixed with Scripture readings. Simply walk through the outline while you look up the passages of Scripture.

1. THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE – PRESENT YOURSELF TO GOD

(MARK 12:30)

- Think of a fresh reason to thank Him (Psalm 100:4, 118:24).
- Present your body in worship (Romans 12:1; Psalm 63-3,4) by:
 - Kneeling before Him as your Lord
 - Lifting your hands to Him as your Source
 - Standing in praise before Him as your King
 - Clapping your hands with rejoicing
 - Dancing with joy as a child
 - Bowing your head in humility
- Sing a new song to Him (Psalm 96:1,2; Colossians 3:16).

2. CONFESSION AND CLEANSING – PRESENT YOUR HEART TO GOD

(PROVERBS 4:23)

- Ask God to search your heart (Psalm 139:23,24) for:
 - Sin – receive cleansing and righteousness
 - Selfishness – receive holiness and sanctification
 - Stress – receive life and power
 - Sickness – receive healing and strength
- Invite God to set a monitor on your mouth and heart (Psalm 19:14, 49:3).
- Ask God to help you keep His purposes and goals in view (Psalm 90:12; Philippians 3:13-14).

3. ORDER AND OBEDIENCE – PRESENT YOUR DAY TO GOD

(PSALM 37:5)

- Present the day's details (Psalm 37:4,5, 31:14,15; Deuteronomy 33:25):
 - Confess your trust in the Lord.
 - Commit your works to God.
- Indicate your dependence upon God (Proverbs 3:5-7; Psalm 131:1-3).
- Request specific direction for actions and decisions (Psalm 25:4-5; Isaiah 30:21).
- Choose to obey God's explicit instructions (James 1:21-25; Matthew 7:24-27).

WARFARE PRAYERS

Prayer is not only communion with God; it is confrontation with the enemy. The Bible explicitly spells out in Ephesians 6:11-18, not only the nature of the battle we're in, but also the mighty weapons God has given us so that we can stand victorious against the devil's schemes.

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." (Ephesians 6:11-18).

The following prayers are very helpful in spiritual warfare:

THE ARMOR OF GOD

(based on Ephesians 6:13-17)

"Thank You, Lord, for my salvation. I believe and confess today that I have taken my stand with Christ and that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ and the place I have in Your kingdom. I wear Your righteousness today against all condemnation and corruption. Cover me with Your holiness and purity—defend me from all assaults against my heart. Lord, I put on the belt of truth. I choose a lifestyle of honesty and integrity. Expose the lies I have believed, and show me the truths I need today. I choose to live for the Gospel in every moment. Show me where You are working and lead me to it. Give me strength to walk daily with You. I believe that You are powerful against every lie and assault of the enemy. You have good in store for me. Nothing is coming today that can overcome me because You are with me. Holy Spirit, show me the truths of the Word of God that I will need to counter the traps of the enemy. Bring those Scriptures to mind today. Finally, Holy Spirit, I agree to walk in step with You in everything as my spirit communes with You in prayer throughout the day."

THE WEAPONS OF WARFARE

(based on 2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

"Father, Your Word says that no weapon formed against me shall prosper (Isaiah 54:17). Therefore I declare that no weapon formed against me prospers this day or any day to come, in Jesus' name. Your Word says that trouble will not arise a second time (Nahum 1:9). Therefore I declare that Satan cannot make trouble for me again, as he did in the past, in Jesus' name. I declare all of these prayers accomplished and brought to pass by trusting You through faith and expectation in the name of Jesus. Lord Jesus, I confess to You all of my sins this day, yesterday and every day past. I repent and renounce them, those known and unknown, those of omission and commission, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do. I lay down at Your feet all of the sins of my flesh, my tongue, my heart and all unholy thoughts and actions. Thank You, Lord, for shedding Your precious blood for me. I stand on Your Word. The enemy is driven out from before me, above me, around me, and below me; from my home, workplace, church and its ministries, from my children and loved ones; from my works and labors, from my land, and from my presence. I declare that he is not able to stand against me, and his works are taken captive and destroyed. No weapon formed against me will prosper, for the Spirit of the Lord shall raise a standard against them. I declare all of these things accomplished by Your Word. Jesus, my Lord, I give You thanksgiving, praise, glory, honor and worship for Your righteousness and holiness given to me by Your Word on my behalf."

PROTECTION PRAYER

(based on 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, 10:3-5; Romans 12:1-2)

"Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before you. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to You. I submit myself only to the true and living God and refuse any involvement of the enemy in my life. I choose to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. I pull down every thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ. I pray and thank You for a sound mind, the mind of Christ. Today and every day I ask for protection over my spouse; each of my children; our immediate family members, relatives, friends, acquaintances and myself. I also ask today for protection during all of our travels; for our provision, finances, possessions, health, safety, and welfare. I put all of these things under the covering of Your precious blood and declare that Satan cannot touch them, on this day or any day to come, in Jesus mighty name."

GENERAL CONFESSION PRAYER

(based on Romans 10:10; James 5:16; I John 1:7-9, 3:8)

"Lord Jesus, I believe that you are the Son of God. You are the Messiah, come in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil. You died on the cross for my sins and rose again the third day from the dead. I now confess all my sins and repent. I receive Your forgiveness and ask you to cleanse me from all sin. Thank You for redeeming me, cleansing me, justifying me, and sanctifying me in Your blood."

FORGIVENESS PRAYER

(based on Matthew 6:14-15; Leviticus 19:18)

"Lord, I have a confession to make. I have not loved, but have resented certain people and have unforgiveness in my heart. I call upon You, Lord, to help me forgive them. I do now forgive (name them). I also forgive and accept myself in the name of Jesus Christ."

PRIDE PRAYER

(based on Proverbs 11:2, 16:18, 26:12; 1 Timothy 3:6)

"Father, I come to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know pride is an abomination to You. I renounce anything that would cause me to have pride in my heart in dealing with other people. I renounce these and turn away from them. I humble myself before You and come to You as a little child." [Study Proverbs 6:16-19 and remember that fasting is a means by which a person humbles himself or herself before the Lord].

GENERATIONAL FREEDOM PRAYER

(based on Exodus 20:4-6, 34:7; Numbers 14:18)

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I now renounce, break, and loose myself from all bondages or bonds of physical or mental illness upon me, my family or family line as the result of parents or any other ancestors. I thank You, Lord, for setting me free."

PERSONAL PRAYER TARGETS

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Pray for those in authority and those under your authority.

MY GOVERNMENT

President _____

National leaders _____

State leaders _____

City leaders _____

MY FAMILY

Spouse _____

Children _____

Parents _____

Siblings _____

Extended family _____

MY CHURCH

Pastors _____

Small group leader _____

Small group members _____

MY LIFE

Employer _____

Co-workers _____

Employees _____

Teachers/Professors _____

THOSE I INFLUENCE

Close friends _____

THOSE WHO NEED JESUS CHRIST

How to pray effectively for your unsaved friends!

- Pray the Father would draw them to Jesus!
"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." (John 6:44).
- Bind the spirit the blinds their minds
"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Corinthians 4:4).
- Loose the spirit of adoption/sonship over them
"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, "Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15).
- Pray that other believers will cross their paths and enter into positive relationships with them.
"Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:38).
- Loose the spirit of wisdom and revelation on them so they can know God better.
"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better." (Ephesians 1:17).



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