

Prayer

What is the ministry of prayer? How important is this ministry?
How do I perform this ministry?

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. Colossians 4:2

Of all the duties enjoined by Christianity none is more essential and yet more neglected than prayer.
François Fénelon

The Importance of Prayer

The ministry of prayer is the first and most important ministry in which the believer serves.

Evangelism is powerless without prayer (Matt 9:38)
Giving is empty without prayer (Micah 6:6-8)
Edification is only encouragement without prayer (Jude 20)
Service is self-serving without prayer (Psalm 127:1)

Prayer is what powers the believer for the tasks to which they have been called:

‘Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’ Jeremiah 33:3

Prayer is what guides the believer and the church

Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5 - 6

Prayer is the incense offering of the believer

May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. Psalms 141:2

The Ministry of Prayer

Let the fires go out in the boiler room of the church and the place will still look smart and clean, but it will be cold. The Prayer Room is the boiler room for its spiritual life.
Leonard Ravenhill

The ministry of prayer can be summarized in the acronym FIRE:

Fortification

Intercession

Reconciliation

Evangelism

Through prayer, the believer is fortified in Christ

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6 - 7

Through prayer, the believer intercedes on the behalf of others

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, Ephesians 6:18

Through prayer, the believer seeks to reconcile the fallen brother

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. 1 John 5:16

Through prayer, the believer seeks the salvation of the lost

Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 7:60

How to Minister Through Prayer

Step 1: Pray Properly

When we pray, scripture teaches us to do certain things.

Avoid repetition (Matthew 6:7)

Ask in Christ name (John 16:23)

Ask in faith (James 1:6)

Avoid wrong motives (James 4:3)

Always keep praying (Luke 18:1)

Step 2: Pray Specifically

There is a general kind of praying which fails for lack of precision. It is as if a regiment of soldiers should all fire off their guns anywhere. Possibly somebody would be killed, but the majority of the enemy would be missed.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Step 3: Pray Thoroughly

Our prayer life should consist of praying for at minimum the following things/people:

Our political leaders (I Tim 2:1-3)

Our Pastor (Colossians 4:3)

For Israel (Psalms 122:6)

For the salvation of the lost (Matthew 9:38)

For our enemies (Matthew 5:44)

For the church (Ephesians 6:18)

For ourselves (Philippians 4:6)

Step 4: Repeat

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, “In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. “There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me legal protection from my opponent.’ “For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.’” And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? “I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:1 - 8

Application

- Prayer should be where we start not where we end up
- Our lives and churches rise and fall on prayer
- When we abandon prayer in our lives we forfeit the power of God
- Therefore, prayer must become such an integral part of my life, that to miss one day of prayer would be like not eating for that day.