

WORSHIP-BASED PRAYER

One challenge that many believers face today is a total lack of discipleship or training in prayer, especially with leading others in prayer. While there are several helpful models and approaches, many have found the concept of Worship-Based Prayer to be a very powerful and practical approach to implementing prayer into their churches, small groups, and even their own lives. It is certainly not the only way to pray, but we have found it to be especially helpful for groups just setting out to learn to pray corporately, or for congregations that may have grown stagnant in their typical prayer routines. This is largely because:

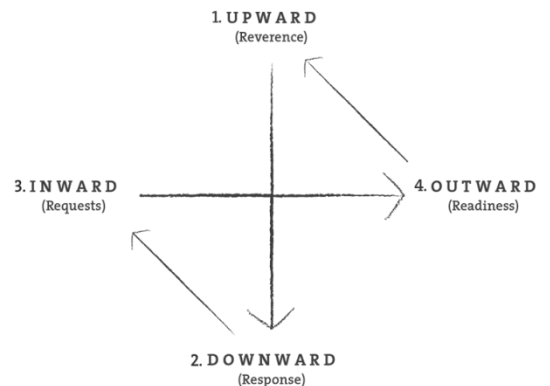
1. It is Scriptural. It is based on the "Lord's Prayer" or the model prayer in Matthew 6.
2. It draws people's focus toward God, as opposed to their own needs or requests.
3. It provides a model to experience life giving prayer that can be applied to nearly any passage of Scripture.

THE 4/4 PATTERN OF PRAYER

Worship-based prayer is built on a "4/4" Pattern, like a musical conductor would use, which is taken directly from the Biblical text we often refer to as "The Lord's Prayer" in Matthew 6.

UPWARD: REVERENCE

In the prayer pattern Jesus gave His disciples, He instructs us to begin with a focus of worship ("*Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name . . .*"). We call this upward focus the "Reverence" stroke. This is the principle of "worship-based" rather than need-based prayer. It begins with the character of God as we take time to focus our entire being on the wonders of who God is. Ultimately, prayer is my response to the character of God, which leads to praise and thanksgiving. As I get to know the God Who is, I will naturally respond to Him. This response is called prayer.



"...Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed by Your name." Matthew 6:9

Helpful Prayer Focuses:

- Praising God for His attributes/character: praise is my response to the person, presence, position, power, greatness, majesty, and the love of God. Praise is glorifying God for Who He is and what he is affects you. It is the most appropriate way to enter into His presence. Since its source is God Himself, praise centers on the excellencies, perfections, and glories of His nature, His character, and His role in human affairs.

"Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." (Psalm 145:3)

"Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel." (Psalm 22:3)

- Thanksgiving is my response to the goodness, the graciousness of God. Thanksgiving is thanking God for what He has done and for what He is going to do. Since its source is the actions of God, thanksgiving declares positively both that He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift and that to the believer every gift is good, perfect and acceptable.

"What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" "To Thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving..." (Psalm 116:12,17a)

"Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name...for with such sacrifices God is pleased." (Hebrews 13:15-16)

Begin with a Psalm or another portion of Scripture, as you read, ask yourself: What does this passage reveal about God and His character? Invite the Holy Spirit to give you understanding of what the text tells you about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Discover truths about God's nature, names and person in the text you are reading. Begin your prayer time seeking His face in worship in your own words.

- I praise you because you are
- I have seen your power in
- Thank you for showing me your grace when ...

(The Names and Attributes of God provided in the Toolkit are helpful resources to incorporate into these times of worship as you focus upward on God because He is worthy.)

DOWNWARD: RESPONSE

Jesus taught a second element of biblical prayer when He said, "***Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven . . .***" This speaks of our response to God's character in prayer as we consider His will, from His Word and for the sake of His purposes on earth. This also involves yielding to the control of the Holy Spirit as I respond to His invitations to a fruitful and obedient life. Introspection and surrender mark this time of response. It is a season of pledged obedience to the will and Word of God, desiring the accomplishment of His will in our lives.

The will of God is not only the highest good, the greatest achievement and the best any person could hope for in this life, it is also the command of God. Therefore, because God is God, and God is our loving Heavenly Father, prayer becomes that time when I seek Him, not to bring Him to my viewpoint, but to bring myself to His, by the discovery of His will and way.

Helpful Prayer Focuses:

- Worshipful response to who God is
- Acknowledge and Surrender to God's Will
- Listening, allowing God's Spirit to speak; then obeying

Pause for listening to God ...

To Hear God's voice is to perceive what God wants me to know.

"Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose." (Psalm 25:12)

To Hear God's voice is a sign that you are His child.

"My sheep hear My voice..." (John 10:27)

To Hear God's voice is the normal everyday activity of His child.

"...TODAY if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts... (Hebrews 3:15)

To Hear God's voice is life's single greatest privilege.

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers... what is man, that Thou dost take thought of him?" (Psalm 8:3-4)

To Hear God's voice is a responsibility to be obedient.

"...not becoming a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer..." (James 1:25)

The one who chooses to listen to God with the intent of obeying will have the privilege of hearing God speak. Revelation demands a response. Submit specific areas of your life to God's authority (your mind, emotions, doubts, fears, plans, career, family, and ministry).

INWARD: REQUESTS

Now that we have rightly worshipped the One True God--- and we have wholly surrendered to His will for our lives --- We can now boldly bring our requests before Him, knowing that we are asking "in His name" and for His glory.

"Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Matthew 6:11-12

This is the next element Christ teaches in His model prayer. This involves a period of heartfelt requests with the themes of resources and relationships.

Of course, Jesus had just said our Father knows our needs before we ask (Matthew 6:8). This is not a time of informing God of our needs as much as it is a conscious trust in God as the perfect definer and provider of our needs. It involves prayer about personal requests and the concerns of others. This focus also includes corporate concerns, such as congregational challenges or broader issues in the body of Christ. In all this, we recognize that, "...God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)

Petition is my response to the power and wisdom of God, who is our Heavenly Father. I ask specifically, and He answers specifically.

Intercession is my response to the love of God for all people, especially those in His family.

Helpful Prayer Focuses:

- Offering requests in accordance with God's will
- Passionate petitions of personal needs

OUTWARD: READINESS

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." **Matthew 6:13 NIV**

This outward stroke reminds us of the spiritual battle before us, and more importantly, reassures us of the spiritual resources within us, the Holy Spirit. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," we recognize our own inability to overcome the temptations and attacks of daily life. We entrust our welfare for the warfare to the delivering force of our Divine Enabler, through the power of His presence and promises. We pledge ourselves to walk in obedience and victory as the fruit of our praying. Look for promises to guard you against temptations, toils and snares that await you beyond the door of your prayer room. This is a great way to integrate Scripture memory into your prayer time as you become battle ready.

Ephesians 6:10-20 provides us with a clear understanding of our enemy and the mighty power of God available to us for this spiritual battle. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world, but instead, our weapons have divine power for demolishing strongholds that are set up in direct opposition to God (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Paul challenges us to "fight a good fight" as he himself did (1 Timothy 6:12), to be a "soldier of Christ that pleases the One who enlisted us as soldiers." (II Timothy 2:4), to put on the "full armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11, 13).

Christians will not be able to prevail unless we know who our adversary is: "For our fight is not against any physical enemy: it is against organizations and powers that are spiritual. We are up against the unseen power that controls this dark world, and spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil." (Ephesians 6:12) "One cannot rob Satan's kingdom without first binding Satan. Only then can his demons be cast out!" (Matthew 12:29) "...Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

We need to know our enemy's strategies and methods:

"Be careful – watch out for attacks from Satan, your great enemy. He prowls around like a hungry, roaring lion, looking for some victim to tear apart." (1 Peter 5:8)

"...able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan." (Ephesians 6:11)

Let us always remember that we reign in life through Jesus. All authority has been given to Christ; and we share the authority with Him because He has given it to us.

Helpful Prayer Focuses:

- Putting on the "Full Armor of God"
- Claiming God's Promises for the battle
- Knowing He will answer
- Focusing on His glory above all else

UPWARD: REVERENCE

End where you began, with your eyes on Him. "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen." Conclude focused on His Lordship, power and glory.

