

# PRAYER

A Biblical Theology and Exposition of Prayer

PRAYER IS WORSHIP

# The Trinity in Prayer

- We pray by the Spirit through the Son to the Father.

# The Definition of Prayer

- Prayer is our response to God.
- Prayer is fellowship with God.
- Prayer is an act of spiritual communion in which the believer responds to the Triune God in ways that he accepts as revealed in his word.

“Where, then, can we find a definition of prayer? Well, despite the fact that it insists that prayer is the most important of all our activities, the Bible nowhere gives us a comprehensive definition of prayer. . . . But if you insist on a definition, let me refer you to the words of John Calvin who in his commentary on Isaiah says, ‘Prayer is nothing else than the opening up of our hearts before God’”

—*Eric Alexander, Prayer: A Biblical Perspective, 6.*

# The Definition of Prayer

“Prayer is nothing else than the opening up of  
our heart before God.”

—*John Calvin, Commentary on Isaiah 63:16.*

# The Definition of Prayer

“A communication between God and us whereby we expound to him our desires, our joys, our sighs, in a word, all the thoughts of our hearts.”

—John Calvin, *Instruction in Faith*; quoted in Beeke and Najapfour, *Taking Hold of God*, 28.

# The Definition of Prayer

“For what benefit do God’s promises confer on us, unless we, embrace them by faith? But prayer is the chief exercise of faith.”

—*John Calvin, Commentary on Daniel 9:1–3.*



“It is, therefore, by the benefit of prayer that we reach those riches which are laid up for us with the Heavenly Father. For there is a communion of men with God by which, having entered the heavenly sanctuary, they appeal to him in person concerning his promises in order to experience, where necessity so demands, that what they believed was not vain, although he had promised it in word alone. Therefore we see that to us nothing is promised to be expected from the Lord, which we are not also bidden to ask of him in prayers. So true it is that we dig up by prayer the treasures that were pointed out by the Lord’s gospel, and which our faith has gazed upon.”

—*John Calvin, Institutes, 3.20.2.*

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

—1 Peter 5:6–7

“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*

# The Definition of Prayer

- Through prayer we experience the riches of God's promises in the gospel.
- Peace with God
- The peace of God
- Enabling grace

“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me — to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

—2 *Corinthians* 12:7–9

“Therefore I am well content with weaknesses,  
with insults, with distresses, with persecutions,  
with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am  
weak, then I am strong.”

– *2 Corinthians 12:10*

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

— *Hebrews 4:14–16*

# The Definition of Prayer

“Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit, for such things as God has promised, or according to His Word, for the good of the church, with submission in faith to the will of God.”

—*John Bunyan, Works, ‘On Praying in the Spirit,’ 623.*



# The Definition of Prayer

- Prayer is an act of spiritual communion in which the believer responds to the Triune God in ways that he accepts as revealed in his word.

# Prayer According to the Word

- Prayer must be according to the word of God.

# Prayer According to the Word

“And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*,  
for he who comes to God must believe that He is  
and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek  
Him.”

—*Hebrews 11:6*

# Prayer According to the Word

“So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

—*Romans 10:17*

# Teaching Our Children to Pray

- Should we teach our unbelieving children to pray?
- We should teach our children to pray because it is right, but we should also remind them at appropriate times that they cannot truly pray until they come to Christ through faith.

# Teaching Our Children to Pray

- Apart from *genuine faith*, prayer is not pleasing to God.

**Psalms 66:18** – “If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”

**Proverbs 15:8** – “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.”

**Proverbs 28:9** – “He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination.”

**Isaiah 59:2** – “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.”

**John 9:31** – “We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.”

# Prayer According to the Word

- Prayer must be according to the word of God.
- Before we can speak to God, he must speak to us and reveal himself to us.
- Without divine revelation success in prayer is impossible.

# Prayer According to the Word

“Real prayer is communion with God, so that there will be common thoughts between His mind and ours. What is needed is for Him to fill our hearts with *His* thoughts, and then His will become *our* desires flowing back to Him. ”

—*A.W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 113.*



# Prayer According to the Word

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you,  
ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for  
you.”

— *John 15:7*

# Prayer According to the Word

“in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed as* the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, *namely*, seventy years [Jer 25:11–12; 29:10]. So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him by* prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.”

—*Daniel 9:2–3*

# Prayer According to the Word

“And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, “O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM [Exod 20:11; Neh 9:6; Ps 146:6], who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, ‘WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? ‘THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST [Ps 2:1–2].’”

—Acts 4:24–26

# Aspects of Prayer

- Praise/Worship
- Thanksgiving
- Confession
- Petition (praying for ourselves)
- Intercession (praying for others)
- Affirmation
- Questions

# Aspects of Prayer

- ACTS
  - Adoration
  - Confession
  - Thanksgiving
  - Supplication

# Attitudes in Prayer

- Waiting
- Watching
- Listening
- Scripture Saturation
- Meditation

# Prayer is Worship

- The first aspect of prayer we will cover is worship.
- Prayer should begin and end in worship, praise, adoration of God.

# Prayer is Worship

“It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.”

And He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.’”

—*Luke 11:1–2*



# Prayer is Worship

“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.’”

—*Matthew 6:9*

# Prayer is Worship

“First and foremost, prayer has been appointed that the Lord God Himself should be *honoured*. God requires us to recognize that He is, indeed, ‘the *high and lofty* One that inhabited eternity’ (Isa 57:17).”

—A.W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, 113.

# Prayer is Worship

“Again; God requires that we shall *worship* Him and prayer, real prayer, is an act of worship. Prayer is an act of worship inasmuch as it is the prostrating of the soul before Him; inasmuch as it is a calling upon His great and holy name; inasmuch as it is the owning of His goodness, His power, His immutability, His grace, and inasmuch as it is the recognition of His sovereignty, owned by a submission to His will.”

—*A. W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, 114.*

# Prayer is Worship

“The name of God in Scripture is of course another way of speaking about his character or nature. To hallow God’s name means not ‘to make his name holy’ but to reverence, or glorify, or honour his great name. . . . Another way of saying all this is to say that we begin our praying with worship, not with our wants.”

—*Eric Alexander, Prayer: A Biblical Perspective, 21.*

# Prayer is Worship

“It may be that thy great prayer is to say, ‘Our Father which art in heaven, etc.’ Dost thou know the meaning of the very first words of this prayer? Canst thou indeed, with the rest of the saints, cry, ‘Our Father?’ Are thou truly born again? Hast thou received the spirit of adoption? Dost thou see thyself in Christ, and canst thou come to God as a member of him?”

—*John Bunyan, On Praying in the Spirit, in Works 1:630.*

# Prayer is Worship

“Or art thou ignorant of these things, and yet darest thou say, ‘Our Father?’ Is not the devil thy father? (John 8:44). And dost thou not do the deeds of the flesh? And yet darest thou say to God, ‘Our Father?’”

—*John Bunyan, On Praying in the Spirit, in Works 1:630.*

# Prayer is Worship

“And dost thou indeed say, ‘Hallowed be thy name’ with thy heart? Dost thou study, by all honest and lawful ways, to advance the name, holiness, and majesty of God? Doth thy heart and conversation agree with this passage? Dost thou strive to imitate Christ in all the works of righteousness, which God doth command of thee, and prompt thee forward to? . . . Or is it not the least of thy thoughts all the day? And dost thou not clearly make it appear that thou art a cursed hypocrite, by condemning that with thy daily practice which thou pretendest in thy praying with thy dissembling tongue?”

—*John Bunyan, On Praying in the Spirit, in Works 1:630.*

# Prayer is Worship

- If we are going to pray rightly, or un-hypocritically our lives must be lived for the glory of God.
- 'Hallowed be thy name' must be the true desire of our hearts.



# Prayer is Worship

“Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving  
And pay your vows to the Most High;  
Call upon Me in the day of trouble;  
I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.”

—*Psalms 50:14–15*

# Prayer is Worship

“Now consider this, you who forget God,  
Or I will tear *you* in pieces, and there will be none to deliver.  
He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me;  
And to him who orders *his way aright*  
I shall show the salvation of God.”

—*Psalms 50:22–23*

# Prayer is Worship

- Two types of praise psalms
  - Descriptive Praise: Praising God for who he is
  - Declarative Praise: Praising God for what he has done.

# Prayer is Worship

“Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were complete:

“Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. Let my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, as the droplets on the fresh grass and as the showers on the herb. For I proclaim the name of the LORD; Ascribe greatness to our God! The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.”

—*Deuteronomy 31:30–32:4*

# Prayer is Worship

“Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. He said, “O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and *showing* lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart, who have kept with Your servant, my father David, that which You have promised him; indeed, You have spoken with Your mouth and have fulfilled it with Your hand as it is this day.”

—*1 Kings 8:22–24*

# Prayer is Worship

“So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him by* prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, “Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,”

—*Daniel 9:3–4*

# Prayer is Worship

“Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name  
give glory because of Your lovingkindness,  
because of Your truth. . . .

But as for us, we will bless the LORD from this  
time forth and forever. Praise the LORD!”

—*Psalms 115:1, 18*

# Prayer is Worship

“‘It is good to praise the LORD,’ So declared the psalmist in Psalm 92:1. But how should God’s people praise him? David the the other psalmists answer: by recalling God’s marvellous attributes; by reporting how he manifests and expresses those attributes through his mighty and redemptive acts for his people.”

—*Kenneth Barker, “Praise” in Cracking Old Testament Codes, 217.*



# Prayer is Worship

“Praise the LORD, all nations;  
Laud Him, all peoples!  
For His lovingkindness is great toward us,  
And the truth of the LORD is everlasting.  
Praise the LORD!”

—*Psalms 117:1–2*

# Prayer is Worship

“The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble;  
He is enthroned *above* the cherubim, let the earth shake!  
The LORD is great in Zion,  
And He is exalted above all the peoples.  
Let them praise Your great and awesome name; Holy is  
He.”

—*Psalms 99:1–3*

# Prayer is Worship

- Psalm 18 is an example of descriptive praise (praising God for what he has done).