

The Laws of Prayer

Foundational Truth Volume 7

By Peter Tan

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PREFACE

Every move of God has always been preceded by a great move of prayer. In this great last move of God, we are going to first witness a stirring among God's people to fast and pray. It will sweep through every church, every city and every nation. Some of God's people may enter the prayer closets for days. Some may even enter the prayer closets for months. Signs and wonders that have never been shown before will be manifested in the last days.

The purpose of this book is to bring to light the various forms and styles of prayer. Each type of prayer works on different circumstances. An application of all the various types of prayer will bring into control every adverse circumstances faced by Christians.

Prayer is a habit taught and learnt. The lack of proper teaching of how to pray has robbed the church of one of the most important weapons of the church.

In a vision, God showed me a valley between two mountains. A large gigantic building was under construction in the valley. Each framework structure of the building was hundreds of feet in width and breadth. I was astounded for I have never seen such huge framework before. I saw men of God whom I recognized, some from previous generations, beckoning me to join them in the work of the building.

When I came out of the vision, the Lord told me that the two mountains were His first and second coming. The building under construction was the church and the framework were the *pillars of prayer*.

May God grant us the grace to establish the foundation of the *pillars of prayer*.

Pastor Peter Tan

CHAPTER 1

THE RIGHT WAY TO PRAY

One of the most important foundations of the Christian life is to learn the art of prayer. The successful Christian is the one who succeeds in prayer. Whether we are called to the fivefold ministry or not, the success of the ministry and of the Christian life depends not on our call but on our prayer life.

The Importance of Prayer in Jesus' Life

The success of Jesus' mission to this planet earth depends on His ability to pray through to God. During His earthly life, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death and was heard because of His Godly fear (Heb. 5:7). If Jesus had failed in His prayer life, He would have failed in the redemption plan of God. Successful prayer was of prime importance to Jesus.

Before Jesus selected His twelve disciples, He spent the whole night in prayer (Lk. 6:12). Upon His descend from the mountain, He appointed the twelve apostles (Lk. 6:13). God must have revealed whom to choose while He was in prayer. Even though He was the Son of God, Jesus had to obey the same laws of prayer to receive guidance just as we do.

After His baptism in water, while He was still in the waters, He prayed before the Holy Spirit came upon Him (Lk. 3:21). He prophesied that the disciples would see Him in His glory (Lk. 9:27). Later, while on the mountain, it was only as He prayed that He was transfigured (Lk. 9:29).

It was the custom of Jesus to spend long prayer vigils with God. He sought after solitary places to pray, sometimes rising a great while before day (Mk. 1:35). Sometimes after a long day of ministry, the Lord Jesus still continued to seek the face of the Father in prayer (Matt. 14:23).

Praying to the Father

Many Christians are not taught who to address when they pray. Their dilemma arises because God is three persons in unity. Most of them end up praying to Jesus. Others try to divide their time between the Trinity. There is no problem among the Godhead. For the Holy Spirit desires to glorify Jesus (Jn. 16:13,14). The Lord Jesus desires to glorify the Father (Jn. 17:1).

Whenever every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, it is to the glory of the Father (Phil. 2:9, 10).

The problem rests with Christians not understanding the way God has set up His heavenly administration. It is in the design and plan of God that we pray to the Father in Jesus' Name through the leading and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We can worship and praise Jesus or pray to receive Him into our hearts. We can talk to Jesus in the sense of fellowship as between close lovers. We can talk to the Holy Spirit in the same sense. However, all official prayer must be to the Father.

When Jesus was asked by the disciples about prayer, He taught them to pray to the Father in heaven (Matt. 6:9). When Jesus prayed, He Himself prayed to the Father (Jn. 17:1, 25, 26). The early church prayed to the Father regarding persecution against the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:24, 27, 30).

In all His recorded prayers, Paul prayed to God the Father of our Lord Jesus (Eph. 1:17; 3:14; Col. 1:3). Jesus Himself said that we are no longer to pray to Him but to the Father in His Name (Jn. 16:23-27). We need to flow with the organization of God and pray to the Father using Jesus' Name. Some Christians are not getting the results they should have been receiving because they have only been talking to the Lord Jesus. The purpose of Jesus' coming is to reveal the Father to us through His life (Jn. 17:3, 4).

Praying in Jesus' Name

Many Christians mouth the words 'in Jesus' Name' without understanding its meaning. The use of a person's name in a transaction or in giving a command means that the bearer of the name is doing the transaction or giving that command on behalf of the person.

When God sent His angel to go with the Israelites in the wilderness, God said that they are to beware of him, obey his voice, and not to provoke him for His Name is in him (Ex. 23:21). The angel became a complete representation of God. To displease the angel would be equivalent to displeasing God. Apparently, the angel also had delegated authority to punish (Ex. 23:21).

Aaron was made to wear the names of all the twelve tribes of Israel on his shoulders and on his breastplate. He was being made a representative of all the tribes of Israel before God (Ex. 28:12, 29). When we use the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in our prayers, we are coming to the throne of God as if Jesus Himself were praying. We are not approaching God by our own

merit, righteousness or ability but we are seeking to come by the rights of access and privileges that Jesus has with the Father.

This is made possible through our identification with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. We have been united together with Him in His death (Rom. 6:4-6). We are now seated together with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). We are heirs and joint heirs together with Christ (Rom. 8:16, 17). All that Jesus has is ours too.

In the Old Covenant, it was very cumbersome to approach the throne of God. The Israelites had to perform the various sacrifices before they can make their request to God. All this is done because of the blockage of sin. It was dangerous to approach God without the blood covering. Jesus Christ became the sacrificial lamb for us (Heb. 9:26). By the use of the Name of Jesus, we can now approach the throne of God knowing that God will accept us.

Using the Name of Jesus does not apply to just the privilege of presenting our requests to God. It implies the knowledge that our prayers will definitely be answered because God will never say 'No' to a request made in the Name of Jesus. The problem with Christians who have no answer to their prayers is that their prayers are not a representation of Jesus Christ although they mouth the words 'in Jesus' Name.' In fact, if a prayer is not a representation of the Will and Person of Jesus Christ, the person who prays has no right to use the Name of Jesus because it is against what Jesus represents.

The positive side of this truth is that all prayers that are representative of the Will and Person of Jesus Christ will surely be answered with a resounding 'Yes' and 'Amen' from God the Father. Such is the power of the Name of Jesus Christ that when the Father hears that Name being used in prayer, He gives it His fullest attention and bade all creatures in heaven to bring the request to pass.

Some of the translations of the Bible that expresses the power of the Name of Jesus on John 16:23 are as follows:

Amplified Translation

I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that My Father will grant you whatever you ask in My Name presenting all I AM.

Charles B. Williams Translation

I solemnly say to you, the Father will give you, as bearers of My Name, whatever you ask Him for.

Kenneth S. Wuest Translation

Most assuredly, I am saying to you, whatever you shall request of the Father, He will give it to you in view of all that I am in His estimation.

We should allow the Holy Spirit to teach us how to pray for items that bring the Will of God to be done on earth as it is in heaven. The secret is to fellowship with God first instead of bombarding the gates of heaven like a supermarket store.

CHAPTER 2

VARIOUS TYPES OF PRAYERS

The apostle Paul speaks of praying to God with all prayer (Eph. 6:18). The Charles B. Williams translation in the same verse says 'with every kind of prayer and entreaty, at every opportunity.' The Amplified version says 'with all manner of prayer and entreaty.' The sense of the meaning is very clear. Paul is speaking about more than one form or type of prayer. Different types of prayer apply to different types of situation. The rules for each type of prayer are different because the principles involved differ.

The Prayer of Faith

The basic function of the prayer of faith is to possess the promises of God. Before we can pray the prayer of faith, we must be ensured that the requests that we are making are covered by the written Word of God. Faith can come only by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Anything not covered by the written Word need to be received by other types of prayer.

The only exception is where a special gift of faith is operating through a spoken word or rhema of God. The basis is still on the Word; except that it is now on the spoken Word. These are exceptional and not the norm. One example is that of Peter requesting from Jesus permission to walk on the water (Matt. 14:28). The answer and command was given only to Peter (Matt. 14:29). If anyone else but Peter tried to walk on the water, they would have drowned.

Christians have many times thought that all their convictions must be faith. Faith has conviction and assurance (Heb. 11:1). But not all convictions and assurances come from the Word of God. Some come out of our own blind zeal or foolish presumptions. We know that such convictions are not faith because they are not in line with the written Word of God.

Some Christians try to believe God for family planning by faith. They exercise their faith not to have a child and do not use any birth control. This is in direct opposition to the Word of God. The Word promises children as a blessing from the Lord. Moreover, it is an unnatural state of the body to be sterile. The perfect body is fertile. Such Christians will only reap what they sow and have unplanned children. This is not faith: it is presumption.

In the prayer of faith, there must not be any mention of the word 'if.' The word 'if' would imply doubt. Those who cannot pray without an 'if' must first study the Word of God to determine the Will of God in the area of their

requests. There must be scripture and verse for all requests made under the prayer of faith.

The prayer of faith is epitomized in Mark chapter eleven, verse twenty-three and twenty-four. The prayer of faith requires that there must be completely no doubt in our hearts. Jesus said that if we do not doubt in our hearts, our words will come to pass (Mk. 11:23). There are three tenses in the Greek language expressed in verse twenty-four of Mark chapter eleven.

The first is the present tense - when you pray; the second is the past perfect tense - believe that you have received; the third is the future tense - you will have them. From the time that we start praying (Point A), to the time that the answer manifests (Point B), we must believe that we have received. Prayer is made only once. In the prayer of faith, if you have to pray seven times to receive, six times were in unbelief.

After praying the prayer of faith, we should maintain our faith level between Point A and Point B by meditation on the Word of God, visualizing the fulfilment of the promises and giving thanks and praise for the answer. We must start calling those things which be not as though they were (Rom. 4:17). This may involve a new set of vocabulary to express ourselves. For example, we do not say, "I am sick" but rather "I believe that by the stripes of Jesus, I was healed."

We do not deny the existence of sicknesses, as in the cult of Christian Science, but we deny the right of those sicknesses to remain on the body. We cannot say, "I am not sick" or "I am already healed" but we can say, "I believe that by the stripes of Jesus, I am healed." We are not confessing that it is in manifestation, nor are we going to confess the circumstances in the sense realm; but we are confessing what we believe.

We should be very careful about what we say when we pray the prayer of faith. The success of the prayer of faith depends very much on what we say between Point A and Point B. Jesus emphasized the importance of our words three times in reference to the prayer of faith - whoever says...those things he says...he will have whatever he says (Mk. 11:23). Unwavering single-minded perseverance is required for the successful prayer of faith (Jam. 1:6-8).

The Prayer of Dedication

The objective of this prayer is to bring about a total surrender to the Will of God. In this type of prayer, it is perfectly alright to use the word 'if.' This is not a prayer that can be made once. It is a prayer that has to be continually

exercised for a complete and total dedication to the Will of God. As we grow in God and receive more and more blessings, we proportionally have more and more things to surrender to God.

The teenager has must less to surrender than a successful multi-millionaire. The famous have must more to surrender than the unknown. Yet it is the requirement of Jesus Christ for every man or woman who comes to know Him to surrender his or her life. Jesus will not accept second place in our lives. We must love Him above our fathers, mothers, wives or husbands, sons and daughters (Matt. 10:37; Lk. 14:26).

Jesus even used the word 'hate' in speaking about discipleship (Lk. 14:26). Jesus is not asking us to hate our family. Rather He is saying that the love we have for Him must be so supreme that when we compare the love for Him with the love we should have for our families, the gulf between our love for Him and the love we have for our own family is as the gulf between love and hate.

The key to maintain this state of consecration and surrender is through the prayer of dedication. Jesus dedicated Himself afresh to the Will of the Father at the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk. 22:42). He prayed this prayer with an 'if.' He was willing to move Himself into any area or avenue that the Father wanted Him to go; as long as it was the Will of the Father.

In praying the prayer of dedication, we must set our will to the 'neutral' position. In seeking the Will of God in any area, there are only two choices - Yes or No. The 'neutral' position is a position where we are willing to accept either 'Yes' or 'No.' The prayer of dedication is in areas where the Word of God is silent. (If it is in an area where the Word of God has plainly shown the Will of God, we should be praying the prayer of faith).

For example, if we are seeking the Will of God as to the choice of occupation or the house to buy or the person to marry, we should be making requests with the prayer of dedication. It is only when we have dedicated ourselves to the Lord that we can hear His voice clearly. Sometimes people have already made up their minds before they pray. They have set their meters to 'Yes.' As a result, they cannot hear from God nor pray this prayer successfully.

The end result of the prayer of dedication is perfect union with God through union with His Will. Before any major decision, we should pray this prayer. The answer to this prayer comes through God speaking to us by the inward witness, the inward voice or any other means chosen by God.

With the answer comes the assurance of what His Will is. Grace and strength to do His Will are also provided in response to this prayer.

The Prayer of Intercession

The prayer of faith and the prayer of dedication usually involve only the personal life of the person who prays. These two types of prayer can only be utilized for others if they are in agreement with us. We cannot pray the prayer of faith over another person who is not consenting to the same thing. We cannot violate the free choice of another.

However, the prayer of intercession is specifically a prayer for another person, family, city or nation. Intercessory prayers involved the will of another person and therefore must be constantly activated until the desired results are manifested. In praying for Peter, the church applied the prayer of intercession (Acts 12:5). Unlike the prayer of faith, the prayer of intercession constantly brings the requests before God. Much of it is usually prayer in the Spirit. For this reason, when Peter was released by the angel, the church was still continuing in prayer (Acts 12:12).

There are three things that will make the prayer of intercession successful: a clear objective, persistent tenacity and praying in the Spirit.

In order to have a clear objective, we must be able to identify or express union with the subject of our intercession. The ability to identify with the subject of our intercession is supplied by the Holy Spirit. This is done through the impartation of the compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can identify compassion as 'intercessory sensation.' We feel, sense and experience all that the subject of our intercession feels.

Jesus was constantly moved with compassion for those whom He ministered to (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27). The reason why Jesus Christ can be our High Priest and Intercessor in heaven is because He could identify with us (Heb. 4:15; 7:25).

Persistent tenacity involves great patience. People have the power of free choice and it takes time for the prayer of intercession to move them to choose God's Will. In praying for the saints, Paul himself prays constantly (Eph. 6:18; Col. 1:3,9; 1 Thess. 5:17; 2 Thess. 1:11). Regular hours of prayer must be set aside for the subject of our intercession. Sometimes we should also add fasting to our regular hours of intercession.

The persistence required for the prayer of intercession is like the tenacity of a bull-dog. When a bull-dog takes a bite, it will not let go of its prey at

all. It locks its jaws into its victim. We should lock ourselves into an intense determination that will not let go until we have the object of our intercession. It is entering the prayer ministry with a do or die attitude.

Praying in the Spirit, which involves praying in tongues, is an important key to spiritual breakthroughs. Paul prayed much in tongues. He even said that he prayed more than all the Corinthians put together (1 Cor. 14:18). We do not understand completely all that is involved to get the answer for the subject of our intercession. The Holy Spirit who lives in us know all things and He can help us make intercession for all saints (Rom. 8:27).

As we grow more sensitive to the Holy Spirit, we can learn to obey His gentle promptings or burdens to uphold various people in our prayers. Intercession in tongues by the Holy Spirit will reach greater heights and achieve greater results than those limited by our finite mind.

The Prayer of Agreement

The prayer of agreement is a multiplication of the prayer of faith. The power that the prayer of faith releases is amplified many, many times when two or more people could pray it together. The prayer of agreement unleashes tremendous power that shakes even the heavens. Demons are afraid when Christians get into unity because of the power that will be unleashed against them.

On the negative side at the Tower of Babel, God pointed out the potential of men. God said that nothing that they proposed will be withheld from them (Gen. 11:6). For good or for evil, there is no doubt that two heads are better than one.

Jesus said that if two of His disciples agree on earth as touching anything that they ask, it will be done for them by the Father in heaven (Matt. 18:19). This is a conditional promise requiring only two things: that the disciples be on earth and that they be in agreement. This prayer has the power of binding or loosing things on earth by binding or loosing things in heaven; that is in the spiritual realm.

In the Old Testament, one of the Covenant people could put a thousand to flight and two ten thousand (Deut. 32:30). It was a multiplication by a factor of ten. Three would probably put a hundred thousand to flight. In the New Testament, both our weapons and warfare are in the spiritual realm. Nevertheless, when two or more Christians get into agreement, there is a tremendous amplification of spiritual power. Imagine the power released

when a whole church or a whole community of Christians get together in agreement.

The Greek word for the word 'agree' is the word 'sumphoneo' from which we get the word 'symphony.' The agreement must be total as in a musical symphony without any discord. Jesus relates the oneness of the church, the glory of God, and the witness to the world, together in His prayer (Jn. 17:22, 23). If the church is one, the power of God and His glory will be in full manifestation. The end result would be the world knowing that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of Lords.

The Prayer of Travail

Travailing prayer involves groaning in the Spirit. Paul said that he travailed again for the Galatians (Gal. 4:19). This implies that he had travailed for the spiritual birth of the Galatians into the kingdom of God before. At his time of writing, he travailed again for the Galatians to be perfectly like Christ.

In the kingdom of God, there is no migration allowed. Souls have to be born into the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:5). Souls are not brought into the kingdom of God by meetings; they are travailed for in the spiritual realm first. Somebody has to give birth to them. It is the intercessors moving into the realm of travail who will give birth to the souls.

Travailing in prayer is a tremendous labour. Paul had people who help him to travail in prayer with him. The success of any ministry or church depends on the travail that is done in the spirit realm. Ministries are not merely organized into existence, they are birthed into existence. The success of any meeting, rally or crusade rests not just on the organization but rather on the labour of prayer.

Epaphroditus was a fellow worker of Paul who knew how to labour fervently in prayers (Col. 4:12). Travail involves a groaning process in our spirits through the working of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26). Great expenditures of energy are required to achieve success in this type of prayer.

Praying in tongues, when compared to prayer in the understanding, is like the difference between a modern sports car and a bicycle. Groaning in the Spirit is praying in tongues at a thousand miles an hour. It can do in one hour what praying in the spirit does in many hours. It reaches beyond languages. It is an outpouring of the soul before God. Usually much tears accompany this type of prayer.

The prayer of travail involves a yielding to the Holy Spirit within. It also involves the carrying of the Lord's burden. It is a partaking of the intercessory ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. It reaches the depths of the spirit realm; where spirit communicates to Spirit. Learn to pray much in the spirit first and then progress from there to learning how to groan in the Spirit.

Travailing in the Spirit is one of the most powerful forms of prayer. It involves the bringing of perfection to all of the creation of God and the total fulfilment of all things to the perfect plan of God (Rom. 8:22, 23, 26). It is this form of prayer that works all things for good to those who love God (Rom. 8:26-28).

CHAPTER 3

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

The prayer of thanksgiving and praise must accompany all the other types of prayer. It is the prayer that should be prayed before and after any other type of prayer. Without this prayer there is no entrance into the throne of God. God has ordained that we enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise (Ps. 100:4).

The Altar of Incense

In the Tabernacle of Moses, the altar of incense was the smallest yet the tallest piece of furniture (Ex. 37:25). It had four horns at its corners like the brazen altar. The four horns of the brazen altar represent the gospel going forth to the four corners of the earth. The four horns of the altar of incense speak of the going forth of praise and worship to the four corners of the earth.

Whenever the high priest went into the most holy place, he must take burning coals on a censer from the altar of incense and a handful of sweet incense with him. As he entered the most holy place, he must quickly place the sweet incense on the coals of fire so that a cloud of incense would cover him (Lev. 16:12). If the cloud of incense did not cover the mercy seat, he would have died (Lev. 16:13).

The altar of incense and the incense represents praise and worship. No one can enter into His holy presence without praise and worship. Praise and worship enables us to enter into His full presence. It is our covering and protection. The Almighty God is so holy and so powerful that all beings who enter into His presence without the covering of praise and worship will die.

The Covering of Praise

God dwells in the praises of His people (Ps. 22:3). Whenever we praise and worship Him, He manifests His presence. The reason why He manifests Himself after we praise and worship Him is because the glory of His presence will kill us if we are unclothed without the garments of praise. People do not understand it; but it is in the mercy of God that He does not show His presence. If His presence comes without praise and worship, we will all die.

Much as God longs and desires to love us, to embrace us, to have us close to Him, He refrains Himself for our own protection. Although His Father-heart yearns for us, our imperfections render us incapable of receiving Him. There has to be continual praise offered to God in heaven. The angels are constantly praising God and the four creatures around the throne are crying 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty' (Rev. 4:8). Without the covering of praise, even the heavens cannot contain the glory and the might of God!

If we desire to live close with God and have God's presence in fullness in our lives, it is inevitable that we enter into higher and higher levels of praise and worship. As we enter deeper into praise and worship, God can manifest greater levels of His glory to us. We should grow in praise and worship until our very lives and existences are a continual river flowing into God.

Thanksgiving, Praise and Worship

Thanksgiving is the lowest form of adoration we can offer God. It is only the beginning of a life of worship. Thanksgiving is offered to God for all His works. Praise is offered to God for who He is. Worship is our response to His presence.

Logically, we begin with thanksgiving because our initial knowledge of God is the knowledge of His works. We need to offer the prayer of thanksgiving every time God answers our prayers. We can also offer thanksgiving by faith for what we believe He is going to do. Working together with the prayer of faith, thanksgiving helps us to maintain our faith. It is like the lubricating oil in the engine of faith. Abraham was strong in faith by giving glory to God (Rom. 4:20).

Praise is an acknowledgement of the attributes of God. It is knowing not only His power but also His person. When the Israelites were worshipping God and recognizing His mercy, God filled the temple of Solomon with a cloud of glory (2 Chron. 5:13, 14). When David made a mistake of numbering Israel, he was given three choices of judgments (1 Chron. 21:11,12). Knowing the attribute of God's great mercy, David choose to fall into the hands of God (1 Chron. 21:13). Jerusalem was spared because of the mercy of God (1 Chron. 21:15).

David was a man after God's heart. He understood not only the works of God but he understood the person of God. He understood the nature of God. Moses was another man who understood the nature of God. He found grace in the eyes of God and made intercession for the Israelites because He knew the character of God. Moses, knowing that God's anger will not be in

violation to His Word, appealed to the covenant God made with Abraham when God was angry at the Israelites (Ex. 32:13).

It is only those who understand the character and the nature of God who will be able to relate closely with God. Those who know only His works will not be great intercessors. We need to learn to worship God for who He is and understand more and more of His attributes and character.

Worship is our response to the presence and the person of God. It is what we do after God has manifested Himself. Thanksgiving and praise bring about God's manifestations. Thanksgiving and praise are offerings we bring unto the Lord. Worship is our love communion with God. It is the fullness of union with God. Worship is the climax of all our thanksgiving and praise.

Personally, I regard the call to worship as my first call; far above the call of God to stand in the fivefold ministry. I am called first to worship Him; then only to serve Him. The prophet Elijah recognizes that his first call is to worship the Lord. In his statements, he constantly mentioned that he stood before the Lord (1 Kgs. 17:1; 18:15). Even the archangel Gabriel is first a worshiper of God and then only a messenger of God. He said to Zacharias that he was Gabriel who stands in the presence of God (Lk. 1:19).

Worship in the Spirit

God has given the New Testament people an advantage over the Old in terms of worship. Through the avenue of a new tongue, God has instantly placed in the hands of the church the power of worship. Through singing in the Spirit, we could immediately enter the depths of heaven and offer God quality worship fully born of the Holy Spirit. This worship goes beyond the limitations of the mind.

There are two aspects of worshiping in the Spirit. The first is familiarity with our new tongues. Before we can sing in tongues with ease, we must speak in tongues with ease. Through time we can learn to sing in tongues to the tune of songs that we already know. The second aspect is to receive both a new melody as well as to sing in tongues. The same Holy Spirit who gives the new tongues will also give the new melodies (Eph. 5:18, 19).

God our Father looks for worshipers. Jesus said that our Father in heaven seeks out those who worship Him in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:23, 24). Our vocal chords were originally designed as instruments of worship to God. In heaven, we do not need spoken words to communicate. We shall know as we are known (1 Cor. 13:12). Our thoughts will be visible and known to all.

For that reason, we can recognize all the people in the Bible in heaven without an introduction. The moment we see them, we shall recognize them. It is spiritual knowing beyond words. We can, of course, still speak and communicate. However, the highest design of the human voice is not just to communicate. It was brought to this low level after the fall of man; and this is still true today. Our voices were originally designed as organs of worship.

Prayers and Thanksgiving

In his epistles, Paul emphasized thanksgiving each time he speaks about prayers. He was a man who knew how to pray all manner of prayers with thanksgiving and praise. He advised that all prayer and supplications be offered to God with thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6). He told the Colossians to continue earnestly in prayer with thanksgiving (Col. 4:2). His exhortation to pray unceasingly is accompanied by the exhortation to give thanks in everything (1 Thess. 5:17, 18).

The prayer of thanksgiving and praise must be the unceasing flow throughout our whole life. This would result in a constant presence of God in our lives which would make our lives an instrument of worship. Be a worshiper of God above all things. May you grow to fulfil your role as a worshiper of God. The whole body of Christ is one large symphony which the Holy Spirit is bringing into harmony with God. For that reason are we called to be a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Pet. 2:5).

Here are eight reasons why we should worship God:

1. Worship shows that God is more important than the things of life.
2. Worship makes the problems grow smaller.
3. Worship enhances our receptivity to God's Word.
4. Worship tunes our ears to hear God.
5. Worship causes our spiritual life to grow.
6. Worship defeats the purposes of Satan.
7. Worship activates angels to our aid.
8. Worship shows that you love God.

We have heard of people organizing twenty-four hour prayer chains. We need to organize twenty-four hour praise and worship chains. Imagine the glory and the presence of God that will be in manifestation after many days. It would be heaven on earth if this is done for years.

CHAPTER 4

STYLES OF PRAYER

Times of prayer can be organized in different ways. Each style has its own merits. We need to learn to make use of all the various styles of prayer to develop our spiritual lives. There are different skills required to pray in the various format.

Corporate Prayer

Corporate prayer brings the full resources of the power that God has put into the church together. The church in the book of Acts was strong in corporate prayer. They prayed together in one accord for ten days before the Holy Spirit came on them (Acts 1:14; 2:1). It was a part of the daily life of the church to pray in one accord (Acts 2:42, 46; 3:1). When persecution arose, they turned corporately to the Lord in one accord (Acts 4:24). The church of Jerusalem was a praying church.

In corporate prayer, it is important to have unity among those who come together. The Jerusalem church could tap the full power of corporate prayer because of their unity. Their leadership was united and the people willingly submitted to the leadership of the church. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:42). Get has set leaders in the church and we must learn to submit to them (1 Pet. 5:5; Heb. 13:17).

Leaders, on the other hand, must learn to lead the sheep by example rather by domineering lordship (1 Pet. 5:2, 3). Submission must be given and not taken. In other words, we cannot take authority over people and demand their submission. We must faithfully be diligent in what God has called us to do and people who are blessed by our lives will most willingly give submission to our leadership. Our gift will make room for us (Pro. 18:16).

The apostle Paul's leadership was one by example. Paul said that he has set an example to the churches he helped (Acts 20:35; 2 Thess. 3:9). He exhorts Timothy to lead by example (1 Tim. 4:12). The leadership of our Lord Jesus Christ is one founded on example (Jn. 13:15). There can be no unity in any church without submission. Corporate prayer is only possible if the church is united under recognized leadership.

Another important aspect of corporate prayer is a common objective. Those who come together must be of one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32). In the upper room, about one hundred and twenty disciples were praying united for the Holy Spirit in obedience to the command of Jesus Christ to

wait (Acts 1:4,13,14). Under persecution, the church prayed corporately for a new measure of boldness and power (Acts 4:24, 29, 30). Leaders can also get together and have a corporate prayer meeting among the leadership (Acts 13:1, 2).

Constant Prayer

Constant prayer is organized chain prayer. When Peter was imprisoned, the Jerusalem church had constant prayer in the house of John Mark (Acts 12:5, 12). Constant prayer takes great discipline on the part of the intercessors. Prayer warriors can be organized in shifts. By continuous prayer over the same objective, an item can be 'prayed through.' The purpose of this mode of prayer is to exercise prevailing prayer.

It is important to remember that prevailing prayer is not prevailing with our Father. The moment we pray, God hears us (Dan. 10:12). However, there are wicked spirits in heavenly places that seek to prevent our answers from manifesting. We need to wrestle with them in prayer (Eph. 6:12, 18).

In a vision of the spirit world, I saw the whole world covered with a cloud of darkness. From time to time, giant beams of light broke forth through the darkness. The source of these beams of light was bands of Christians praying together. Constant prayer is prevailing prayer against the forces of darkness.

Fasting and Prayer

Fasting multiplies the intensity of our prayers. By fasting and prayer, we demonstrate our desire for the answer to our prayers more than our daily food. The key to achieving things beyond the possibilities of the natural rests in fasting and prayer.

When Jesus mentioned that nothing will be impossible to the disciples if they have faith, He went on to speak about fasting (Matt. 17:20,21). He pointed out that taking authority over certain demonic forces would require fasting and prayer (Matt. 17:21). In His encounter with Satan in the wilderness, Jesus fasted for forty days and nights (Lk. 4:2). There is a direct link between fasting and spiritual battles.

Daniel's twenty-one days of fasting shook the satanic power over the whole kingdom of Persia (Dan. 10:2, 3, 13, 14). One man's prayer could bring about the aid of two archangels, Gabriel and Michael, against the spiritual wickedness over Persia. Fasting to prayer is like fuel to fire. It increases the magnitude of the flames of prayer.

It is during times of fasting that God's voice can be heard clearly. When the leaders of the Antioch church fasted and prayed, the Holy Spirit spoke to them (Acts 13:1, 2). When the Israelites fasted and prayed in Jehoshaphat's time, God spoke through Jahaziel (2 Chron. 20:14). Before the apostles selected church elders, they fasted and prayed to hear God in choosing the right leaders (Acts 14:23).

In many places of the world and in diverse countries, the demonic powers that rule over the geographical areas must be dislodged by prayer and fasting. Ministers, who have struggled to bring the Word of God to those regions, should have regular times of fasting and prayer. The first thing that Jesus did in His ministry was to wrestle with Satan by fasting. He entered the forty days of temptation filled with the Holy Spirit. He came out of it in the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 4:14). Unless we win the battle in the spiritual realm, we will never win the battle in the natural realm.

Overnight Prayer

Jesus was accustomed to prayer overnight. He spend a whole night in prayer to seek the Father's guidance in selecting His twelve disciples (Lk. 6:12). After the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, Jesus sent all the people away, including His disciples, and spent the whole night in prayer (Mk. 6:46,47). He continued praying until the early hours of the morning. At about the forth watch (between three to six in the morning), Jesus saw His disciples rowing against the wind, and He came to them walking on the water (Mk. 6:48).

On the night of His betrayal, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives after the Lord's Supper to pray (Lk. 22:39, 40). He must have prayed for many long hours because by the time Judas came with the multitudes to arrest Him, it was already towards morning. Shortly during the trial, the rooster crowed and it was morning (Jn. 18:27, 28). The last night of our Lord Jesus before His crucifixion was spent in an overnight prayer meeting.

During an overnight meeting, we have two areas to overcome. We have to wrestle in the spiritual realm and we also have to overcome the physical limitations of our natural body. We cannot determine whether it is the Will of God or not to pray by our feelings. Nor can we judge the spiritual quality of a meeting by our own tiredness or sleepiness. Some of the most powerful supernatural happenings have taken place when the disciples of Jesus were tired and sleepy (Lk. 9:32; 22:43-46).

In an overnight prayer meeting, we should avoid postures that are conducive to sleep. It was the Will of God that the disciples of Jesus prayed

but they were too sleepy to pray with Jesus even for an hour (Matt. 26:40, 41). Jesus asked them to pray that they not enter into temptation (Lk. 22:40). The man of prayer avoids a lot of unnecessary problems and temptations that beset the prayerless.

Overnight prayer vigils can be done either individually or corporately. Those who cannot pray long hours alone should join good prayer meetings until they develop the habit of prayer. Unless, we pray like Jesus prayed, we cannot live like Jesus lived nor do the works that Jesus did. The life of prayer is the foundation of the Christian life and also of the church life.

CHAPTER 5

WAITING ON GOD

Waiting on God is related to prayer yet it is a separate form of spiritual development. It is a definite requirement for every Christian to learn the art of waiting on God. No Christian has been able to live in the perfect Will of God without learning how to wait on God. Many Christians are doing only the permissive Will of God and not the perfect Will of God. The key to discovering the perfect Will of God is in learning the art of waiting on Him.

The Cycles of the Spiritual Life

The natural life is full of natural cycles. There is a cycle of sleep and wake, childhood, teens and adulthood, etc. The spiritual world has many cycles. Even Satan attacks in cycles. Paul speaks about being able to stand on the evil day (Eph. 6:13). Satan cannot attack us unceasingly. He plans his attacks in cycles. When his temptation of Jesus failed, he left seeking an opportune time to try again (Lk. 4:13).

Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint (Isa. 40:31). There are four cycles mentioned here: waiting, flying, running, and walking. These cycles will be repeated frequently in our spiritual lives. Notice the difference in speed. From waiting we go to mounting up our wings like eagles. Then it slows down to running. Afterwards it slows down even more to walking and then to waiting all over again.

Each part of the cycle is important. An eagle needs to slow down to swoop on its prey. Then it needs to find a place of rest to eat its food and also a regular nest to set up its home. There are times when we need to wait on God to receive fresh direction and vision. From those times we come forth with God's vision for our lives. As we implement it, we need to learn how to run and also how to walk with the vision.

The Art of Waiting on God

There are five main Hebrew words that have been translated as 'wait' in our English Bibles. They each carry a different meaning. They are as follows:

1. Chakah - to wait earnestly (Isa. 64:4; Hab. 2:3).
2. Dumiyah - to wait in silence (Ps. 62:1; 65:1).

3. Daman - to stand still (Ps. 62:5).
4. Tsaba - to serve (Num. 8:24, 25).
5. Qavah - to wait with hope, to be bound (Ps. 25:3; 37:9; 69:6; Lam. 3:25; Isa. 40:31; 49:23).

The word 'wait' in Isaiah chapter forty comes from the word 'qavah.' It does not mean waiting in silence or waiting earnestly to receive something. Nor does it mean waiting to hear His command and serve Him. All these are good and have their place in the spiritual life. However true waiting on God is not just waiting to receive His blessings or waiting to be sent forth.

The root meaning of the word 'qavah' is 'to be gathered together' or 'to be bound.' The word 'qavah' has been translated as 'gathered together' in Jeremiah 3:17 and Genesis 1:9. The sense of the gathering together in these scriptures is not just an ordinary coming together but rather being bound in unity together. Waiting on God is not just waiting to receive or to serve; it is staying in His presence, seeking to be bound in perfect union together. Times of waiting should be times of intimate bonding to the Lord; where He abides in us and we abide in Him.

The art of waiting is the art of binding ourselves in perfect union with the Lord. Our bounding together with the Lord should be as the gathering of the waters into one (Gen. 1:9).

Being Renewed by God

The word 'renew' comes from the Hebrew word 'chalaph' which have four special meanings. Each of these meanings explains the process of renewing that takes place as we wait on the Lord. The four possible translations of the word 'chalaph' are as follows:

1. Removed or strike through (Isa. 2:18; Judg. 5:26).
2. Changed (Gen. 35:2; 41:14; 2 Sam. 12:20; Ps. 102:26).
3. Go forward (1 Sam. 10:3).
4. Grow up (Ps. 90:5, 6).

When we wait on God and become bound in one with Him, four things take place as we are renewed: our sharp edges are removed, we receive an exchange of God's strength for our strength, we receive a new vision to go forward, and we grow spiritually in our times of intimacy with Him. We do not just get refresh, we receive His strength to do His work. The key to all of the works of Jesus was His union with the Father (Jn. 14:10, 11). When we discover the art of waiting on God - being in union with Him - we tap on

the same resources of Jesus. Through union with God, we can do the works that Jesus did and greater works as He promised (Jn. 14:12).

Paul exhorts us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1). This implies union with God where our bodies become the bone of His bone and the flesh of His flesh (Eph. 5:30). The end result is that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2).

The Greek word for 'renew' is 'anakainos' which means 'to make new again.' It is not just a refreshing; it is a replacement - our strength for His strength. The end result of renewal is transformation (Greek - metamorphoomai). The same Greek word for 'transformation' is used to refer to Jesus' transfiguration on the Mount of Olives (Mk. 9:2).

At His transfiguration, Jesus face shone like the sun and His garments became as white as light (Matt. 17:2). Those who walk close with God, presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice, can be transformed (transfigured) by the renewal of the mind. Stephen's face shone like an angel at his trial (Acts 6:15).

We are all being transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit of God as we behold the glory of God and bound ourselves to Him. Wait on God. Bind yourselves to Him and His glory will transform and transfigure your spirits, souls and bodies including your garments.