

Three Different Styles of Prayer

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by Nancy Wood



In reading the bible, you will find several different types of prayers. The importance in our prayer life is to know what type of prayer to pray and when to pray it. Three different types of prayer are supplication, intercession, and praise and thanksgiving.

Supplication means to petition. To ask for something humbly, earnest entreaty, or request. As stated in Eph 6:18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. NKJV Elijah and Solomon were men of prayer. We see in James 5:17-18 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. NKJV We see in 1 Kings 8:54-55 And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. 55 Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel. NKJV

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The prayer of supplication changes things. In Philippians 4:6 it states "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. NKJV Fasting can sometimes come from a prayer of supplication.

We can pray the prayers of supplication concerning both natural and spiritual needs not only for ourselves but also for all men. We are also to pray for those who are in authority, including the unbeliever as stated in 1 Tim 2:1-2 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. NKJV

Another type of prayer is the prayer of intercession. To intercede means to mediate on behalf of another. We see examples of Jesus and the Holy Spirit praying prayers of intercession for us. In Hebrews 7:25 it states Therefore He (Jesus) is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. NKJV We see in Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit [is], because He makes intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God. NKJV

To quote Oswald Chambers as he put it succinctly, "Jesus Christ carries on intercession for us in heaven, the Holy Ghost carries on intercession in us on earth, and we the saints have to carry on intercession for all men."

Prayer of intercession means to pray earnestly for others. We must enter with our heart that really loves the Lord and cares about the things God cares about.

One of the earliest examples is when Abraham pleaded with God for the well-being of the people of Sodom as seen in Genesis 18. We see Abraham, instead of being overcome with his own needs, he prayed for those around him.

In the New Testament we see Paul's prayers of intercession. In Philippians 1:9-11 it states, And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which [are] by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. NKJV Another example is while Peter was in prison, the church prayed fervently. We see this in Acts 12:5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. NKJV

Possibly the most important type of prayer is that of praise and thanksgiving. As we praise God especially in what appears to be a negative situation we affirm our faith in Him. This not only pleases God but helps us with our faith.

The prayers of praise and thanksgiving are power weapons to the believer. It destroys the hold of Satan and unbelief in our life. Both of these can manifest in many different ways. It is no wonder why scripture calls praise a two edged sword as seen in Psalm 149:4-9 For the LORD

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takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds.6 [Let] the high praises of God [be] in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, 7 To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; 8 To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; 9 To execute on them the written judgment-- This honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD! NKJV

When we give praise and thanksgiving to God it helps us understand just how awesome He really is. We should praise Him or how powerful, giving, and loving He is. We should thank Him for all He has done, is doing, and will continue to do for us. Paul tells us this in Col 1:3, 12-14 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [us] into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. NKJV

Also, we are commanded to give praise and thanksgiving to God as seen in Hebrew 13:15-16 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of [our] lips, giving thanks to His name.16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. NKJV We see this command also in 1 Thess 5:16-18 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. NKJV

All forms of prayer are important and have a place in our lives as Christians. I feel most Christians get complacent with their prayer life. As we see above, it is necessary to pray a variety of prayers depending on what is going on in your life and for those around you. We must always remember foremost to pray a prayer of praise and thanksgiving daily. This alone will strengthen our faith in God.

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