



Worship-Based Prayer Guide

Introduction

If we're honest we must admit we've experienced disappointment in praying both with others and by ourselves. Can you remember instances where this was the case? How many times have we fallen asleep praying or allowed fleeting thoughts to derail the reason why we prayed in the first place? A one hour prayer session can begin with 55 minutes of sharing prayer needs followed by 5 minutes of rapid-fire prayer requests. Over time we understandably grow weary of these practices because they are neither life-giving nor biblical. God didn't intend prayer to be boring or irrelevant.

We struggle with prayer because our natural self (the flesh) opposes prayer, we make other things in life higher in priority, and the devil surely hates it when disciples of Jesus pray in faith. The devil discourages and distracts us from prayer because he does not want us to experience the true community, deepening intimacy with God, and spiritual breakthroughs that accompany authentic, biblical prayer.

How would you answer this question: *What is prayer?* One common definition we've been taught is that prayer is simply "talking to God." The problem with this concept is that it minimizes God and us by making Him one big ear and us one big mouth. We simply engage in one-way conversation with God by informing Him how He needs to reorder the universe in order to meet our expectations for the future. Request-based prayer makes our wants the foundation of prayer, not God Himself. The New Testament has no record of a praying gathering starting with the question, "*Does anyone have any prayer requests?*" Our fixation on our wants in prayer is a symptom of a larger issue in the church: the pervasive ideology that God exists to provide us comfortable and successful lives. Sharing requests is important but is neither the foundation nor the goal of prayer. We need a better, biblical definition of prayer.

What Is Prayer?

Professor Alvin Reed defines prayer thusly: ***Prayer is intimacy with God that leads to the fulfillment of His purposes.*** Much of scripture supports this definition; how does the following passage agree:

Matthew 6:31 *Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'* 32 *For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and*

your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Prayer is not shaped by our requests but by the word of God. *Genuine prayer is scripture-fed prayer.* The best way to have an intimate conversation with God is to let Him begin and guide the conversation from His own word. John Piper said, “*Where the mind is not brimming with scripture the heart is seldom brimming with prayer.*”

Prayer is characterized by fervor, or spiritual energy. *Genuine prayer is Spirit-led prayer.* It is impossible to pray effectively apart from the leading of the indwelling Holy Spirit; Romans 8:26 *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.* The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual insight into God’s will; 1 Corinthians 2:11 *So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.* Why would we want to pray our own thoughts when we can pray God’s thoughts through the agency of the Holy Spirit?

Life-giving prayer begins with worshipping God, not expressing our prayer needs. *Genuine prayer is worship-based prayer.* We will see how Jesus modeled this in prayer.

When have you experienced the best, most effective and fruitful times of prayer? You likely experienced the dynamics of genuine, biblical prayer. *Genuine prayer is scripture-fed, Spirit-led, worship-based prayer.*

Worship-Based Prayer

There are plenty of books and resources on prayer, but Jesus Himself established **the** model for prayer in Matthew 6:9-13, commanding us in v9 to *pray then like this:*

9 “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread, 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

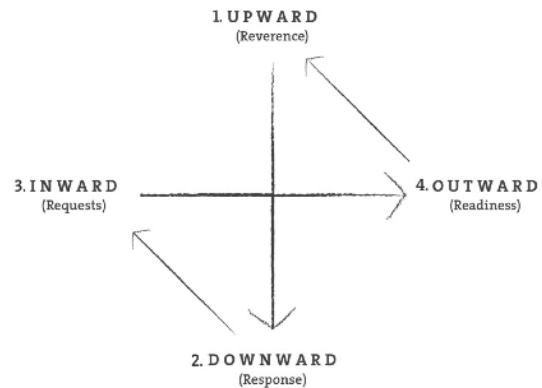
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Worship-based prayer is a pattern of prayer established in the Lords Prayer and begins by focusing on God as opposed to ourselves. It stands in contrast to request-based prayer. This model prayer is also found in Luke 11:2-4 and while the words are somewhat different the pattern is the same. The first half the prayer is God-focused (Our Father...) and the second half is man-focused (Give us this day...).

There are four distinct parts to the Lord's prayer; 1. Reverence, 2. Response, 3. Requests, and 4. Readiness.

1. Reverence (Worship)

- *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name*
- What does this passage tell us about God and his character?
- We take note of God's unique characteristics as revealed in His word and praise Him accordingly
- We offer thanks to God for what He's done
- We do not ask Him for anything yet, we just worship in prayer. Worship is the response of all we are to the revelation of all that He is



2. Response

- *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*
- We trade our purposes for God's purposes
- We acknowledge and accept His will for our lives
- Based on this passage how does God want us to respond? Is there a sin we need confess, including unforgiveness?
- How else have we been unfaithful to God this season?
- Do we need to surrender our pride or our will to His?

3. Requests

- *Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*
- After worshipping God and affirming His purposes we offer passionate petitions in accordance with His will
- Asking for God's grace to obey His commands
- What are our **resource** needs (daily bread)? How can God provide for our material, emotional, and physical needs?
- What are our **relationship** needs (forgiven debtors)? We are trusting God for the vital needs in our marriages, friendships, work relationships, and our influence in society

4. Readiness

- *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*
- We trust in God's supernatural authority in our spiritual battle against the devil
- What promises from God's word do we need to claim for battle?
- We put on the "full armor of God" and utilize the *sword of the Spirit, which is the word (rhema = spoken word) of God* (Ephesians 6:17)
- We trust that God will answer our prayers against temptation and evil
- We declare the overarching purpose for our prayers: that God would be glorified and His Kingdom would advance

How To Experience Worship-Based Prayer

1. **Begin with an open bible:** select a passage of scripture to pray from, preferably from your bible reading plan. Trust that the Holy Spirit will lead your prayers as you pray alone or with others. (For this example we will use Psalm 99)

Psalm 99

- 1 The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!
- 2 The Lord is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.
- 3 Let them praise your great and awesome name!
Holy is he!
- 4 The King in his might loves justice.
You have established equity;
you have executed justice
and righteousness in Jacob.
- 5 Exalt the Lord our God;
worship at his footstool!
Holy is he!
- 6 Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
Samuel also was among those who called upon his name.
They called to the Lord, and he answered them.
- 7 In the pillar of the cloud he spoke to them;
they kept his testimonies
and the statute that he gave them.
- 8 O Lord our God, you answered them;
you were a forgiving God to them,
but an avenger of their wrongdoings.
- 9 Exalt the Lord our God,
and worship at his holy mountain;
for the Lord our God is holy!

2. **Reverence:** make a list of and meditate upon God's unique characteristics as revealed in this passage. Praise God in prayer according to these attributes.

- Sovereign king over all the nations vv1-2
- Establishes covenants with His people v1
- He is worthy of praise v3
- His name is awesome v3
- God is holy vv3, 5, 9
- He acts with justice and equity for His people v4
- He worthy of exaltation and worship vv5, 9

- He answers worship-based, scripture-fed, Spirit-led prayer vv6-8
- He forgives v8
- He disciplines us v8

- **Possible prayer prompts:**

- Lord, even though we see so much _____ in the world You remain sovereign over all vv1-2
- God you are worthy of all praise because _____ v3
- Lord you are awesome because your name is _____ v3
- Lord I thank you that you answered my prayers for _____ vv6-8

3. **Response:** In prayer acknowledge God's will and purposes according to this passage and confess any sins or unfaithfulness in your present season of life.

- **Possible prayer prompts:**

- Lord I admit that instead of worshipping at your feet I have focused my attention on _____ v5
- Because you act with justice and equity I confess my conditional love/selfish attitude towards _____ v4
- Lord I surrender my fears over _____ that I may keep Your testimonies and statutes v7
- Lord because you have forgiven your people I in turn forgive _____ v8

4. **Requests:** Offer passionate petitions according to His will, as revealed in this passage. Pray for both resource and relationship needs.

- **Possible prayer prompts:**

- Lord keep my heart in a place of exaltation and worship as I deal with _____ v9
- Lord help me to treat _____ (name/people) with justice and equity as you have done for us v4
- God because you are sovereign I will trust You today for _____ vv1-2
- Because You have spoken through your word I will obey You by _____ v7
- Lord in the middle of their struggle cause _____ (name) to call upon your name and exalt You vv5-6

5. **Readiness:** Pray for God's favor in spiritual warfare against temptation and evil, claiming God's promises, all for His glory.

- **Possible prayer prompts:**

- Lord we trust that You will establish Your justice and equity as we deal with _____ v4
- I will worship and exalt Your name this week as I face spiritual battle against _____ vv5-6
- For our glory keep us guided by your word as we begin to _____ v7

6. **Continue** to pray with others according to this pattern; we learn how to pray by praying with other disciples of Jesus more so than we do from a prayer study alone.

Worship-Based Prayer Worksheet

1. **Begin with an open bible:** select a passage of scripture to pray from, preferably from your bible reading plan. Trust that the Holy Spirit will lead your prayers as you pray alone or with others.

Passage: _____

2. **Reverence:** make a list of and meditate upon God's unique characteristics as revealed in this passage. Praise God in prayer according to those attributes.

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- _____
- _____
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- _____

- **Possible prayer prompts:**

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3. **Response:** In prayer acknowledge God's will and purposes according to this passage and confess any sins or unfaithfulness in your present season of life.

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