

3.0 Elements of Prayer (cont'd)

3.2 Worship

When we come to God in prayer, we also want to bring our worship to Him. In its most basic form, worship is praising God for who He is, for His character, His nature. This is very different from thanking Him for what He has done. Worship has also been described as “the overflow of a heart delighted with knowing God” and “the encounter of a redeemed heart in adoration of its awesome God.” However we describe it, worship must be:

- an encounter with the living God - we are consciously in His presence when we worship
- directed toward God - when we worship, we are directing our words to God
- centered on God: His character, His nature - not on ourselves
- an acknowledgment of His greatness, my smallness
- for God’s pleasure, not mine.

The Bible is full of examples of worship. The book of Psalms was the hymnbook of ancient Israel; in it we find some of the greatest examples of worship. Read, for example, Psalm 8, which worships God for His creation. Psalms 95 through 98 express the joy of knowing and worshipping God. Psalm 103 praises God for His love in caring for His people. As you read the book of Psalms, you will discover many other examples of worship.

There are also many examples of worship in the New Testament. For example, in Revelation 5:11-14, John is given a vision of worship in heaven: *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12In a loud voice they sang:*

*"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!"*

13Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

*"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!"*

14The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped. Other examples of worship are found in Hebrews 1:8-12 and Jude 24-25.



Living the Christian Life Bible Study

Lesson 6a (NIV)

Understanding Prayer (Part 1 of 3)

Student's Name _____ Unit _____

Instructor _____

Comments _____

1.0 Introduction

Prayer is our greatest joy and comfort, the link to our greatest source of power; yet at the same time, it is also our most difficult discipline. In prayer, we have a personal conversation with the Almighty Creator and controller of the universe, yet we appear to be speaking to no one, and we get no audible response from anyone.

In the first two lessons we will consider several aspects of prayer; in the last lesson we will consider some encouragements and some hindrances to prayer.

2.0 The Disciples' Prayer

Matt 6:9-13 9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "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 today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

"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 today our daily bread. _____

12 Forgive us our debts, _____

as we also have forgiven our debtors. _____

13 And lead us not into temptation, _____

but deliver us from the evil one. _____

3.0 Elements of Prayer

When we talk with our friends, we converse in a variety of ways. We might discuss the news of the day, we might argue over the justice of a referee's call at a football game, or we might pour out our emotions about a close friend who has died. In the same way, there are many different ways that we talk to God in our prayers. We might ask for forgiveness of a habitual sin, thank Him for protection in a recent close call, or plead for the healing of a sick friend. As we look at the examples of prayer in the Bible, including the Disciples' Prayer on the previous page, we find several elements that are common in many of these prayers. In the next few pages we will look at these common elements, recognizing that a well-rounded prayer life will include time for each of them.

3.1 Confession of sin

As we approach a holy God, we want to be free from any hindrance in our relationship due to sin. This is not the forgiveness of a sinner before his judge, but the forgiveness of a child seeking to maintain a close relationship with his father.

1 John 1:9 - If we _____ our _____, he is faithful and just and will _____ us our sins and _____ us from all unrighteousness.

In Psalm 19, David asks for forgiveness for sins he does not know he committed.

Ps 19:12 - Who can discern his _____ ? Forgive my _____ faults.

There are many other examples of prayers of confession in the Bible, which you may wish to read and study on your own.

- After David had sinned badly with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11), he wrote Psalm 51 in confession of his guilt. He later wrote of the relief of forgiveness in Psalm 32.
- In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus tells a parable that contrasts two men praying in the Temple. Only the one who confessed his sin was heard by God.
- In Nehemiah 1:4-11 and Daniel 9:4-19, we find examples of men praying for forgiveness for the sins of their nation.