

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Study Series: Foundation for an Effective Prayer Life
Part 1: An Effective Prayer Life

Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024
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When You Pray!

One thing you will discover as you read the scriptures is that the basic assumption is a believer is someone who prays. Prayer is fundamental to having a relationship with God. A believer is as strong as his or her prayer life. A weak prayer life means a weak relationship with God. Therefore, prayer is not an option, or something done at leisure; it is our life.

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said “when you pray” not “if you pray.” Prayer is not if but when, a true believer will pray.

- **Matthew 6:6** *“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”* (NKJV)

Later in the passage, He said “This, then, is how you should pray”. There is no debate whether a believer should pray or not, the debate is how to pray.

- **Matthew 6:9-10** *“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.”*

Prayer is expected to be a constant activity in the life of a believer. Prayer is like food, water, or the air we breathe.

- **1 Thessalonians 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.*

Why is Prayer so Significant?

1. *Prayer is our primary way to communicate with God:* Prayer is essential to growing in your faith and deepening your relationship with Christ. Put simply, prayer is communicating with God as you would with a friend. God doesn't require us to come to Him with large words or fancy language. He longs to hear what our heart desires, our worries, and what we're thankful for.
2. *Prayer is how we deploy the weapon of our warfare:* Praying is our war cry that attaches to the bayonet of God's Word for the very real and brutal spiritual warfare in which we must engage. Eph. 6:10-18
3. Prayer is the way we get God involved in the affairs of men. The late Chinese church leader and Christian teacher, Watchman Nee described praying as laying a train track that allows the train carrying God's blessings to go into places. Matthew 6:10

What does it mean to have a prayer life?

A prayer life is an individual's private practice of prayer. A person with a prayer life has prayer as a regular part of their daily routine, just like brushing, eating, sleeping, etc. Let's look at the example of people who had a prayer life in the Bible:

- David was a man that had a prayer life. He said in **Psalms 55:16-17** *“As for me, I call to God, and the Lord saves me. 17 Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.”*
- Daniel was a man that prayed diligently. **Daniel 6:10** *“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”*

- Apostle Paul was a great man of prayer. **2 Timothy 1:3** *“I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.”*. Ephesians 1:16, Philippians 1:4.
- Jesus was both a man of prayer and a model for prayer: **Hebrews 5:7** *“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.”* We also know that Jesus rose very early in the morning to pray (Mark 1:35), and He sometimes prayed all night (Luke 6:12).

What does it mean to have an effective prayer life?

An effective prayer life is a prayer life that produces results. Prayer moves the hand that moves the world (Charles H. Spurgeon). Prayer also changes the life that is supplicant and creates an atmosphere that is saturated with God’s presence around you.

James 5:16 *“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”* (NASB 1995)

James 5:16 *“Therefore, confess your sins to one another [your false steps, your offenses], and pray for one another, that you may be healed and restored. The heartfelt and persistent prayer of a righteous man (believer) is able to accomplish much [when put into action and made effective by God—it is dynamic and can have tremendous power]”* (AMP)

So, what makes a prayer life effective? To answer this properly, we are going to look at factors that can make a prayer life ineffective. Ideally, a believer’s prayer life should be effective. After all, God loves us, and He wants to answer our prayers. But there are factors we must be aware of that can render our prayers ineffective.

Seven Factors that Render Our Prayers Ineffective

1. Unconfessed sin - **Psalm 66:18-20** *“If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. 19 But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer. 20 Praise God, who did not ignore my prayer or withdraw his unfailing love from me.”* (NLT)
2. Unforgiving spirit. **Matthew 6:15** *“But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”* (NIV)
3. Selfish motivation. **James 4:3** – *“When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”*
4. Lack of faith. **James 1:6-7** *“But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. 7 Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.”* (NLT)
5. Lack of knowledge – Lack of knowledge leads to wrong prayer. **1 John 5:14** *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”*
6. Lack of heart (fervency). **Matthew 6:7** *“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”*
7. Lack of persistence (lack of “shameless audacity”) - **Luke 11:5-13**. (Verse 8) *“I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity[a] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.”* (NIV)