

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

**Study Series: Foundation for an Effective Prayer Life
Part 2: The Praying Person**

**Wednesday, January 10, 2024
Facilitator: Pastor Jide Lawore**

James 5:13-18 “Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them **pray**. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to **pray** over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the **prayer** offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and **pray** for each other so that you may be healed. The **prayer** of a righteous person is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He **prayed** earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he **prayed**, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.” (NIV)

Last week, we looked at what an effective prayer life is - prayer life that produces results. We also discussed seven factors that can render our prayers ineffective. Today we are going to continue in the foundation for an effective prayer life by looking at one of the two major factors that makes our prayer register in heaven.

One of the most mentioned attributes of effective prayer in the Bible is praying the will of God. Prayer is not effective unless it is according to the will of God. Prayer, by Jesus’ definition is partnering with God in order to establish His will on earth.

Matthew 6:9-10 “In this manner, therefore, 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 not arm-twisting God to do our selfish will; it is aligning and partnering with God to fulfil His will in our lives and around us. While His will in heaven is automatic, His will on earth requires our prayer.

However, it is not just the prayer itself that must align with the will of God, the praying person must also be in the will of God. If the praying person is not aligned with God, his or her prayer will not be aligned even if the prayer itself is the will of God.

Proverbs 28:9 “If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable.” (NIV)

Matthew 5:23-24 “Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (NKJV)

The Praying Person

The most important element of effective prayer is the praying person. Too often in teachings on prayer, our emphasis tends to be on the nature of the prayer itself - the manner, length, correctness, and fervency of the prayer. While all these factors are very important, the most important element of effective prayer however is the person doing the prayer itself.

It will not matter that the prayer is right if the person is not right. Hence becoming right must be more important than praying right.

Proverbs 15:8 “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.” (NKJV)

Let’s look at a few important truths about who can pray.

1. **Everyone can pray** – this is important to guide us against thinking that people who are not right with God cannot pray. Afterall how can they be made right with God without prayer.

- There is a place in prayer for everyone regardless of who they are. **Psalm 65:2** “O You who hear prayer, To You all flesh will come.”
- Sinners can pray - **Luke 18:13** “And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’” (James 4:8-10)
- Backsliders can return to God in prayer – “Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish’s belly.... And He answered me.” **Jonah 2:1-2**
- When someone is not right with God, there is a limitation in the level of access, the weight, and quality of their prayer. **Genesis 18:17** “Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?”

Question: What are the differences between the prayer of a sinner and the prayer of the righteous?

2. **Not all prayers are the same:** There are higher heights and deeper depths in prayer - The quality (effectiveness) of our prayer improves with the quality of our life and relationship with God.

Psalm 24:3-6 “Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He shall receive blessing from the Lord, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6 This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face.”

- A person who is after God’s heart – the more we are consecrated and submitted to the will of God, the more effective is our prayer.
- A person who pursues holiness – holiness endears us to God and silence the accuser of the brethren. **Hebrews 12:14** “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”
- An individual fully submitted to God’s will - **2 Chronicles 16:9** “For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.”
- A kingdom-minded person. **Matthew 6:31-33** “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
- A person cleansed from sin - **Psalm 66:18** “If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.” (NLT)

3. **Prayer is the key to higher heights and deeper depths in God** - Despite what we’ve said so far about being right with God, it’s important to understand that prayer is still the means of going higher and deeper in God.

- Prayer changes the individual that prays and qualifies them for an even greater level in prayer.
- Your depth and height in God will never surpass the depth and height of your prayer life.
- Without a clean hand and a pure heart, we are unable to access the throne of God in prayer, but without prayer we cannot develop a clean hand and a pure heart.
- Prayer is what introduces us to the throne of grace where we can encounter the life changing grace and mercy of God that takes us even higher in God.

Hebrews 4:16 “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”