

CHURCH OF HOPE EVANGELISM AND MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE BY EMAIL AND WEBSITE

STUDY GUIDE: WEEK ONE

TOPIC ONE: THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE: This is the first week's study guide for the Church of Hope 17-week Evangelism and Ministry Training Course that is also on their website page: www.coh.org.au/ministry_course The first week's study is on the importance of having a lifestyle of prayer. On this website page there are also other teachings that form part of the first week's reading materials for topic one. Each week of this course we cover a new topic that relates to evangelism, making mature disciples and leaders, or keys to having healthy community changing churches. Each week's topic will have a study guide and related teachings. To minimise printing costs, the Study Guides are mainly 2-4 pages (One or Two Double Sided pages) in size.

Due to the importance of winning souls, we will be sharing much early on in the course on equipping Christians to become soul winners.

We will begin this course by looking at a passage of Scripture in Colossians. The Apostle Paul wrote, **“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labour, striving to His working which works in me mightily.” (Colossians 1:28-29)**

In this passage of Scripture, we see the Apostle Paul emphasising the importance of preaching the gospel to all people and the importance of seeing Christians coming to maturity in their faith. The whole purpose of this course is to help equip and to encourage all Christians to become strong in their faith and soul winners. To achieve this end, each week's study will contain a number of key areas and points to focus on and related bible Scriptures to meditate on. Studying the Word of God is a key to growing strong in our walk with the Lord. **(2 Timothy 3:16-17) (John 8:31-32) (Joshua 1:8)**

We will now begin this study on prayer by looking at the overview in the Pastors Workshop Guidelines and Teachings Manual for the topic: Building our lives on the Word of God and Prayer. (Page 5) This manual can be downloaded from the following website page: www.coh.org.au/downloads

“All Christians need to build their life on the Word of God and prayer... Prayer is also a key to seeing God's plan and purpose unfolding in our lives and churches. Jesus often withdrew to spend time praying to His Father in Heaven. **(Luke 5:16)** We need to have a lifestyle of prayer **(1 Thessalonians 5:17)** and continually seek God for His direction for our lives, **(Proverbs 3:5-6)** and to make our needs known to Him. Prayer is simply communing with God. When we live a lifestyle of prayer we will not be overcome by anxiety **(Philippians 4:6-7)** when confronted by needs and challenging situations, but we will learn to cast our cares upon the Lord. God promises in His Word that He will answer all of our prayers which are in line with His will for our life. **(1 John 5:14-15) (Mark 11:22-24) (John 14:12-14) (John 16:23-24)**

At times God will lead Believers into times of fasting and prayer, often just prior to a new season in their life. Fasting helps us to humble ourselves before God **(Ezra 8:21)** and to get closer to God. This is why Jesus told His disciples that in the days when He was no longer physically with them, then they should fast. **(Luke 5:35)** During times of fasting God will often speak very clearly in terms of future direction and at the same time bring about an increased hunger for spiritual things. During times of fasting, it is often far easier to discern the voice of God. During these times we also experience increased spiritual power as His strength is made perfect in our weakness. **(2 Corinthians 12:9)** Jesus Himself fasted for 40 days before commencing His ministry. **(Luke 4:1-2) (Mark 1:13-15)** Those in the early church often fasted and prayed. **(Acts 13:2-3)** Fasting and prayer also helps people to be set free of addictions and demonic strongholds. **(Matthew 17:18-21)**”

The study outline and related Scriptures on page 2 of this study guide can be read and studied in conjunction with the following two additional teachings for this topic, “SOME KEYS TO ANSWERED PRAYER” and the Christian Growth Key No. 2 for those who would like some additional teachings on prayer.

14 AREAS AND RELATED SCRIPTURES TO LOOK AT AND STUDY IN RELATION TO LIVING A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER

- 1) Prayer helps us to examine our hearts and to deal with any wrong attitudes quickly. It is crucial that we keep a soft and right heart. **(Proverbs 4:23) (Luke 6:45)** We must learn to be open before the Lord and quickly deal with any hurts and disappointments and wrong attitudes by surrendering them to the Lord **(Psalm 51:1-10)**
- 2) The importance of listening to God when we pray. **(Jeremiah 23:18)** Prayer is a two way communication with Him. **(Jeremiah 33:3)** The Holy Spirit will speak to us clearly in prayer when we are still **(John 16:13)**
- 3) The importance of making time to spend with the Lord to pray to Him. **(Psalm 34:4-6) (Psalm 63:1)** We must never get too busy to pray. Non Praying people are powerless. Our prayers can remove the hindrances and mountains in our life. **(Mark 11:22-24)** The enemy will try and keep us too busy to pray. **(Luke 10:38-42)**
- 4) The importance of committing our weekly and daily plans to the Lord in prayer, **(Proverbs 16:3)** so that we remain in the centre of God's will for our life. Prayerfully involving God in our plans helps us to be fruitful in life. God's plan for our life unfolds one step at a time. **(Psalm 37:23)**
- 5) The importance of involving the Lord in all that we do. (Having a lifestyle of prayer). **(Proverbs 3:5-6) (1 Thessalonians 5:17)** God's ways are far higher than our ways. **(Isaiah 55:8-9)** WE NEED CONTINUALLY GOD'S GUIDANCE AND WISDOM in life and in all that we do. God promises to give us wisdom when we ask of Him. **(James 1:5)** Life is full of choices. Some wrong choices can impact us for a lifetime
- 6) The importance of praying with an open Bible. God will speak through His Word to us to give us clear direction in life when we commit our needs to Him and seek Him for wisdom and guidance. **(Psalm 119:105) (Psalm 119:133)** God will often give us a Rhema word of encouragement through His Word when we are seeking Him for help and encouragement during times of trials and challenges
- 7) The importance of being led and empowered by the Holy Spirit in our prayers. This is a key to praying in line with the will of God for our life and according to His Word **(Romans 8:26-27) (1 John 5:14-15)**
- 8) The importance of being persistent in our prayers. Praying until we get the breakthroughs. We must not allow temporary circumstances to stop us from being fervent in our prayers. **(Luke 18:1-8) (James 5:16-18)**
- 9) We need to pray believing already for the answered prayer WHEN WE PRAY. We must always pray in faith. **(Mark 11:24) (Hebrew 11:6)**
- 10) Committing our cares continually to the Lord in prayer is a great key to maintaining a heart of peace and hearing God's voice. We must refuse to continually talk about our problems but learn to instinctively give them to Jesus in prayer. **(Philippians 4:6-7) (1 Peter 5:7)** God both hears and answers our prayers
- 11) Prayer in the secret place (in isolation) with the Lord is a key to gaining revelation knowledge from God and growing in intimacy with Him. We must frequently draw aside to a quiet place to pray **(Luke 5:16) (Matthew 6:6)** Those who wait upon the Lord renew their strength and in His Presence is fullness of joy
- 12) We need to learn to be specific in our prayers and never forget that "For with God nothing will be impossible" **(Luke 1:37)** The prayer of agreement is powerful **(See Matthew 18:19)**
- 13) Worship and Prayer go together. When we worship the Lord we connect with God's heart for people and have a greater sensitivity and passion as to what to pray about **(Psalm 37:4)** Worship helps to usher God's presence into our circumstances. **(Psalm 22:3)** Chains were loosed when Paul and Silas were praying and singing Hymns to God after they had been beaten and thrown into prison, **(Acts 16:25-26)** and
- 14) For Pastors we need to ensure that our corporate prayer meetings are focussed and Spirit led as we pray for our community, the nation and those in our church and that we encourage all believers in our churches to develop and cultivate a lifestyle of prayer themselves

SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF ANSWERED PRAYER: (James 5:17-18) (Acts 12:5-12) (Acts 3:1-10)

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS IN RELATION TO PRAYER BASED ON THIS WEEK'S READINGS

- i) *What can stop us from having a vibrant prayer life and involving God in all that we do?*
- ii) *How can we maintain a strong faith that we always believe for answered prayers when we pray?*
- iii) *As a pastor do I encourage those in our church to develop an active prayer life and God dependency?*
- iv) *Is prayer an important part of our church life and in my own walk with the Lord?, and*
- v) *What can be some of the hindrances to our prayers being answered?*