

# The importance of maintaining a strong prayer life



- Through prayer we have unlimited potential
- **The word of the LORD came to the Prophet Jeremiah in prison, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33:3)**

- God cares about our every need in life and is concerned about every aspect of our life
- God sees all the struggles and challenges that we go through in life
- As a loving Heavenly Father God wants to help us in life and to give us wisdom and direction to make good choices in life
- We were not meant to do life independently of God and to carry the weights and burdens of life ourselves. We have a God who is well able to help us in time of need



- Prayer helps to involve God in our daily challenges and struggles in life. This is a great key to maintaining peace in our heart and mind and to walking in victory as a believer

**This is why the apostle Peter wrote,**

**“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)**



- Having a lifestyle of prayer is a great key to consistently making right choices in life that are in line with God's will for our life – God's ways are higher than our ways

- Involving God in all that we do in life helps to keep our life uncomplicated



- **The Apostle Paul wrote,**  
“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” **(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)**

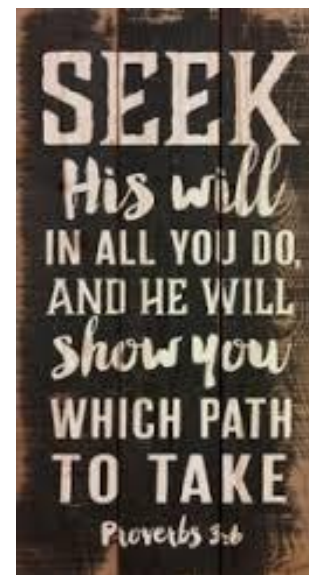
- God is always willing to give us the wisdom that we need in life to succeed.
- Prayer helps us to gain the wisdom and the direction that we need in life to make right choices AND helps us to use our time wisely

- No situation is ever impossible for God



- **In the book of James we read,**  
“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” **(James 1:5)**

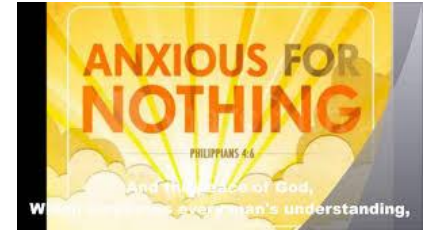
- Having a lifestyle of prayer is a great key to seeing God's plan for our life unfolding over time and our lives bearing much fruit



**In the book of Proverbs we read,**

**“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.”  
(Proverbs 3:5-6)**

- Having a lifestyle of prayer is a great key to maintaining peace in our lives.



- We will all encounter many challenges in life. We need to learn to instinctively take our problems to the Lord in prayer. We have a God who is both willing and able to help us



- **The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” **(Philippians 4:6-7)**

- Persistent prayer is the key to seeing the continual breakthroughs that we need in life



- Our Christian walk is an overcoming walk. Prayer helps to remove the mountains in our life
- **Jesus Himself said,** “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” **(Mark 11:22-24)**





- We must never give up in our prayer life, especially when we do not see any changes in our circumstances or signs of a breakthrough in our life
- We need to be continually fervent in our prayers
- We need to pray until we see the breakthroughs in our life
- Continually seeking God for His help and being persistent in our prayer life, is a great key to living an overcoming and victorious Christian life



- Jesus Himself emphasised the importance of being persevering in our prayer life in the Parable of the persistent Widow



“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’” **(Luke 18:1-3)**

“And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me’”

Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said, “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?”

“I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” **(Luke 18:4-8)**



- Prayer also helps us to remain strong in the midst of the trials and temptations of life

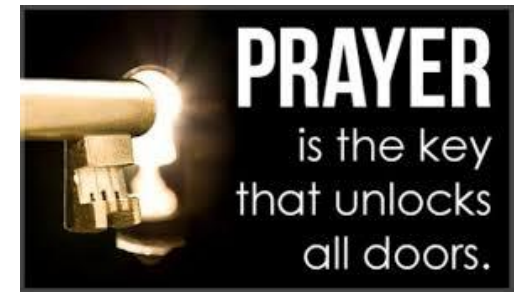


- God is always faithful and will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it

**This is why Jesus said to His disciples,**

**"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**  
**(Matthew 26:41)**

- It is so important that we regularly make time to spend with the Lord.



- We must not allow the enemy to get us too busy so that we fail to pray



- Prayerless people are powerless people
- Jesus Himself often withdrew to pray to His Father in heaven during His time here on earth.
- **In the gospel of Luke we read,**  
“So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.” **(Luke 5:16)**

- Prayer is the key to seeing revival in our nation
- All great revivals have been preceded by a time of persistent prayer and seeking the face of God



- **In the book of 2 Chronicles we read,**  
“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” **(2 Chronicles 7:14)**

# THE BIBLE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT WE HAVE A GOD WHO BOTH HEARS AND ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS



**The Apostle John wrote,**

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

**(1 John 5:14-15)**

**Jesus Himself said,**

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works that these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **If you ask anything in My name, I WILL DO IT.**” (John 14:12-14)





**Jesus also said,**

**“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” (Matthew 7:7-8)**



**“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” (Matthew 21:21-22)**

**The bible makes it clear that we have a God who answers all of our prayers that are in line with His will for our life**



- **God will however answer our prayers:**

- 1) His way, and*

- 2) In His timing*



which at times may be different to our timetable and how we would have expected and liked Him to answer our prayers

- However we can be assured that God's timing and the way He answers our prayers is always the best. We can trust in God's faithfulness. God knows what we need in life and what is best for us at all times.

I will now quickly share seven keys that can help us in our prayer life



## 1) Asking in the Name of Jesus

(We need to be also specific in our prayers)

Jesus said,



“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:23-24)

- We have great authority when we pray in the name of Jesus. As Christians we are Christ's ambassadors here on earth.



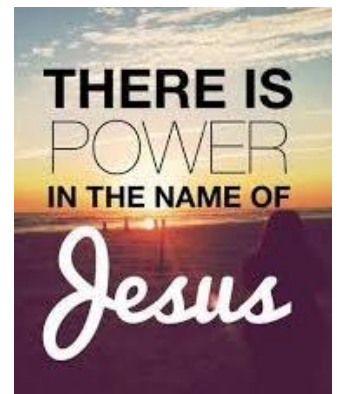
**In the book of Hebrews we read,**

**“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,” (Philippians 2:8-10)**

**Jesus when commissioning His disciples said,**

**“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)**

**“And these signs will follow those who believe:  
In My Name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:17-18)**



## 2) We need to Pray with Praise and thanksgiving

- Praise and worship helps us to enter into God's presence and to gain His heart for people and to know what to pray for



- **In the book of Psalms we read,**  
“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.” **(Psalm 100:4)**

### 3) Allowing the Holy Spirit to direct our prayers

- This will help to ensure that we are praying according to God's will for our life
- The Holy Spirit will impress upon our heart what to pray for and who to pray for.
- If we allow the Holy Spirit to direct our prayers our prayer life will be effective and fervent
- Praying in the Spirit is also a key to building up our faith. (Jude 20)



**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” **(Romans 8:26-27)**





## 4) Putting away all know iniquity in our heart

- We need to have right motives when praying
- We need to pray with a motive of glorifying God
- We must refuse to regard iniquity in our heart. Allowing wrong attitudes and desires to develop in our heart will negatively affect our prayer life
- Having a right heart is a great key to seeing our prayers being answered on a consistent basis. God is more concerned about our character and our relationships with Him and others being right. For this reason He can sometimes withhold answers to our prayers until we get our heart right



**In the book of Psalms we read,**

**“I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear. But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.” (Psalm 66:17-19)**



## 5) We must ensure that our relationships with others are right. We must be quick to forgive those who hurt us



- Being unforgiving towards others will negatively affect our prayer life and stop answers to prayer
- Before we pray for the miracles in our life, we need to first ensure that we have forgiven all those people who have hurt us in life
- Jesus clearly emphasised the importance of always walking in forgiveness and loving others

**Jesus Himself said,**

**“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”  
(Mark 11:25-26)**



## 6) We need to pray according to the promises in God's Word



- As believers we can position ourselves to appropriate all of God's promises in His Word (i.e. Matthew 6:33, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 1:19)
- When we pray in line with God's promises in His Word we can expect answers to our prayers.  
God's word is God's will for our life
- Attaching Scriptures to our prayers helps to build up our faith to receive answers to our prayers

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

**“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”  
(2 Corinthians 1:20)**



**In the book of Isaiah we read,**

**“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)**

7) We need to pray in faith according to God's will for our life, believing already for the **answered prayers as we pray** (*Again God's Word is His general revealed will to us. God will also specifically reveal to us what His plans are for our life – Ephesians 2:10*)

- We need to always pray in faith, believing as we pray for God to answer our prayers
- The bible makes it clear that without faith it is impossible to please God



**In the book of Hebrews we read,**

**“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)**

**The bible makes it clear that nothing is impossible for God. “For with God nothing will be impossible.” (Luke 1:37)**



**Jesus Himself emphasised the importance of having faith when He said,**

**“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” (Mark 9:23)**



- Jesus clearly emphasised the importance of praying with faith in our heart, believing already for answers to our prayers as we pray

**Again Jesus said in relation to prayer,**

**“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” (Mark 11:22-24)**



- The bible makes it clear that IF we pray in faith according to God's will for our life, we can be ASSURED that we have a God who will both hear and answer all of our prayers

**Again the Apostle John made this very clear when he wrote,**

**“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)**



# **I will now finish by looking at the life of Nehemiah and the power of a praying man**

- Nehemiah heard about the state of his brethren in Jerusalem and how his people had been taken into captivity



**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

**“And they said to me, “The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.” (Nehemiah 1:3)**

- Nehemiah was moved to prayer as he heard about the plight of the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity



**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

**“So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” (Nehemiah 1:4)**

**When we look at the state of this nation and how many people are addicted to ice, how we need to be also moved to prayer for those who are lost**

- Nehemiah prayed fervently and acknowledged the bigness of our God in his prayers



**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

**“And I said: “I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, *You* who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with those who love You<sup>[a]</sup> and observe Your<sup>[b]</sup> commandments,” (Nehemiah 1:5)**

**When we speak out God’s promises in His Word and how awesome He is, our faith is built up to believe for miracles and answers to prayers**

- Nehemiah was persistent in his prayers as he acknowledged and repented for the sins of his people



**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

“please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father’s house and I have sinned.” **(Nehemiah 1:6)**

- We too like Nehemiah need to be persevering in our prayers



- We also need to repent on behalf of this nation. A nation in which so many people have now for many years rejected God. How we need a spiritual awakening in this nation
- How we need to pray for God's hand of favour and blessing to be upon our lives and nation

- Nehemiah prayed for favour



**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

**“O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”**

**For I was the king’s cupbearer.” (Nehemiah 1:11)**



- Nehemiah instinctively prayed when confronted with opposition for God's help and protection

**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

“Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, <sup>8</sup> and all of them conspired together to come *and* attack Jerusalem and create confusion. <sup>9</sup> Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.”  
**(Nehemiah 4:7-9)**



- Nehemiah had faith in God's ability to answer his prayers



**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

**“And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.” (Nehemiah 4:14)**

- Nehemiah prayed for strength



- We all will need God's strength and enabling power to complete the tasks that He gives us to do in life. We are all in a very real spiritual contest

**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

***“For they all *were trying to* make us afraid, saying, “Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done.”***

**Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands.”**

**(Nehemiah 6:9)**

- Nehemiah was persistent in his prayers
- He believed in the power of prayer to change circumstances
- We can see how God answered Nehemiah's prayers each step of the way in the book of Nehemiah after he purposed in his heart to see the wall of Jerusalem rebuilt
- When we commit to doing God's will for our life, we will see it come to pass as we pray and involve God in all that we do



## As a result of his persistent prayers:

- God granted Nehemiah favour with the King to go to Jerusalem (He was the King's cupbearer)



**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

**“Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), “How long will your journey be? And when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.” (Nehemiah 2:6)**

- Nehemiah saw God's continual favour and blessing upon his work



- He saw God's continual provision and protection over his life during the work of rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem, and
- He saw great unity amongst his brethren that enabled the wall to be built without complications and disputes

- As a result of Nehemiah's persistent prayers and God's faithfulness, the wall around Jerusalem was miraculously rebuilt in just 52 days



**In the book of Nehemiah we read,**

**“So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.” (Nehemiah 6:15)**

- In the life of Nehemiah we see the results of a man who was persevering in his prayer life



- How we too need to be persevering in our prayers until we see the answers and breakthroughs in our life, so that we can see God's plan for our life unfolding over time
- God has a good plan for each of our lives that is full of purpose and meaning. Prayer is a key to seeing God's destiny for our life coming to pass.