

Discipleship Training Course

This course contains 23 chapters and is released freely to the public domain for the purpose of discipling new believers and strengthening those older in the faith.

All Bible quotations are given in italics with their book, chapter and verse(s), followed by an abbreviation for their translation as follows:

AMP	The Amplified Bible © 2015 The Lockman Foundation
AMPC	The Amplified Bible (Classic Edition) © 1987 The Zondervan Corporation and the Lockman Foundation
ESVUK	English Standard Version Anglicised © 2001 Crossway Bibles
HCSB	The Holman Christian Standard Bible © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 Holman Bible Publishers
MSG	The Message © 1993, 2002, 2018 Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress.
NASB1995	The New American Standard Bible © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NHEB	New Heart English Bible, Edited by Wayne A. Mitchell 2008-2026, Public Domain
NIVUK	The New International Version® Anglicized © 1979, 1984, 2011 Biblica, Inc.®
NKJV	New King James Version® © 1982 Thomas Nelson
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996, 2004, 2015 Tyndale House Foundation
WEBPB	The World English Bible® Protestant British Edition, Public Domain

The use of Bible quotes within this course conforms to the copyright exceptions of all these publishers.

The following systematic adjustments have also been made to Bible quotes:

- The Old Testament tetragrammaton name of God (derived from the four Hebrew letters translated into English as YHWH) has been rendered LORD unless translated Jehovah or Yahweh
- Pronouns referring to the Trinity and some specific terms relating to the Trinity (such as Name and Word) have been capitalized
- Speech marks around entire quotes and at the beginning of new paragraphs have been omitted
- Anglicised spellings have been used
- All quotes begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop
- Some weights, measures and times have been replaced with easier to understand terms given in the footnotes using square brackets
- All verse numbers, footnote numbers and symbols have been removed
- Poetry has been indented and only new sentences start with a capital letter

Published in electronic format by Pastor Peter Samuels, Morecambe, UK

Version 2.5, July 2026

ISBN 978-0-9956916-1-2

Chapter 9. Prayer

Contents

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 Origins
 - 1.2 Jesus' model Prayer
 - 1.3 Practicalities of prayer
 - 1.4 Types of prayer
 - 1.5 Initial questions
2. Prayer life of Moses
 - 2.1 Early life
 - 2.2 Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush
 - 2.3 Deliverance from Egypt
 - 2.4 Crossing the Red Sea
 - 2.5 Interceding in the wilderness
 - 2.6 The golden calf incident
 - 2.7 Moses' hunger to know God
 - 2.8 Further intercession in the wilderness
 - 2.9 Frustration and disobedience
 - 2.10 Summary
3. Other Old Testament prayer examples
 - 3.1 Enoch
 - 3.2 Abraham
 - 3.3 Jacob
 - 3.4 Gideon
 - 3.5 Hannah
 - 3.6 Samuel
 - 3.7 Jabez
 - 3.8 David
 - 3.9 Elijah
 - 3.10 Jehoshaphat
 - 3.11 Hezekiah
 - 3.12 Ezra
 - 3.13 Nehemiah
 - 3.14 Esther
 - 3.15 Job
 - 3.16 Isaiah
 - 3.17 Daniel
 - 3.18 Jonah and the Ninevites

4. Jesus and prayer
 - 4.1 Prayer life of Jesus
 - 4.2 Jesus' teaching on prayer
5. Other New Testament Scriptures on prayer
 - 5.1 Other examples of prayer in the New Testament
 - 5.2 New Testament teaching on prayer
6. Other prayer topics
 - 6.1 Prayer with fasting
 - 6.2 Praying over gates
 - 6.3 Praying through the Word
 - 6.4 Questions

1. Introduction

1.1 Origins

Prayer is **communication with God when He is not physically present**. Prayer began when men started calling on the Name of the LORD (Genesis 4:26). The word **prayer** is first used in Genesis 20 when Abraham prayed for Abimelek and for the women in Abimelek's household to be healed from barrenness:

God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also withheld you from sinning against Me. Therefore I didn't allow you to touch her. Now therefore, restore the man's wife. For he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. If you don't restore her, know for sure that you will die, you, and all who are yours."

Abraham prayed to God. God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his female servants, and they bore children. For the LORD had closed up tight all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Genesis 20:6-7, 17-18 (WEBPB)

1.2 Jesus' model Prayer

Jesus taught His followers how to pray in His Sermon on the Mount:

Pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name. Let Your Kingdom come. Let Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Let us not come into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 6:9-15 (NHEB)

There are seven stages in the Lord's Prayer:

1. **"Our Father"** – the Greek word used here is **Abba**, meaning **Daddy**, indicating that we may approach God with freedom and confidence like a small child approaching its parents because of Christ's work for us upon the cross
2. **"Hallowed be Your Name"** – in addition to the informality of our initial approach we should also begin by worshipping God in His holiness and majesty

Chapter 9. Prayer

3. **“Let Your kingdom come”** – we agree with God for His rule to be established on the earth
4. **“Give us today our daily bread”** – once we are seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness we can rely upon God to provide our needs (Matthew 6:33)
5. **“Forgive us our debts”** – we agree that we are sinners and ask God to forgive us
6. **“As we also forgive our debtors”** – as we accept that we are sinners in need of forgiveness we also choose to forgive others who have sinned against us – the importance of this is emphasised in vv. 14-15
7. **“Let us not come into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”** – finally, we focus on overcoming the enemy

1.3 Practicalities of prayer

1. Take time to pray - let go of any cares and reject distractions so that you can focus on God
2. Be in right relationship with God and with others (e.g. see Isaiah 58:1-12, Matthew 5:23-24, 1 Timothy 2:8 and 1 Peter 3:7)
3. Pray in secret – not for other people to see you (Matthew 6:6)
4. Don't make a big thing of fasting (Matthew 6:17-18)
5. Begin by drawing near to God with praise and thanksgiving (Psalm 100)
6. Combine prayer with action (e.g. see Joshua 7:10-12, Nehemiah 2:4-5, 4:4-5, 5:19, 6:9, 14, Isaiah 58:1-12 and Matthew 17:1-23)

1.4 Types of prayer

- Short prayers (e.g. Nehemiah 2:4) v. extended periods of prayer and fasting (e.g. Deuteronomy 9:18)
- Personal prayers v. corporate prayers of agreement (we should not mix styles inappropriately)
- Prayers with ministry authority v. Biblically-based (rhema word) prayers
- Praying in the Spirit (or in tongues) v. praying with your mind (or with understanding, asking for an interpretation – see 1 Corinthians 14:13-15) v. being still and listening to God (Exodus 14:14, Psalm 46:10)
- Prayers motivated by personal needs v. prayers motivated by the needs of others (intercession) v. prayers motivated by a hunger for God Himself
- Prayer before making important decisions (e.g. Luke 6:12-16)
- Prayer when you are under attack – attacks need to be reversed (see Chapter 18)
- Prayer at a time of crisis (e.g. Jehoshaphat – see 2 Chronicles 20) v. praying when all is well to keep your spiritual focus right (contrast with David in 1 Samuel 11:1)
- Sometimes we need to be persistent (e.g. Elijah praying for rain – see 1 Kings 18:41-46) v. sometimes we need to thank God before we see the answer (e.g. Jonah's prayer inside the belly of the whale in Jonah 2)
- Prayer in the Name of Jesus (John 14:14)

1.5 Initial questions

1. When should we pray? When should we fast as well?
2. When should we stop praying: after asking once, when we sense God has heard, or do we need to keep asking until we see an answer?
3. How does God answer prayer? What different answers can He give?

2. Prayer life of Moses

2.1 Early life

- Born leader
- Prophetic deliverance as a baby (Moses = “Drew out” of the Nile, indicating his destiny was to draw out the Israelites from Egypt)
- But he did not know God well
- He tried to fulfil his destiny in his own strength but failed (Acts 7:25)
- He then fled and ended up looking after sheep on the far side of the desert for 40 years, a broken man

2.2 Moses’ encounter with God at the burning bush

Exodus 3:1 – 4:17:

- Intrigued / fascinated by God’s presence (Exodus 3:1-3)
- Receives a revelation of the holiness of God (vv. 4-5)
- God reveals Himself as the God of his ancestors (the Patriarchs, v. 6)
- God explains His concerns for the Israelites (vv. 7-9)
- God calls Moses to save His people (v. 10)
- Moses wants reassurance (v. 11)
- God gives him a sign – you shall worship Me on this mountain (v. 12)
- Moses wants more reassurance and asks God for His Name (v. 13)
- God reveals His Name to Moses: **“I AM WHO I AM”**, encapsulating His character and covenant commitment to Israel: **dependable, unchanging and consistent** (vv. 14-15)
- God gives Moses more detailed instructions (vv. 16-22)
- Moses asks for yet more reassurance (4:1)
- God gives Moses miraculous signs through his staff and hand (vv. 2-9)
- Moses expresses concern that he cannot speak well (v. 10)
- God encourages him as the Creator of man’s mouth (vv. 11-12)
- Moses asks God to send someone else (v. 13)
- God burns with anger momentarily then suggests that Moses uses Aaron as his spokesman (vv. 14-17)

The major themes of Moses’ first encounter with God are:

- The holiness of God

Chapter 9. Prayer

- God's concern for His covenant people
- God revealing His Name/character to Moses
- God reassuring Moses of his calling
- Moses starting to interact with God
- In essence, **God had come down** (Exodus 3:8)

2.3 Deliverance from Egypt

- Bricks without straw – the Israelites blame Moses and Aaron (Exodus 5:1-21)
- Moses complains to God (vv. 22-23)
- The LORD encourages Moses (6:1-8)
- The Israelites no longer believe Moses (6:9)
- But Moses stood firm (turning point: he believes God more than his discouraging circumstances)
- The LORD reveals Himself through Moses' relationship to Pharaoh (7:1):

*The LORD said to Moses, "**Behold, I have made you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.**"* (WEBPB)

- Moses obeys God through a series of prophetic actions (7:10, 7:20, 8:6, 8:17, 9:10, 9:23, 10:13, 10:22, 12:28)
- Key Scripture (8:1):

*The LORD spoke to Moses, "**Go in to Pharaoh, and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me.'**"* (WEBPB)

- God sends ten plagues upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, culminating in the Passover and the plague of the firstborn (7:8-12:30)
- Moses learns to pray to stop some of the plagues (8:12-13, 8:30-31, 9:33, 10:18-19)
- Pharaoh finally releases the Israelites without compromise and even asks Moses to bless him (12:31-42)
- After eating the Passover meal they leave with silver and gold and not one person was sick (Psalm 105:37)
- They march out confidently (14:8)

2.4 Crossing the Red Sea

- Another key point of growth in Moses' prayer life
- The Israelites are stuck between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea (14:10-12)
- He speaks confidently to the people (14:13-14) but cries out in desperation to God (14:15)!
- The LORD encourages Moses to use his staff once more (14:16)
- When Moses obeys in faith the LORD also defeats the spiritual stronghold behind Pharaoh (Isaiah 51:9-10)
- Moses sings a song of praise (15:1-18):

I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously.

*He has thrown the horse and his rider into the sea.
The LORD is my strength and song.
He has become my salvation.
This is my God, and I will praise Him;
my father's God, and I will exalt Him.
The LORD is a man of war.
The LORD is His Name.
He has cast Pharaoh's chariots and his army into the sea.
His chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea. ...
Who is like You, LORD, amongst the gods?
Who is like You, glorious in holiness,
fearful in praises, doing wonders?*
Exodus 15:1b-4, 11 (WEBPB)

2.5 Interceding in the wilderness

Interceding against bitterness:

When they came to Marah, they couldn't drink from the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore its name was called Marah. The people murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Then he cried to the LORD. The LORD showed him a tree, and he threw it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them. He said, "If you will diligently listen to the LORD your God's voice, and will do that which is right in His eyes, and will pay attention to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you, which I have put on the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you."
Exodus 15:23-24 (WEBPB)

Interceding in battle:

So Joshua did as Moses had told him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. When he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; so they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side. His hands were steady until sunset. Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword...
Moses built an altar, and called its name "the LORD our Banner".
Exodus 17:10-13, 15 (WEBPB)

2.6 The golden calf incident

The LORD spoke to Moses, "Go, get down; for your people, who you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves! They have turned away quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a moulded calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.'"
Exodus 32:7-8 (WEBPB)

Reminding God of ownership:

But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people, whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and relent from this disaster against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac,

and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" And the LORD relented from the disaster that He had spoken of bringing on His people.

Exodus 32:11-14 (ESVUK)

Sacrificial intercession:

I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you sinned, in doing that which was evil in the LORD's sight, to provoke Him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry against you to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me that time also. The LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him. I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.

Deuteronomy 9:18-20 (WEBPB)

Ultimate self-sacrifice:

Moses returned to the LORD, and said, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made themselves gods of gold. Yet now, if you will, forgive their sin – and if not, please blot me out of Your book which You have written."

Exodus 32:31-32 (WEBPB)

2.7 Moses' hunger to know God

Moses' regular prayer life:

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far away from the camp, and he called it "The Tent of Meeting." Everyone who sought the LORD went out to the Tent of Meeting, which was outside the camp. When Moses went out to the Tent, all the people rose up, and stood, everyone at their tent door, and watched Moses, until he had gone into the Tent. When Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, stood at the door of the Tent, and the LORD spoke with Moses. All the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent, and all the people rose up and worshipped, everyone at their tent door. The LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. He turned again into the camp, but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, didn't depart from the Tent.

Exodus 33:7-11 (WEBPB)

Moses desires to know God's ways:

*Moses said to the LORD, "Look, You have told me, 'Lead this people up,' but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. You said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favour in My sight.' **Now if I have indeed found favour in Your sight, please teach me Your ways, and I will know You and find favour in Your sight. Now consider that this nation is Your people.**"*

*Then He replied, **"My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."***

Exodus 33:12-14 (HCSB)

Moses desires God's presence to God with the Israelites:

*Moses said to him, **"If Your presence doesn't go with me, don't carry us up from here.** For how would people know that I have found favour in Your sight, I and Your people? Isn't it that You go with us, so that we are separated, I and Your people, from all the people who are on the surface of the earth?"*

*The LORD said to Moses, **"I will do this thing also that you have spoken; for you have found favour in My sight, and I know you by name."***

Exodus 33:15-17 (WEBPB)

Moses wants to know God more deeply for himself:

Moses said, "Please show me your glory." And He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you My Name 'The LORD'. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," He said, "you cannot see My face, for man shall not see Me and live."

Exodus 33:18-20 (ESVUK)

2.8 Further intercession in the wilderness

Moses interceded for the Israelites when they listened to the bad report of the ten spies (Numbers 13:25-29):

Then Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground before the whole community of Israel. Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing. They said to all the people of Israel, "The land we travelled through and explored is a wonderful land! And if the LORD is pleased with us, He will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. Do not rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"

But the whole community began to talk about stoning Joshua and Caleb. Then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the Tabernacle. And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat Me with contempt? Will they never believe Me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them? I will disown them and destroy them with a plague. Then I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they are!"

But Moses objected. "What will the Egyptians think when they hear about it?" he asked the LORD. "They know full well the power You displayed in rescuing Your people from Egypt. Now if You destroy them, the Egyptians will send a report to the inhabitants of this land, who have already heard that You live among Your people. They know, LORD, that You have appeared to Your people face to face and that Your pillar of cloud hovers over them. They know that You go before them in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Now if You slaughter all these people with a single blow, the nations that have heard of Your fame will say, 'The LORD was not able to bring them into the land he swore to give them, so He killed them in the wilderness.'

Please, Lord, prove that Your power is as great as You have claimed. For You said, 'The LORD is slow to anger and filled with unfailing love, forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. But He does not excuse the guilty. He lays the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected – even children in the third and fourth generations.' In keeping with Your magnificent, unfailing love, please pardon the sins of this people, just as You have forgiven them ever since they left Egypt."

Then the LORD said, "I will pardon them as you have requested."

Numbers 14:5-20 (NLT)

2.9 Frustration and disobedience

Numbers 20:1-12:

- Becomes frustrated
- Calls the people rebels
- Disobeys God's command by striking the rock twice rather than speaking to it
- Loses his inheritance

He later tried to intercede for himself in vain:

And I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, 'O LORD GOD, You have only begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours? Please let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.' But the LORD was angry with me because of you and would not listen to me. And the LORD said to me, 'Enough from you; do not speak to me of this matter again. Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westwards and northwards and southwards and eastwards, and look at it with your eyes, for you shall not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he shall go over at the head of this people, and he shall put them in possession of the land that you shall see.'

Deuteronomy 3:23-28 (ESVUK)

2.10 Summary

- Brokenness
- Calling – started to interact with God
- Learnt to pray out of responsibility for the Israelites and confrontation with Pharaoh
- Interceded when the Israelites were in trouble to an ultimate level
- Still wanted to know God more deeply
- Yet lost his inheritance through a moment of frustration

3. Other Old Testament prayer examples

3.1 Enoch

Enoch walked with God:

*Enoch lived sixty-five years, then became the father of Methuselah. After Methuselah's birth, **Enoch walked with God for three hundred years**, and became the father of more sons and daughters. All the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. **Enoch walked with God, and he was not found, for God took him.***

Genesis 5:21-24 (WEBPB)

3.2 Abraham

Abraham interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah:

*The men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. Abraham went with them to see them on their way. The LORD said, "Will I hide from Abraham what I do, seeing that Abraham has surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that the LORD may bring on Abraham that which He has spoken of him." The LORD said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether their deeds are as bad as the reports which have come to me. If not, I will know." The men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. Abraham drew near, and said, "**Will You consume the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous within the city? Will You consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are in it? Be it far from You to do things like that, to kill the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be like the wicked. May that be far from You. Shouldn't the Judge of all the earth do right?**" The LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city,*

then I will spare all the place for their sake." Abraham answered, "See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes. What if there will lack five of the fifty righteous? Will you destroy all the city for lack of five?" He said, "I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there." He spoke to Him yet again, and said, "What if there are forty found there?" He said, "I will not do it for the forty's sake." He said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry, and I will speak. What if there are thirty found there?" He said, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." He said, "See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord. What if there are twenty found there?" He said, "I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake." He said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry, and I will speak just once more. What if ten are found there?" He said, "I will not destroy it for the ten's sake." The LORD went His way, as soon as He had finished communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Genesis 18:16-33 (NHEB)

3.3 Jacob

Jacob wrestled with God and his character was changed:

He rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. He took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had. Jacob was left alone, and wrestled with a man there until the breaking of the day. When he saw that he didn't prevail against him, the man touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained as he wrestled. The man said, "Let me go, for the day breaks."

Jacob said, "I won't let you go unless you bless me."

He said to him, "What is your name?"

He said, "Jacob".

He said, "Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have fought with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Jacob asked him, "Please tell me Your Name."

He said, "Why is it that you ask what My Name is?" He blessed him there.

Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for he said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Genesis 32:22-30 (WEBPB)

3.4 Gideon

The LORD called Gideon to save the Israelites from the Midianites. Gideon asked the LORD for a sign. The LORD revealed His Name, Jehovah Shalom (meaning "the LORD is Peace") to him. Gideon built an altar to the LORD:

He said to him, "If now I have found favour in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. Please don't go away, until I come to You, and bring out my present, and lay it before You."

He said, "I will wait until you come back."

Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes of an ephah [about 22 litres] of meal. He put the meat in a basket and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out to Him under the oak, and presented it.

The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth."

He did so. Then the LORD's angel stretched out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and fire went up out of the rock, and

consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. Then the LORD's angel departed out of his sight.

Gideon saw that He was the LORD's angel; and Gideon said, "Alas, LORD God! Because I have seen the LORD's angel face to face!"

The LORD said to him, "Peace be to you! Don't be afraid. You shall not die."

*Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it "**the LORD is Peace.**" To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*

Judges 6:17-24 (WEBPB)

3.5 Hannah

Hannah was barren and interceded for a child:

*Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of other Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. This man went up out of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests of the LORD, were there. When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: but to Hannah he gave a double portion; for he loved Hannah, but the LORD had shut up her womb. Her rival taunted her severely, to irritate her, because the LORD had shut up her womb. As he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she taunted her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" So Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. She was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly. She vowed a vow, and said, "**LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your handmaid, and remember me, and not forget your handmaid, but will give to Your handmaid a boy, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come on his head.**" It happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli saw her mouth. And Hannah, she was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, "How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine from you." And Hannah answered, "**No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before the LORD. Do not count your handmaid as a worthless woman; for I have been speaking out of the abundance of my distress and my anguish.**" Then Eli answered, "**Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him.**" She said, "Let your handmaid find favour in your sight." So the woman went her way, and ate; and her facial expression wasn't sad any more. They rose up in the morning early, and worshiped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. It happened, when the time had come, that Hannah conceived, and bore a son; and **she named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the LORD."** The man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah did not go up; for she said to her husband, "Not until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and stay there forever. I will offer him as a Nazirite forever, all the days of his life." And Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems good in your eyes. Wait until you have weaned him; only may the LORD establish His word." So the woman waited and nursed her son, until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with a three-year old bull, and one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child was young. And*

they brought him before the LORD, and his father slaughtered the sacrifice, which he did annually for the LORD. And he brought the child. And they slaughtered the bull, and brought the child to Eli. She said, "Oh, my lord, as your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives he is lent to the LORD." He worshiped the LORD there.

1 Samuel 1 (NHEB)

3.6 Samuel

Samuel learnt to pray as a boy:

At that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see), and God's lamp hadn't yet gone out, and Samuel had laid down in the LORD's temple, where God's ark was; the LORD called Samuel; and he said, "Here I am." He ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am; for you called me."

He said, "I didn't call. Lie down again."

He went and lay down. The LORD called yet again, "Samuel!"

Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; for you called me."

He answered, "I didn't call, my son. Lie down again." Now Samuel didn't yet know the LORD, neither was the LORD's word yet revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again the third time. He arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; for you called me."

Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down. It shall be, if He calls you, that you shall say, 'Speak, the LORD; for Your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

*Then Samuel said, **"Speak; for Your servant hears."***

1 Samuel 3:2-10 (WEBPB)

Samuel interceded for the Israelites when they were under attack:

*Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you." They gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. When the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. When the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. The children of Israel said to Samuel, **"Don't stop crying to the LORD our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines."** Samuel took a suckling lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD. **Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel; and the LORD answered him.***

1 Samuel 7:5-9 (WEBPB)

Samuel was concerned about Saul's disobedience and spent the night in prayer:

*Then the LORD's word came to Samuel, saying, "It grieves me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." Samuel was angry; **and he cried to the LORD all night.***

1 Samuel 15:10-11 (WEBPB)

3.7 Jabez

There was a man named Jabez who was more honourable than any of his brothers. His mother named him Jabez because his birth had been so painful. He was the one who prayed

to the God of Israel, "Oh, that You would bless me and expand my territory! Please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all trouble and pain!" And God granted him his request.

1 Chronicles 4:9-10 (NLT)

3.8 David

David learnt to seek God in prayer through his many hardships as a fugitive. Many Psalms were written by him in these extreme circumstances. Three have been chosen to illustrate his prayer life.

Firstly, we see in Psalm 18 how he called upon the Name of the LORD:

I love you, LORD, my strength.

The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer;

my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge;

my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower.

I call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised;

and I am saved from my enemies.

Psalm 18:1-3 (WEBPB)

Secondly, Psalm 27 shows his confidence in the LORD and his single-mindedness to seek Him:

The LORD is my light and my salvation.

Whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the strength of my life.

Of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers came at me to eat up my flesh,

even my adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell.

Though an army should encamp against me,

my heart shall not fear.

Though war should rise against me,

even then I will be confident.

One thing I have asked of the LORD, that I will seek after:

that I may dwell in the LORD's house all the days of my life,

to see the LORD's beauty,

and to enquire in His temple.

For in the day of trouble, he will keep me secretly in His pavilion.

In the secret place of his tabernacle, He will hide me.

He will lift me up on a rock.

Now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me;

I will offer sacrifices of joy in his tent.

I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

Hear, LORD, when I cry with my voice.

Have mercy also on me, and answer me.

When you said, "Seek My face,"

my heart said to you, "I will seek Your face, LORD."

Don't hide Your face from me.

Don't put Your servant away in anger.

You have been my help.

Don't abandon me,

neither forsake me, God of my salvation.

When my father and my mother forsake me,

then the LORD will take me up.

Teach me Your way, LORD.

*Lead me in a straight path, because of my enemies.
Don't deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
for false witnesses have risen up against me,
such as breathe out cruelty.*

I am still confident of this:

I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD.

Be strong, and let your heart take courage.

Yes, wait for the LORD.

Psalm 27 (WEBPB)

Thirdly, Psalm 51 is a prayer asking for forgiveness:

*Have mercy on me, God, according to Your loving kindness.
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity.
Cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions.
My sin is constantly before me.
Against You, and You only, I have sinned,
and done that which is evil in your sight;
that You may be proved right when You speak,
and justified when You judge.
Behold, I was born in iniquity.
In sin my mother conceived me.
Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts.
You teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean.
Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness,
that the bones which You have broken may rejoice.
Hide Your face from my sins,
and blot out all of my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a right spirit within me.
Don't throw me from Your presence,
and don't take Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation.
Uphold me with a willing spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors Your ways.
Sinners shall be converted to You.
Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation.
My tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.
Lord, open my lips.
My mouth shall declare Your praise.
For You don't delight in sacrifice, or else I would give it.
You have no pleasure in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.
A broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.
Do well in Your good pleasure to Zion.
Build the walls of Jerusalem.
Then You will delight in the sacrifices of righteousness,
in burnt offerings and in whole burnt offerings.*

Then they will offer bulls on Your altar.

Psalm 51 (WEBPB)

3.9 Elijah

Elijah prayed twice on Mount Carmel:

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

He answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but you, and your father's house, in that you have forsaken the LORD's commandments, and you have followed the Baals. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel to Mount Carmel, and four hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal, and four hundred of the prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

So Ahab sent to all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together to Mount Carmel. Elijah came near to all the people, and said, "How long will you waver between the two sides? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

The people didn't say a word.

Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left as a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bull, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under it. You call on the name of your god, and I will call on the LORD's name. The God who answers by fire, let Him be God."

All the people answered, "What you say is good."

Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves, and dress it first; for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it."

They took the bull which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, "Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice, and nobody answered. They leapt about the altar which was made. At noon, Elijah mocked them, and said, "Cry aloud; for he is a god. Either he is deep in thought, or he has gone somewhere, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he sleeps and must be awakened."

They cried aloud, and cut themselves in their way with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. When midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the evening offering; but there was no voice, no answer, and nobody paid attention.

Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me!"; and all the people came near to him. He repaired the LORD's altar that had been thrown down. Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the LORD's word came, saying, "Israel shall be your name." With the stones he built an altar in the LORD's name. He made a trench around the altar, large enough to contain [14 litres] of seed. He put the wood in order, and cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood. He said, "Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt offering, and on the wood." He said, "Do it a second time;" and they did it the second time. He said, "Do it a third time;" and they did it the third time. The water ran around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

*At the time of the evening offering, Elijah the prophet came near, and said, "**LORD, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known today that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You, LORD, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again.**"*

Then the LORD's fire fell, and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces. They said, "The LORD, He is God! the LORD, He is God!"

Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Don't let one of them escape!"

They seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and killed them there. Elijah said to Ahab, "Get up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain."

*So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. **Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he bowed himself down on the earth, and put his face between his knees.** He said to his servant, "Go up now, and look towards the sea."*

He went up, and looked, and said, "There is nothing."

He said, "Go again" seven times.

On the seventh time, he said, "Behold, a small cloud, like a man's hand, is rising out of the sea."

He said, "Go up, tell Ahab, 'Get ready and go down, so that the rain doesn't stop you.'"

In a little while, the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. the LORD's hand was on Elijah; and he tucked his cloak into his belt and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

1 Kings 18:16-46 (WEBPB)

3.10 Jehoshaphat

King Jehoshaphat had an established relationship with God so that when the time of trouble came he resolved to enquire of the LORD and called the people together to seek God:

*After this, the children of Moab, the children of Ammon, and with them some of the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. Then some came who told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea from Syria. Behold, they are in Hazazon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi). Jehoshaphat was alarmed, **and set himself to seek to the LORD. He proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. Judah gathered themselves together to seek help from the LORD. They came out of all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD.***

*Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the LORD's house, before the new court; and he said, "**LORD, the God of our fathers, aren't You God in heaven? Aren't You ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand, so that no one is able to withstand You.** Didn't You, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and give it to the offspring* of Abraham your friend forever? They lived in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your Name, saying, 'If evil comes on us – the sword, judgement, pestilence, or famine – we will stand before this house, and before You (for Your Name is in this house), and cry to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' Now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned away from them, and didn't destroy them; behold, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of Your possession, which You have given us to inherit. Our God, will You not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that comes against us. **We don't know what to do, but our eyes are on You.**"*

All Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

*Then the LORD's Spirit came on Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite, of the sons of Asaph, in the middle of the assembly; and he said, "Listen, all Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, king Jehoshaphat. The LORD says to you, 'Don't be afraid, and don't be dismayed because of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow, go down against them. Behold, they are coming up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight this battle. **Set yourselves, stand***

still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Don't be afraid, nor be dismayed. Go out against them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you."

Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. The Levites, of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with an exceedingly loud voice.

2 Chronicles 20:1-19 (WEBPB)

3.11 Hezekiah

King Hezekiah also sought the LORD on several occasions. Firstly, he prayed for the people when they took the Passover in an irregular manner and God forgave them:

*For there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves. Therefore the Levites had to slaughter the Passover lamb for everyone who was not clean, to consecrate it to the LORD. For a majority of the people, many of them from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than as prescribed. **For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD pardon everyone who sets his heart to seek God, the LORD, the God of his fathers, even though not according to the sanctuary's rules of cleanness."** And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.*

2 Chronicles 30:17-20 (ESVUK)

Secondly, he and the Prophet Isaiah sought the LORD when the nation was in trouble:

When king Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the LORD's house. He sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. They said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, 'Today is a day of trouble, of rebuke, and of rejection; for the children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to deliver them. It may be the LORD Your God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master has sent to defy the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD Your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master this: 'the LORD says, "Don't be afraid of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and he will hear news, and will return to his own land. I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'"

So Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah; for he had heard that he had departed from Lachish. When he heard it said of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "Behold, he has come out to fight against you, he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, 'Tell Hezekiah king of Judah this: "Don't let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly. Will you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, which my fathers have destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the children of Eden who were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivvah?"'

*Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. Then Hezekiah went up to the LORD's house, and spread it before the LORD. Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, "**LORD, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, even You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, LORD, and hear. Open Your eyes, LORD, and see. Hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to defy the living God. Truly, LORD, the***

kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, LORD our God, save us, I beg You, out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You, LORD, are God alone."

2 Kings 19:1-19 (WEBPB)

Then Hezekiah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed because of this and cried to heaven. And the LORD sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he came into the house of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword. So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all his enemies, and He provided for them on every side. And many brought gifts to the LORD to Jerusalem and precious things to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from that time onward.

2 Chronicles 32:20-23 (ESVUK)

Thirdly, he sought the LORD when he was ill and the LORD added fifteen years to his life:

In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover." Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, "Now, O LORD, please remember how I have walked before You in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: "Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD, and I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David's sake."

2 Kings 20:1-6

3.12 Ezra

Ezra was appalled when he heard news about intermarriage. He humbled himself before the LORD and set an example for his fellow Israelites to follow:

After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has been foremost." As soon as I heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled. Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered round me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice. And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God, saying:

"O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt. And for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands,

to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is today. But now for a brief moment favour has been shown by the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant and to give us a secure hold within His holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our slavery. For we are slaves. Yet our God has not forsaken us in our slavery, but has extended to us His steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us protection in Judea and Jerusalem.

And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, ‘The land that you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land impure with the impurity of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations that have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.’ And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that You, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserved and have given us such a remnant as this, shall we break Your commandments again and intermarry with the peoples who practise these abominations? Would You not be angry with us until You consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape? O LORD, the God of Israel, You are just, for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as it is today. Behold, we are before You in our guilt, for none can stand before You because of this.”

While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly. And Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, addressed Ezra: “We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. Therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the Law. Arise, for it is your task, and we are with you; be strong and do it.”

Ezra 9:1-10:4 (ESVUK)

3.13 Nehemiah

Nehemiah was a man of conviction, prayer and action. We especially see his prayer life in chapter 1:

These are the memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah.

In late autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes’ reign, I was at the fortress of Susa. Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem.

They said to me, “Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.”

When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. Then I said,

“O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps His covenant of unfailing love with those who love Him and obey His commands, listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for Your people Israel. I confess that we have sinned against You. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned! We have sinned

terribly by not obeying the commands, decrees, and regulations that You gave us through Your servant Moses.

Please remember what You told Your servant Moses: 'If you are unfaithful to Me, I will scatter you among the nations. But if you return to Me and obey My commands and live by them, then even if you are exiled to the ends of the earth, I will bring you back to the place I have chosen for My Name to be honoured.'

The people You rescued by Your great power and strong hand are Your servants. O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers of those of us who delight in honouring You. Please grant me success today by making the king favourable to me. Put it into his heart to be kind to me."

In those days I was the king's cup-bearer.

Nehemiah 1 (NLT)

3.14 Esther

Queen Esther prayed and fasted with her attendants before presenting herself to the king:

Then Esther asked them to answer Mordecai, "Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Susa, and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I and my maidens will also fast the same way. Then I will go in to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."

Esther 4:15-16 (WEBPB)

3.15 Job

Job was healed and restored after he prayed for his friends:

After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, He said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken accurately about Me, as My servant Job has. So take seven bulls and seven rams and go to My servant Job and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer on your behalf. I will not treat you as you deserve, for you have not spoken accurately about Me, as My servant Job has." So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did as the LORD commanded them, and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.

When Job prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes. In fact, the LORD gave him twice as much as before! Then all his brothers, sisters, and former friends came and feasted with him in his home. And they consoled him and comforted him because of all the trials the LORD had brought against him. And each of them brought him a gift of money and a gold ring.

Job 42:7-11 (NLT)

3.16 Isaiah

Isaiah 64 is a prayer to the LORD:

***Oh that You would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at Your presence –
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil –
to make Your Name known to your adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble at Your presence!
When You did awesome things that we did not look for,
You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence.
From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,***

*no eye has seen a God besides You,
who acts for those who wait for Him.
You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
those who remember You in Your ways.
Behold, You were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls upon Your Name,
who rouses himself to take hold of You;
for You have hidden Your face from us,
and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.
But now, O LORD, You are our Father;
we are the clay, and You are our potter;
we are all the work of Your hand.
Be not so terribly angry, O LORD,
and remember not iniquity for ever.
Behold, please look, we are all Your people.
Your holy cities have become a wilderness;
Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation.
Our holy and beautiful house,
where our fathers praised You,
has been burned by fire,
and all our pleasant places have become ruins.
Will you restrain Yourself at these things, O LORD?
Will You keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?*
Isaiah 64 (ESVUK)

3.17 Daniel

Daniel interceded for the Israelites to return from captivity according to Jeremiah's prophecy. He did not take this for granted but humbled himself and identified with the sins of the people:

*In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood from the books the number of the years about which the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the completion of the desolation of Jerusalem, seventy years. And I turned to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and petitions, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God, and made this confession, "**O LORD, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and loving kindness with those who love Him and keep His commandments. We have sinned, and have done what is wrong and wicked, and have rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and from Your ordinances. Neither have we listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your Name to our kings, our leaders, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. LORD, righteousness belongs to You, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, who are near, and who are far off, through all the countries where You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds that they have committed against You. LORD, to us belongs open shame, to our kings, to our leaders, and to our fathers, because we have sinned***

against You. To the LORD our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him. And have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and turned away, refusing to obey Your voice. Therefore has the curse been poured out on us, and the oath that is written in the Law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against You. He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us, and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing on us a great calamity; for under the whole heaven such has not been done as has been done on Jerusalem. As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us. Yet have we not tried to gain the favour of the LORD our God, that we should turn from our iniquities, and have discernment in your truth. Therefore has the LORD watched over the calamity, and brought it on us, for the LORD our God is just in all He has done, and we have not obeyed His voice. And now, Lord our God, who has brought Your people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for Yourself, even to this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. LORD, according to all Your righteousness, let Your anger and please let Your wrath be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all who are around us. Now therefore, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant, and to his petitions, and cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary that is desolate, for the LORD's sake. My God, turn Your ear, and hear; open Your eyes, and see our desolation, and the city which is called by Your Name. For we do not present our petitions before You for our righteousness, but for Your great mercy. LORD, hear. LORD, forgive. LORD, listen and take action. Do not delay, for Your own sake, my God, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

Daniel 9:1-19 (NHEB)

On another occasion, he prayed and fasted partially for three weeks. He received an answer from an angel who had been sent as soon as he started praying but had been held up in a spiritual battle:

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, even a great warfare. He understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three whole weeks. I ate no pleasant bread. No meat or wine came into my mouth. I didn't anoint myself at all, until three whole weeks were fulfilled.

In the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel, I lifted up my eyes, and looked, and behold, there was a man clothed in linen, whose thighs were adorned with pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as flaming torches. His arms and his feet were like burnished bronze. The voice of his words was like the voice of a multitude.

I, Daniel, alone saw the vision; for the men who were with me didn't see the vision; but a great quaking fell on them, and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone, and saw this great vision. No strength remained in me; for my face grew deathly pale, and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the voice of his words. When I heard the voice of his words, then I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face towards the ground.

Behold, a hand touched me, which set me on my knees and on the palms of my hands. He said to me, "Daniel, you greatly beloved man, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright; for I have been sent to you, now." When he had spoken this word to me, I stood trembling.

Then he said to me, "Don't be afraid, Daniel; for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. I have come for your words' sake. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; but, behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me because I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days; for the vision is yet for many days."

When he had spoken these words to me, I set my face towards the ground, and was mute. Behold, one in the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth, and spoke and said to him who stood before me, "My lord, by reason of the vision my sorrows have overtaken me, and I retain no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? For as for me, immediately there remained no strength in me. There was no breath left in me."

Then one like the appearance of a man touched me again, and he strengthened me. He said, "Greatly beloved man, don't be afraid. Peace be to you. Be strong. Yes, be strong."

When he spoke to me, I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak; for you have strengthened me."

Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Now I will return to fight with the prince of Persia. When I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you that which is inscribed in the writing of truth. There is no one who holds with me against these, but Michael your prince."

Daniel 10:1-21 (WEBPB)

3.18 Jonah and the Ninevites

Jonah prayed in the belly of the whale:

Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside the fish. He said,

***"I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble,
and He answered me.***

***I called to You from the land of the dead,
and LORD, You heard me!***

*You threw me into the ocean depths,
and I sank down to the heart of the sea.*

*The mighty waters engulfed me;
I was buried beneath Your wild and stormy waves.*

*Then I said, 'O LORD, You have driven me from Your presence.
Yet I will look once more toward Your holy Temple.'*

*I sank beneath the waves,
and the waters closed over me.*

*Seaweed wrapped itself around my head.
I sank down to the very roots of the mountains.*

*I was imprisoned in the earth,
whose gates lock shut forever.
But You, O LORD my God,
snatched me from the jaws of death!*

*As my life was slipping away,
I remembered the LORD.
And my earnest prayer went out to You
in Your holy Temple.*

*Those who worship false gods
turn their backs on all God's mercies.
But I will offer sacrifices to You with songs of praise,*

*and I will fulfil all my vows.
For my salvation comes from the LORD alone.”*
Jonah 2:1-9 (NLT)

The Ninevites believed Jonah's word and prayed with fasting:

So Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh, according to the LORD's word. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey across. Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried out, and said, "In forty days, Nineveh will be overthrown!"

*The people of Nineveh believed God; and **they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from their greatest even to their least.** The news reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and took off his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. He made a proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, "**Let neither man nor animal, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and animal, and let them cry mightily to God. Yes, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows whether God will not turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we might not perish?**"*

God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way. God relented of the disaster which He said He would do to them, and He didn't do it.

Jonah 3:3-10 (WEBPB)

4. Jesus and prayer

4.1 The prayer life of Jesus

Jesus prayed at His baptism when the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove (Luke 3:21).

After Jesus was baptised He was sent by the Spirit to the desert for forty days of prayer and fasting after which He overcame Satan's temptations through the Word. He returned in the power of the Spirit to begin His ministry.

Jesus prayed through the night before choosing His twelve disciples (Luke 6:12).

Jesus got up very early in the morning to pray (Mark 1:35-27).

Jesus often withdrew to lonely places to pray (Luke 5:16).

The purpose of the transfiguration was for Jesus to pray (Luke 9:28-29).

The disciples asked Jesus how to pray because they observed His prayer life (Luke 11:1).

Jesus prayed that Peter would not fall (Luke 22:31-32).

Jesus prayed for Himself, His disciples and all believers. His main concerns were to be glorified, for protection from the world and for unity:

*Jesus said these things, then lifting up his eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may also glorify You; even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, so He will give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. This is eternal life, that they should know You, the only true God, and Him whom You sent, Jesus Christ. I glorified You on the earth. I have accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, **glorify Me with Your own self with the glory which I had with You before the world existed.** I revealed Your Name to the people whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You have given them to Me. They have kept Your Word. Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are from You, for the words which You have given Me I have given to them, and they received them, and knew for sure that I came from You. They have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I don't pray for*

Chapter 9. Prayer

*the world, but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. All things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them through Your Name which you have given Me, that they may be one, even as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your Name. I have kept those whom You have given Me. None of them is lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and I say these things in the world, that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your Word. The world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **I pray not that You would take them from the world, but that You would keep them from the evil one.** They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. Not for these only do I pray, but for those also who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me, I have given to them; **that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one;** that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them, even as You loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may see My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world hasn't known You, but I knew You; and these knew that you sent Me. I made known to them Your Name, and will make it known; that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

John 17 (WEBPB)

Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane but His disciples were unable to keep watch with Him because they were overwhelmed with sorrow:

*Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then He said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with Me." And going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed, saying, "**My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.**" And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And He said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, for the second time, He went away and prayed, "**My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done.**" And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, He went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, My betrayer is at hand."*

Matthew 26:36-46 (ESVUK)

Jesus offered fervent prayers and petitions whilst He was on the earth:

While Jesus was here on earth, He offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the One who could rescue Him from death. And God heard His prayers because of His deep reverence for God.

Hebrews 5:7 (NLT)

Jesus prayed several times when He was on the cross:

When they came to the place that is called "The Skull", they crucified Him there with the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.

*Jesus said, “**Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.**”*

Luke 23:33-34a (WEBPB)

About [3pm] Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lima sabachthani?” That is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Matthew 27:46 (WEBPB)

Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit!” Having said this, He breathed His last.

Luke 23:46 (WEBPB)

After His resurrection and ascension, Jesus’ present occupation is to intercede for us (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25, 9:24, 1 John 2:1).

4.2 Jesus’ teaching on prayer

Jesus’ Mount of Olives discourse includes some teaching on prayer:

When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. In praying, don’t use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. Therefore don’t be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask Him.

Matthew 6:5-8 (WEBPB)

Jesus taught His disciples to ask, seek and knock, and to trust the Father to give them the Holy Spirit:

*He said to them, “Which of you, if you go to a friend at midnight, and tell him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him,’ and he from within will answer and say, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give it to you’? I tell you, although he will not rise and give it to him because he is his friend, yet **because of his persistence, he will get up and give him as many as he needs.***

*I tell you, **keep asking, and it will be given you. Keep seeking, and you will find. Keep knocking, and it will be opened to you.** For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened.*

*Which of you fathers, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he won’t give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he asks for an egg, he won’t give him a scorpion, will he? **If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?**”*

Luke 11:5-13 (WEBPB)

Jesus told His disciples a parable of the persistent widow to emphasise the importance of persistence in prayer:

***He also spoke a parable to them that they must always pray, and not give up,** saying, “There was a judge in a certain city who didn’t fear God, and didn’t respect man. A widow was in that city, and she often came to him, saying, ‘Defend me from my adversary!’ He wouldn’t for a while, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God, nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will defend her, or else she will wear me out by her continual coming.’”*

The Lord said, “Listen to what the unrighteous judge says. Won’t God avenge His chosen ones who are crying out to Him day and night, and yet He exercises patience with them? I tell you that He will avenge them quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

Luke 18:1-8 (WEBPB)

Jesus taught His disciples the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector to indicate that it is prayer from the heart and not the outward appearance that matters to God:

*He spoke also this parable to certain people who were convinced of their own righteousness, and who despised all others. “Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself like this: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men, extortionists, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn’t even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; **for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.**”*

Luke 18:9-14 (WEBPB)

Jesus taught His disciples to pray to the Father in His Name:

Whatever you will ask in My Name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you will ask anything in My Name, I will do it.

John 14:13-14 (WEBPB)

*And in that day you will ask nothing of Me. Truly, truly I tell you, **whatever you may ask of the Father in My Name, He will give it to you.** Until now, you have asked nothing in My Name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full. I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. But the hour is coming when I will no more speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father. **In that day you will ask in My Name**, and I am not saying to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf, for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

John 16:23-28 (NHEB)

5. Other New Testament Scriptures on prayer

5.1 Other examples of prayer in the New Testament

The prophetess Anna prayed and fasted constantly in the temple (Luke 2:36-37).

The disciples, the women who followed Jesus and Jesus’ brothers prayed constantly after his ascension (Acts 1:14).

The disciples prayed after the release of Peter and John (Acts 4:23-31).

The deacons were chosen in part so that the apostles could devote themselves to prayer (Acts 6:4).

Saul observed a three day dry fast after he was converted (Acts 9:9).

Barnabas and Saul were set aside for the work God had called them to after a period of worship and fasting (Acts 13:1-3).

Paul and Barnabas committed elders in each town to the Lord through prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23).

Discipleship Training Course

Paul and Silas prayed in a Philippian prison (Acts 16:25).

Paul describes his prayer life in many of his letters (Romans 1:9-10, Ephesians 1:16, Colossians 1:9, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, 3:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:11, 2 Timothy 1:3, Philemon 4).

Paul made a prayer of thanksgiving in his letter to the Romans, known as a doxology:

Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out!

“For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been His counsellor?

Or who has first given to Him,

and it will be repaid to Him again?”

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever! Amen.

Romans 11:33-36 (WEBPB)

Paul asked the recipients of his letters to pray for him on several occasions (Romans 15:30-32, Ephesians 6:19-20, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

Paul prayed again later on in his letter to the Romans:

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my Good News and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret through long ages, but now is revealed, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known for obedience of faith to all the nations; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Romans 14:24-26 (WEBPB)

Paul prayed twice for the Ephesian believers:

*For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, **that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power towards us who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.***

Ephesians 1:15-23 (ESVUK)

*For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, **that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (ESVUK)

Chapter 9. Prayer

Paul prayed for the Philippian Christians:

*And it is my prayer that **your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.***

Philippians 1:9-11 (ESVUK)

Paul prayed for the Colossian Christians:

*And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that **you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.***

Colossians 1:9-12 (ESVUK)

Epaphras was always wrestling in prayer for the Colossian Christians (Colossians 4:12-13).

Paul twice prayed for the Thessalonian believers:

Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 (ESVUK)

*To this end we always pray for you, that **our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfil every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power**, so that the Name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (ESVUK)

Paul prayed for Philemon:

I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have towards the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

Philemon 4-7 (ESVUK)

The writer to the Hebrews made prayer requests from his readers (Hebrews 13:18-19).

Finally, Jude prayed a doxology for the recipients of his letter:

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory in great joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

Jude 24-25 (NHEB)

5.2 New Testament teaching on prayer

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And

He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:26-27 (ESVUK)

Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.

1 Corinthians 14:13-15 (ESVUK)

*Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having the utility belt of truth buckled around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having fitted your feet with the preparation of the Good News of peace, above all, taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; **with all prayer and requests, praying at all times in the Spirit, and being watchful to this end in all perseverance and requests for all the saints.***

Ephesians 6:10-18 (WEBPB)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NHEB)

Pray without ceasing.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (WEBPB)

I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Saviour, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. For,

There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity – the man Christ Jesus. He gave His life to purchase freedom for everyone.

This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time. And I have been chosen as a preacher and apostle to teach the Gentiles this message about faith and truth. I'm not exaggerating – just telling the truth.

In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.

1 Timothy 2:1-8 (NLT)

Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.

*Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. **The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops.***

James 5:13-18 (NLT)

*In the same way, you husbands, **live with your wives in an understanding way [with great gentleness and tact, and with an intelligent regard for the marriage relationship], as with someone physically weaker, since she is a woman. Show her honour and respect as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered or ineffective.***

1 Peter 3:7 (AMP)

*But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, **pray in the power of the Holy Spirit**, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love.*

Jude 20-21 (NLT)

6. Other prayer topics

6.1 Prayer with fasting

Jesus taught his followers “when you fast” (Matthew 6:16), not “if you fast”, indicating that fasting is part of the normal Christian life, except in special circumstances, such as a medical condition.

There are four main types of fasting:

- A diet fast, as practiced twice by Daniel (Daniel 1:12 and 10:2)
- A liquids only fast, not recorded in Scripture; in between a diet fast and a water only fast
- A water only fast, such as David praying for Bathsheba's baby (2 Samuel 12:15-17)
- A dry, or complete, fast, as practiced by Saul (Acts 9:9). This should not be attempted by a young believer for more than 24 hours. More advice is given below.

Individual fasting (e.g. Daniel, David, Saul) v. corporate fasting (e.g. Ninevites)

True fasting requires grace and should be led by the Holy Spirit. However, some fasts may be called seasonally (see discussion below on gatekeeping of temporal gates). For example, the Israelites were required to fast on the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 16:29); it was even known as the Fast in New Testament times (see Acts 27:9). We also need to operate with grace towards others when we are fasting, such as supporting the poor and hungry (Isaiah 58:6-9).

Fasting amplifies your spiritual receptiveness. It is a form of discipline of the flesh. It is wise to give up other pleasures when fasting, such as entertainment, and spend mealtimes in prayer or Bible study, otherwise other voices can become amplified instead.

Practicalities of drink or water only fasting:

- Food cravings and caffeine addiction can be overcome in the first two days
- A second energy source starts to take over after about three days
- After about a week, the body starts to cleanse itself from impurities
- It is important to drink a lot of (especially warm or hot) fluids

- Be careful when standing as your spine can become weakened
- The longest you should do a water only fast is 30-40 days, depending on your fat reserves. After this, your body will start to digest your living flesh. This may be what the Scripture stating, “Jesus was hungry” (Luke 4:2) means as His craving hunger would have disappeared after the first few days of His fast.
- A complete fast should not be attempted for more than three days. Longer dry fasting could damage your vital organs.
- **Extended fasting can also be spiritually dangerous because it brings you into contact with high level spiritual powers. It should only be conducted in consultation with experienced ministers.**
- When coming off a fast it is good to start with juices, then soup and cooked vegetables. Do not eat meat or other rich foods for at least a day.

6.2 Praying over gates

Gatekeeping originally referred to watching over the gates of the **city** (2 Kings 7:10) and the **temple** (1 Chronicles 9:17). Gatekeepers were the lowest of servants amongst the Israelites but their service was very important. 1 Chronicles 9:22-29 gives a description of the general duties of gatekeepers:

- They guarded the gates of the house of the LORD (v. 23)
- The principal gatekeepers were entrusted with the responsibility for the rooms and treasuries in the house of God (v. 26). It is also interesting to note from here that not all the gatekeepers were Levites.
- They would spend the night stationed around the house of God in order to guard it (v. 27)
- They were given a key for opening it each morning (v. 27)
- Some of them were in charge of the articles used in the temple service, the furnishings and all other articles of the sanctuary (vv. 28-29)

In addition to the city gates and the gates to the temple, gatekeepers also watched over the home or tent (Phineas – see Numbers 25, and Joshua – see Exodus 33:7-11), the storehouse (Obed-Edom and his descendants– see 1 Chronicles 26:15 and 2 Chronicles 25:24) and the mountain of God (Joshua – see Exodus 24:13-18 and 32:15-17).

Gatekeepers were encouraged to worship when they were serving:

*Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD,
who stand by night in the house of the LORD!*

*Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless the LORD!*

*May the LORD bless you from Zion,
He who made heaven and earth!*

Psalm 134 (ESVUK)

Psalm 24 refers to speaking directly to gates:

***Lift up your heads, you gates!
Be lifted up, you everlasting doors,
and the King of glory will come in.***

*Who is the King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.*

*Lift up your heads, you gates;
yes, lift them up, you everlasting doors,
and the King of glory will come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of Armies is the King of glory!*

Psalms 24:7-10 (WEBPB)

A similar ministry to gatekeeping is **watchmen** (2 Samuel 13:34). Their job was to watch over the walls of a city.

Both gatekeepers and watchmen can be taken figuratively to refer to intercession. Isaiah 52 can be used in this context:

*How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who proclaims peace,
who brings glad tidings of good things,
who proclaims salvation,
who says to Zion,
"your God reigns!"
Your watchmen shall lift up their voices,
with their voices they shall sing together;
for they shall see eye to eye
when the LORD brings back Zion.*

Isaiah 52:7-8 (NKJV)

Gates can refer to:

- **The home** – the leading Christian in a home should take the responsibility as a gatekeeper by praying over the entry points to the home and by being a priest to the other members of the family. If the leading Christian is also head of the home then they should take responsibility to ensure nothing impure enters the home.
- **Temporal gates**, such as times of the day (Acts 3:1), days of the week (such as Sundays) and month (such as the first day) and year (such as religious festivals and the beginning of the New Year), and particular years (such as the year of jubilee)
- **Ministries**, such as a pastor who can be seen as the gatekeeper of the flock. Jesus called Himself the gate for the sheep (John 10:1-10), referring to the way a shepherd would lie across the doorway to a sheep pen in order to protect the sheep inside from wild animals.
- **Physical places**, although extreme caution should be exercised before praying over physical places outside of one's home – please seek advice from senior ministers

6.3 Praying through the Word

Jesus overcame Satan in the wilderness by using the inspired word of God, known as a **rhema word**. Many Scriptures are suitable for this purpose. We must study the Bible in order that the Holy Spirit can bring to mind the right word at a time of trial.

Examples of Scriptures which might be used for rhema words are:

I will not leave you nor forsake you.

Joshua 1:5b (NKJV)

The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.'

2 Chronicles 16:9a (NLT)

***Once I was young, and now I am old.
Yet I have never seen the godly abandoned
or their children begging for bread.***

Psalms 37:25 (NLT)

***If I cherished sin in my heart,
the LORD wouldn't have listened.
But most certainly, God has listened.
He has heard the voice of my prayer.
Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer,
nor His loving kindness from me.***

Psalms 66:18-20 (WEBPB)

***Let God arise,
let His enemies be scattered;
let those also who hate Him flee before Him.***

Psalms 68:1 (NKJV)

He withholds no good thing from those who walk blamelessly.

Psalms 84:11b (WEBPB)

***I have hidden Your Word in my heart,
that I might not sin against You.***

Psalms 119:11 (WEBPB)

***Your Word is a lamp to my feet,
and a light for my path.***

Psalms 119:105 (WEBPB)

***Depart from me, you evildoers,
that I may keep the commandments of my God.***

Psalms 119:115 (WEBPB)

***Those who love Your law have great peace,
and nothing causes them to stumble.***

Psalms 119:165 (NASB1995)

***For you have exalted above all things
Your Name and Your Word.***

Psalms 138:2b (ESVUK)

***Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and don't lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He will make your paths straight.***

Proverbs 3:5-6 (WEBPB)

***Though a righteous man falls seven times,
he will get up***

Proverbs 24:16a (HCSB)

***You will keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on You,
because he trusts in You.***

Isaiah 26:3 (NKJV)

***For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.***

Isaiah 62:1 (ESVUK)

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

Jeremiah 33:3 (NKJV)

***Do not rejoice over me, my enemy!
Though I have fallen, I will stand up;
though I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be my light.
Because I have sinned against Him,
I must endure the LORD's rage
until He argues my case
and establishes justice for me.
He will bring me into the light;
I will see His salvation.***

Micah 7:8-9 (HCSB)

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NASB1995)

I am the Bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will not be hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty.'

John 6:35b (WEBPB)

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

John 6:63 (ESVUK)

I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.

John 8:12b (WEBPB)

I am the Door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

John 10:9 (ESVUK)

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 10:11 (WEBPB)

I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will still live, even if he dies. Whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.

John 11:25b-26a (WEBPB)

And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.'

John 12:32 (NASB1995)

Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in Me.

John 14:1 (WEBPB)

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me.

John 14:6b (WEBPB)

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27 (NHEB)

I am the Vine. You are the branches. He who remains in Me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:5 (WEBPB)

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, it is much more [certain], now that we are reconciled, that we shall be saved (daily delivered from sin's dominion) through His [resurrection] life.

Romans 5:10 (AMP)

Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin [and your relationship to it broken], but alive to God [in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:11 (AMP)

For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 6:14 (HCSB)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:1-2 (ESVUK)

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Romans 8:6 (NKJV)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Romans 8:18 (ESVUK)

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to His purpose.

Romans 8:28 (WEBPB)

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from God's love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39 (WEBPB)

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESVUK)

It is written: 'I believed; therefore I have spoken.' Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak.

2 Corinthians 4:13 (NIVUK)

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things

that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (ESVUK)

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (WEBPB)

He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (HCSB)

Since the weapons of our warfare are not worldly, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to obey Christ. And we are ready to punish any disobedience, once your obedience has been confirmed.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6 (HCSB)

But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (ESVUK)

And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 (HCSB)

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Galatians 5:24 (NASB1995)

But that is not the way you learned Christ! – assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:20-24 (ESVUK)

Therefore God also highly exalted Him, and gave to Him the Name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11 (WEBPB)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

Put to death, therefore, whatever is worldly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Colossians 3:5 (NHEB)

If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny himself.

2 Timothy 2:13 (NHEB)

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:22-23 (NASB1995)

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV)

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

2 Peter 1:3 (NIVUK)

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

1 John 2:15-17 (NLT)

6.4 Questions

1. When should we pray? When should we fast as well?
2. When should we stop praying: after asking once, when we sense God has heard, or do we need to keep asking until we see an answer?
3. How does God answer prayer? What different answers can He give?