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The Priority & Prerogative of God-centred Prayer

In a world of intense communication over the social media, we have the privilege in prayer with God which is a means of grace, the breath of godliness and barometer of our spirituality. One of the highest honour accorded to a child of God is to come directly before God's holy presence without any hindrance. **All the infinitely rich and inexhaustible sources of heaven are available to us** as God responds to our prayer according to His sovereign purpose. Our Lord Jesus reminds his disciples to pray, in John 16:24, "*Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*"

Purpose & Privilege of Prayer

The end of all prayer is the glory of God, and it is not about us and our wants only. The lack of drive for prayer is an indicator that our love for God has grown cold. Sin will keep us from prayer or prayer will keep us from sin and we are to pray according to His will always. The apostle John summarised the vital principle of God-honouring prayer in 1 John 5:14-15, "*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*"

The inspired Word of God commands us to pray always and not faint (Eph 6:18) and to pray without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17). Prayer is a both a privilege and sacred duty, and the neglect of prayer is to our spiritual loss. When God answers prayer, He will be glorified, and He desires His subjects to **be engaged in intercessory for the saving of souls and the building up of His kingdom.** The primary reason for prayer is not only the granting of our requests according to our will, but also the display of God's goodness, wisdom, power and grace to His glory. 2 Cor 1:11 says, "*Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.*" Prayer makes a difference in the lives of others and ourselves too.



Building up our Prayer Life

On how to build up our prayer life, firstly, consider our Lord Jesus who set the perfect example for us to follow in the habit of prayer in Mark 1:35, which says, *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."* It is often profitable to wake up early and to be alone with God first before men (Ps 5:3). The Psalmist also said, *"Early will I seek you"* (Ps 73:1). It requires settling aside a place and time to be disciplined to do it especially in the morning if possible.

Secondly, consider also Daniel who prayed three times a day with thanksgiving on his knees without fail (Dan 6:10). **Kneeling gives us a good standing before God.** Luke 6:12 says that our Lord Jesus continued all night in prayer to God. Can we last more than ½ hour in private intercession with God while we talk for hours on the phone with a friend? King David said that he will raise his voice to seek God early in the morning (Psa 5:3)

Thirdly, it is important to note that prayer is **not a magical incantation or meaningless chanting or mantra to be repeated.** It is the **heartfelt expression of the soul to God** for such things that will glorify God and in accordance to His perfect will. Prayer should be a way of life for all the saints of God. Be sincere in your words for God knows our hearts.

One of the useful analogies is to compare praying to our breathing. Inhaling and exhaling are so natural to us that we do it every second involuntary. Should not this be our frequent spiritual exercises ('inhale' through prayer and the Word and 'exhale' through confession of our sins) and for the good health and vitality of our souls?

Fourthly, our prayer life should be **accompanied by importunity or persistence.** Luke 18:4-5 gives us an important example whereby the perseverance of prayer brought about a positive response. May this challenge us and increase our fervency and frequency in daily intercession.

Answers to Prayer

God our loving heavenly Father longs to answer our prayers but He may **test our intensity of desire or persistence** to see if we really ask him. Prayer is not prattle; it is battle. The evil one will prevent us from it if possible. Keep asking, seeking and knocking and you will be pleasantly surprised one day (Matt 7:7). As to why God did not answer your prayers it is noteworthy that. There are generally four answers to prayer according to His will:

Direct - Yes (you get exactly what you ask for as it is the will of God)

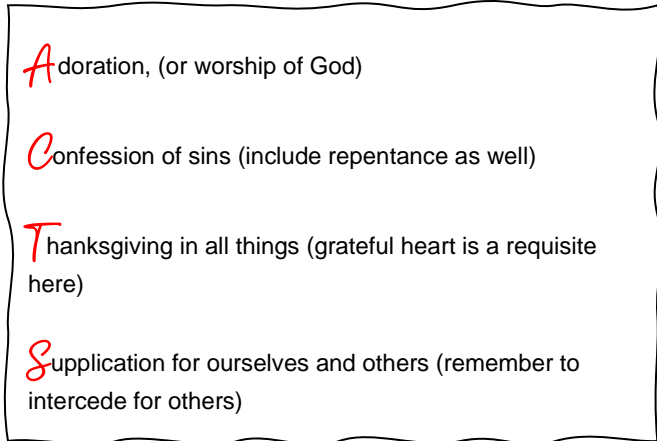
Denial - No (you get a negative response from God which is for our own good)

Delay - Wait (you get a test of patience and that the answer will come finally in the fullness of time)

Different - Something else (you get a better response which is not quite what you ask for)

Daily Prayer should be accompanied by genuine fervency and frequency. An example is a godly leader from Colossae called Epaphras. Col 4:12 says, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." He is truly an example of a prayer warrior which we should emulate.

To pray aright before God. consider using the acronym **ACTS** that may be helpful here:



There is no greater joy that to be able to come before the throne of grace daily in prayers with Him and for others in need. (Heb 4:16)

Corporate intercessions

Our **personal petitions and supplications for others** can be included in our **corporate prayers as well as a church body**. Phil 4:6 says, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." We can ask for inner strength, victory, comfort, peace, wisdom and guidance in our daily walk, work, salvation of our family and friends among other things. **Do not forget to thank God as a church when He answers and not be weary to pray for the salvation of our loved ones and church members and friends as we intercede together as a church.**

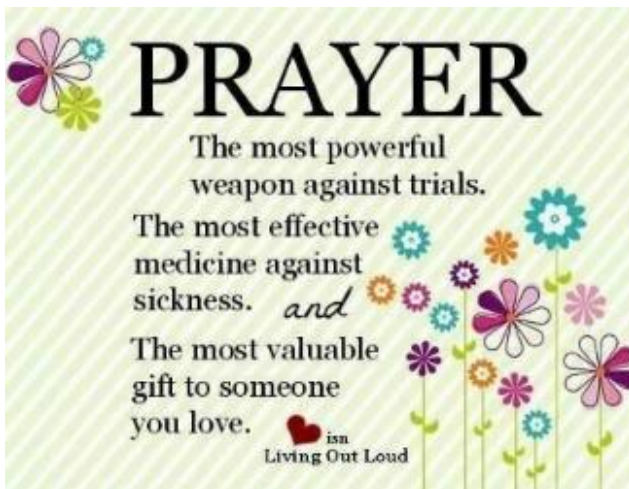
Prayers ascends to God as sweet-smelling odour or savour that is well pleasing to Him (Rev 5:9, 8:4) and let others hear when we pray together aloud. Have you contributed to the spiritual aroma in heaven?

1 Sam 12:23 says, “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way”. Prayerlessness is a sin and a prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian and we pray that this will not be our loss but our gain when we pray before the Lord.

Conclusion

There are many obstacles to fervent prayers that Satan will put in the way to stop us, including ill-discipline, sin, leisure, indifference, excessive care for worldly business, pets, games, carnality and worldliness that may prevent us from coming to the Throne of Grace often. Satan will not let us pray easily. We need to be **resolute, disciplined to call on God daily and be truly refreshed and blessed by the joy and privilege of persevering in personal and corporate intercessory prayer. Do not miss your personal morning audience with God in fervent prayer and the Wednesday church prayer meeting with the brethren, where the Word is also heard which is the source for the spiritual life of our souls.**

Jack Sin



Memory Verse

3 John 3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Lord's Day Sunday Worship Service! If you are here for the first time, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave. Those who share the church vision to acquire a place of worship in due time, may designate your offerings to the SHBPC Church Building Fund.
2. Pastor is ministering the Word and Lord's Supper at Gospel Light BPC this morning.
3. Rev Tan Eng Boo brings us God's Word this morning on "**A Case Study of 3 Characters (3John 1-12)**", continuing the quarterly series on "Discovering and Applying the Johannine Epistles – Studies in the Book of 1, 2 and 3 John".
4. Next Sunday is Gospel Sunday. Pastor will preach on "**In Search of Peace with God (Rom 5:1-8)**". **Do bring someone to hear the Gospel next Sunday.**
5. Sunday School classes after the worship service are as follows:
 - Westminster Confession of Faith – Pastor
 - Studies in 2 Chronicles – Dr Kwong Leen
6. **Door-to-Door Evangelism at Macpherson this afternoon.** Do join the Evangelism Team to invite Macpherson residents to our Gospel Sunday.
7. Chinese Fellowship meets on every Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. We have systematic studies on Kingdoms, Covenants and Canon of the Old Testament and the Parables of Jesus. Join us for a time of profitable learning. [Zoom ID:883 9662 4157 Passcode:625551]
8. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church. [Zoom ID:863 7527 5431 Passcode:218178]
9. We need willing hands and hearts to assist in the weekly cleaning of the premises. Do let Dn Yue Kay if you are available to serve in this area.
10. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

Kindly indicate "**Church Building Fund**" if you would like to designate towards this cause.
