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## Applying the Biblical Precepts of Prayer

There is a great prerogative that everyone who believes in Christ has. It is the avenue of access to the throne of grace of God. and to the church prayer meeting as a corporate body. Praying is part of our communion with and worshipping and seeking God according to His sovereign good will. Matt 7:7 says, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' We need to learn to pray according to the Word of God, asking and receiving. 1 John

5:14-15 says, '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.' Pray for the knowledge of the unrevealed will of God in a specific situation, need, seeking and finding God as well.

Jer 29:12-13 says, 'Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.' We need to pray daily for the gracious intervention of God in our lives. We are not to seek signs and wonders or tongue speaking, but for God to guide us daily in situations by His grace and mercy when we pray. John 16:24 says, 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' Matthew 17:20-21 says, 'And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.'



### Reasons for Prayer

As we study the WCF catechism, we are reminded that prayer is defined by the **Shorter Catechism Q 98**, "**What is prayer? Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.**"

Prayer is access to heaven and is commanded of God. Matt 26:41 says, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* Prayer is to seek God first and is more than just requesting things from God (Jas 4:2).

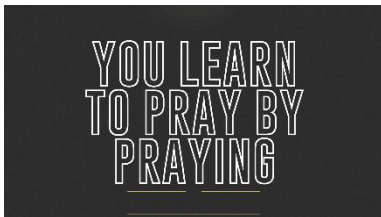
Prayer is also the source of all joy when God hears us. John 16:24 says, *'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.'*

**Fervent and believing Prayer can help to deliver us out of much trial and trouble (Acts 12:1-17). Prayer unlocks the treasures of God's wisdom when we humbly seek Him asking Him for wisdom.** James 1:5 says, *'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.'* Praying is a vehicle for power and God will hear (Jer 33:3). We are told by Samuel that not to pray or prayerlessness is a sin before God. 1 Samuel 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.'* Salvation is through prayer in faith for the sinner who called on God. Romans 10:13 says, *'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'* **We need to pray without ceasing in the Lord or continually (1 Thess 5:17) for prayer brings peace, comfort and hope (Psa 33:22).**

## Learning to Pray

There are many good examples of prayer in both the NT and OT. Christ taught the disciples how to pray (see the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13). Pray in the name of Christ submitting our petition through Him alone (John 14:13-14). The Holy Spirit guides and led us when we are at a loss of words to pray (Rom 8:26-27). Pray that God's will is done in everything.

James 4:15 says, *'For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.'* We need to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and God's covenant people including both Jews and Gentiles (Psa 122:6). This includes the body of Christ who will one day be in the new Jerusalem when the Lord returns (Heb 10:22; Rev 3:12; 21:2). Pray also for God's provision of our daily necessities (Lk 11:3).



**Prayer can change our lives and the way we live or treat others too as God wills.** Pray for forgiveness from God and also the ability to forgive others (Matt 18:21-22). We need to learn to pray for our family, our church, our nation, (ie new govt) ourselves in faith and trusting in God. Hebrews 11:6 says, *'But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.'*

## Obstacles to Prayer

**We need to ask God to cleanse our hearts first before we pray as we seek God for forgiveness and humble our mind before God.**

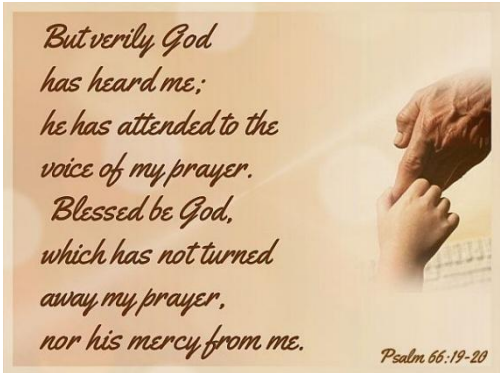
**When there is a sin or a problem of selfishness or covetousness and other obsessions or distractions (Jas 4:3), it can hinder our prayers.**

When there is iniquity in the hearts God will not hear us (Psa 66:18; Isa 59:1-2; John 9:31). When Husbands do not honour their wives, their prayers are hindered too. 1Pet 3:7 says, *'Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered'* and Ephesians 6:18 says, *'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.'* We need to confess our sins and repent and ask the Lord for forgiveness and for the revival of our hearts first before we worship or serve Him effectively.

## Prayer Matters

The question that is often asked is, "Does God answer our prayers?" Look up to Jer 33:3 and John 15:7 which says, *'Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.'* *'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'* Does prayer change things or make a difference at all? The answer is given in 2Cor 1:1 which says, *'Paul, an apostle of*

*Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia.'* Yes it does Paul says



*But verily, God  
has heard me;  
he has attended to the  
voice of my prayer.  
Blessed be God,  
which has not turned  
away my prayer,  
nor his mercy from me.*

*Psalm 66:19-20*

## Requirements for Answers to Prayer

Matt 21:22 says, *'And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'* Often it can be delayed as the Lord wills. Daniel experienced delayed in his answers too from God for 21 days and we need to learn to be patient and wait upon the Lord (Dan 10:12-14). There is much peace when we pray for Phil 4:6-7 says, *'Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'* We are to pray fervently. With grace from above for God answers all prayers but not always exactly as we asked for. Isaiah 55:8 says, *'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.'* Above all we must endure and honour and glorify God in whatever He has for us. Heb 4:16 says, *'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'*

## God & His Answers to Prayers

John 16:24 says, *'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.'* God promises in Jer 33:3 that if we call upon Him, He will hear and answer our prayers according to His will. **We must keep in mind that God may not always answer our prayers the way we would like Him to for**

**He knows best. Consider four ways by which God answers our prayers.** We call these the four D's by God in answer to our prayer.

### **Direct**

God may choose to answer your prayer in a direct manner and give you a "yes." You might pray for something, and God will grant it just the way you asked Him for it (i.e. your prayer to get a job and you get it). This type of answer means you were praying in accord and with the will of God and that is the best for us (Mt 21:22).

### **Different**

**Sometimes God gives us a different reply than when we can ask or imagine.**

You may be praying for a certain college or a university (NUS) to study in, but you got into another college or University (ie SMU or NTU) instead. Sometimes our first inclination toward an answer to prayer is that "this can't be the answer to my prayer." But yes, it is and God's different answer is better for us than ours and that is the best for us.

### **Delayed**

**God will answer a prayer, but it will be according to His perfect timing.**

We may be praying according to His will not ours, but He is preparing special circumstances which will benefit us when it is time to claim the answer (i.e. someone who desires to be married very soon but has to wait a few years to find a right partner in life and is blessed). The delayed answer teaches us a lesson in patience to wait patiently upon and to trust God (Isa 40:31).

### **Denial**

**This is the answer we never want to hear but it is often good for us that God denied our prayer request. When God says "No" or denies a request, it is never to our detriment, even though we may not understand it in the short run.** Do not say there is no answer to our prayers but say that the answer is no and often that is the best for us which we will learn later.

God answers our prayers in His sovereign good pleasure, will and timing as 1 John 5:14-15 says, *'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.'*

## **Unpacking The Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13)**

There is a good example on prayer given by our Lord in the NT as a pattern or example on how to pray. It is called the Lord's Prayer. Consider the salient elements of it.

**'Our'** signifies our intimate relationship with God and as a result with other true Christians as well.

**'Father'** indicates our close communion and relationship between God and His children that we can call Him Abba Father.

**'Which Art In Heaven'** : God is in Heaven meaning that He is higher than any on the earth (Psa 20:6) and he rules over all. Faith and our prayers go hand in hand together to please God (Heb 11:6)

**'Hallowed Be Thy Name'** : God is to be respected and blessed. Hallowed means has the sense of holy worship and veneration. King David shared this too and he had appointed men in the temple to do that to honour and magnify God (1 Chr 23:5; 25:1, 7)

**'Thy Kingdom Come'** : There is an sincere anticipation here. The kingdom of God will come and not self or men or even Satan. The Lord's will for the church will be fulfilled one day and it will more than a visible kingdom as some are looking for (Lk 17:20-21). The church is visible as we be assembled for worship and prayer on every Sabbath Day but it will be so in heaven for eternity one day.

**'Thy Will Be Done In Earth, As It Is In Heaven'** : God's will is sovereign and that He will redeem a chosen people for Himself. He did this by establishing His salvation plan on earth through Christ. God's will for redemption was settled in heaven before the foundations of the world. Eph 1:4 says, *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*

**'Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread'** : Our intercession should be daily and not infrequent. The daily bread that we are to seek is spiritual nourishment on a daily service and not once a week and it is our regular needs and not luxuries. We must seek the face of God in fervent and humble dependence prayer every day. We may also ask God for daily physical sustenance but also the weightier matter is for more lasting spiritual things in the fear of God.

**'And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors'** : Debt is a word often used in Bible to also signify sin or offence. We pray that God will be gracious to cleanse and forgive our sins and if you are true believer who accepted Christ, Christ has paid for all your sins. Each person is a debtor to God because of our sin and when we are saved, that debt is paid fully by the death of Lord Jesus

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done  
in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Christ on the cross as an atonement for us. But are you struggling to forgive others? One narrative in Scripture deals with unforgiveness found in Matthew 18:23-35. We need to learn to forbear and forgive others too. **Someone said, to forgive someone is to release a prisoner free and discover him to be yourself.**

**'And Lead Us Not Into Temptation':** The word "temptation" may also be translated "a proving, testing, or trials." In 1 Cor 10:13, we read *"There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* God is faithful and He will keep and preserve us and will see us through every testing and trial when he allows it.

**'But Deliver Us From Evil':** It can also be translated "keep us from the evil one." It is a petition asking for deliverance out of malevolent danger. When a person is outside the Kingdom of God, he is vulnerable to the diabolical bondage to Satan and sin. This is in essence is a petition for salvation and for victory over the evil forces for we are victors in Christ alone and not in our selves.

**'For Thine Is The Kingdom, And The Power, And The Glory, For Ever, Amen':** Finally, this is like a doxology to end a prayer on to glorify God. A good example to us to bless and glorify God before we end our prayers in Jesus' name when we submit all of what is said to God, and we must anticipate and yearn for his soon coming kingdom as our hope.

## Conclusion

King Solomon reminded us in 2Chr 7:14 says, *'If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.'* Thank God for this great prerogative that God has given to us. Imagine we have the handphone number or the email of God (that is how someone described Jeremiah 33:3 – God's phone number is 333) and we can call upon Him for help daily. (Heb 4:16) **What a great honour and privilege and do you make full use of this privilege daily? Something to think about and act upon and to pray about.**

Jack Sin



## ***Myanmar Quake Relief Updates***

Dear All,

Thank God for your kind gifts of love in practical ways to help the victims of the recent earthquake in Myanmar.

Rev David Khobal has led a relief mission there and he has given us a short report below with photos of food and necessities and tracts given to different families in 3 locations as supported by these funds coordinated by SHBPC with our mission partners there.

We pray that this will help them and above all that some will come to seek Christ as the eternal refuge for their souls.

Gal 6:10 and Rom10:9,10.

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*Dear brothers and sisters of SHBPC,  
Thank you very much for your  
generously contribution to help the  
earthquake affected families in  
Mandalay, Sagaing, and Naypyidaw.*

*Some relief to the (60) families in  
Sagaing where the earthquake  
started and the worst affected areas.  
We went from house to house, meet  
with them, encouraged them and  
gave them bags of rice, oils, some cash with tract.*



*Some families really need a new location  
and building houses. Please pray for them  
so that they will be able to relocate at new  
places.*

*Thanks to all and May the Lord our God  
bless you abundantly for His glory!*

***Rev David Khobal  
Myanmar Theological Seminary  
Yangon, Myanmar***

## Memory Verse

*Heb 11:6* But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

## Announcements

1. Welcome to our 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. Rev Matthew Yong brings us God's Word this morning on "***Approaching God with Faith (Heb 11:1-6)***", continuing the quarterly series on "***Approaching God with the Right Disposition***".
3. Next Sunday, Rev Eric Kwan will bring us on God's Word on "***Approaching God with a Burden for His Kingdom (1Cor 9:1-16)***".
4. Sunday School classes after worship service are as follows:
  - The Apostle Paul's Solution to Church Problems – Lessons from 1 Corinthians (Joseph)
  - Studies in Job (Dr Kwong Leen)
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on every Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. We have systematic studies on New Testament Foundations and the Psalms. [Zoom ID:883 9662 4157 Passcode: 218178].
6. Pastor & Angie are on sabbatical leave from Apr 23 to Jun 5. Rev Nathan and Bro Joseph will be available to provide pastoral support during this period. Do contact the session members for assistance when needed.
7. 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: 625551].
8. Pray for:
  - **2025 Annual Church Camp**, Jun 10-13 at Forest City Marina Hotel, Johor, Malaysia on the theme "*Wise or Foolish Living in a Smartphone Era*" by Rev Tan Eng Boo.
  - **Visa application**: Amulya's (Pastor Babu's daughter) visa application for travel to Singapore for our Church Camp.
  - **Travels**: **Pastor & Angie** (23/4-5/6 Sabbatical), **Albert & Janet** (12-21/5, HK & China), **Peter** (13/5 for 3 weeks, Malaysia), **John W** (16-23/5, Japan), **Dn Paul** (22/5-5/6, Japan)
  - **Medical**: **Simon** [liver issues and depression], **Agnes' mother** [medical investigations], **Dr KL & CP's daughter: An Yan & baby** [postnatal recovery], **Mrs Philip Heng** [brain aneurysm], **John W's sister Angeline** [lung cancer], **John W's daughter** [dialysis treatment].
  - **Myanmar Earthquake Victims & Relief Ministry Teams.**
9. 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.