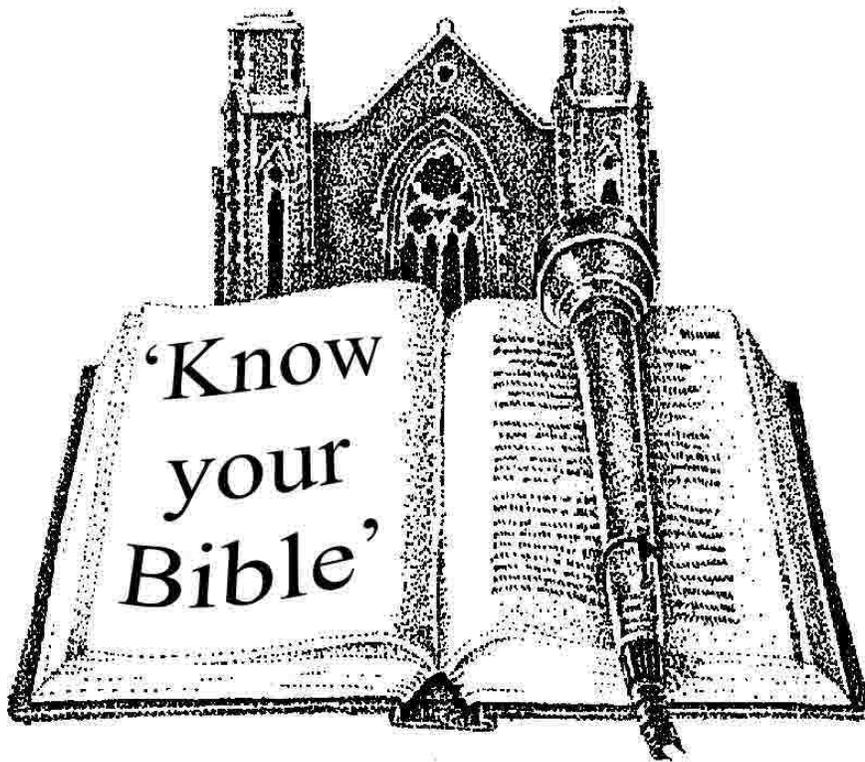


Discussional Bible Study : Prayer

Study Notes by Stuart Olyott



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1. The Nature of prayer.

Passages to be read: Matthew 6:7-15 and Luke 11:1-4.

1. What are the main themes of this prayer?
2. What does the phrase 'Our Father which art in heaven' imply about those who are praying?
 - a. See Matthew 11:27, John 14:6, John 1:12.
3. Matthew 6:9b-10. What is the basic concern here? See Matthew 6:33.
How should this concern find expression in our lives, as well as in our praying?
4. Matthew 6:11-13. What attitude is at the root of these requests?
Why is this important? See Luke 18:9-14, John 15:5.
What is the meaning of 13a? See James 1:12-15.
5. What does this pattern teach us about the nature of prayer?
What warnings and encouragements precede it in verses 7-8?
How do these apply to us?
6. Is prayer essentially active? Or is there a sense in which something 'happens' to the person who prays?
See Moses' experience in Exodus 3 and 4: and Gideon's in Judges

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2. The Practice of Prayer.

Passages to be read: Luke 18:1-8. Matthew 6:5-8 and Philippians 4:4-7

1. What is the contrast between the unjust judge and God?
2. What is implied in the comparison between the people of God and a widow?
How does this story illustrate the point that we ought 'always to pray'?
3. What does it mean in practice to pray constantly? 1 Thessalonians 5:17, and see Philippians 4:4-7 and Psalm 34:1.
4. If we are to pray continually, is there any need for definite times of prayer?
See Matthew 6:6 and Christ's example regularly and in times of crisis - baptism, choice of disciples, transfiguration, Gethsemane.
5. Why is it helpful to have regular times of prayer? Isaiah 50:4, Daniel 6:10.
6. There is no direct command about when we should pray, but examples are Daniel 6:10, Psalm 55:16, Mark 1:35, Luke 6:12.
What considerations should guide us in deciding when our 'quiet time' should be?
7. In finding a place to pray, what is the essential thing we should aim at?
Matthew 6:5-6, 14:23. But see Luke 9:18.

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3. Promises Concerning Prayer.

Passages to be read: John 15:1-17. John 16:22-24.

Matthew 7:7 reads 'Ask, and it shall be given you'.

This appears to be a promise unlimited in its scope, but other passages seem to qualify it:-

1. What does it mean to abide in Christ and to let His words abide in us? How can we judge whether we are doing this? See John 15:7, 10 and 1 John 3:6 (NIV).
2. What is meant by praying in the name of Jesus? (15:16). See John 16:23-24. What is the relationship between this and praying according to God's will? See 1 John 5:14, Luke 22:42.
3. If these promises were fully grasped, and their conditions met, what effect would it have:-
 - on our own prayer lives?
 - on our church?
4. Can these promises be claimed by the unconverted?
5. John chapter 15 stresses our complete dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ. How is this enlarged on in Hebrews 4:14-16, and what further grounds for confidence in prayer do these verses give?
6. What should be said about unanswered prayer? Discuss what light is shed on this subject by Psalm 66:18 - Jeremiah 7:16-20, Jeremiah 11:14, Isaiah 59:1-2, James 4:3, 1 John 5:16. How can we guard against similar hindrances operating in our own prayer lives.

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4. The Scope of Intercession.

Passage to be read: Colossians 1:3-12.

1. What does the apostle desire for the Colossian Christians?
What evidence of God's answer would he expect to see in them?
2. For whom should we pray?
Colossians 4:3-4, Ephesians 6:18-20, sup 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, 2 Timothy 2:1-4.
3. Why should we pray for those in authority?
Should we pray for our own government more than any other?
What precisely should we ask for in praying for international authority: governments:
local authorities: and others over us?
4. How important is prayer in the worldwide mission of the church?
See Matthew 9:37-38, Romans 15:30, 2 Corinthians 1:11.
What definite steps do you suggest for each Christian to take, to make sure he is not
failing in this area?
5. The Bible commands us to of such prayers. Should breaks out?
If now, how changes should we expect pray for our enemies, and gives examples we do
this now, or wait until persecution and for whom should we pray?
What to see?
6. Should we pray for the unsaved to be saved?
Or should we pray something else for them?
See 1 John 5:14, 1 Timothy 2:4, Romans 10:1.
7. How can we avoid becoming overwhelmed by the number and variety of causes needing
prayer?

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5. Prayer as a battle.

1. Passage to be read : Matthew 26:36-45.
2. Prayer is often spoken of in terms of a battle. Where does the conflict lie? Is it:-
 - a. with ourselves? Matthew 26:41, Luke 21:34-36.
What makes it so difficult?
 - b. with God? Study Luke 11:5-13 and Matthew 15:21-28.
Why may God appear to make difficulties about answering prayer?.
 - c. with Satan? Ephesians 6:10-22, 1 Peter 5:8-9.
3. What was the battle the Lord Jesus Christ fought in Gethsemane?
See Hebrews 5:7-8. Was it unique, or do we need to follow His example?
What did He mean by His words in verse 39?
4. Is prayer always a battle? Philippians 4:6-7, Matthew 6:7-8.
What part should thanksgiving play?
5. What is the relationship between prayer and fasting?
What part should fasting have in the experience of a Christian today?
Matthew 6:16-18, Isaiah 58:1-9.
6. Should we pray only when we feel like it? Matthew 26:40-41.

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6. Prayer and the Trinity: Prayer and faith.

Prayer and the Trinity.

1. What place does each Person of the Godhead have in our prayers?
 - a. the Father : Luke 11:2, Ephesians 3:14, 1:3, 1 Peter 1:3.
 - b. the Son : John 14:6, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 10:19-22.
 - c. the Holy Spirit : Romans 8:26-27, John 15:26-27, 16:14, Jude 1:20, Luke 11:13.
2. Does it really matter if we get it wrong?
Acts 7:59, 2 Corinthians 12:8-9, Romans 8:34, 26-27.
3. Would a person who believed in the sovereignty of God pray differently from someone who did not? Romans 8:28, Matthew 6:7-8, Ephesians 3:20, James 1:5-6.

Prayer and faith..

1. Matthew 9:27-31, Luke 5:17-26. What is faith, and how does it express itself?
2. Why is it so important that prayer should be offered in faith? Mark 6:5-6.
What is 'the prayer of faith'? James 5:15.
3. What would you say to someone who thinks that his faith is too weak to be expressed in prayer? Mark 9:24, Romans 4:20-22.
4. Faith may be tested by an apparent lack of answers to prayer.
What possible reasons for delay may there be?
Daniel 10:12-13, John 3:4, Hebrews 11:13