

17 Minute PRAYER PLAN



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Introduction

We are now on a journey to explore the powerful ministry of a personal prayer life. Therefore, the question is, "How do you develop a prayer life that is effective?"

For most people, the thoughts of prayer are just sheer torture. Often this reaction is due to questions such as:

- How To Get Started?
- What Do I Say??
- How To Pray???

Prayer is critical to the life of the saint...

- Prayer is communion with God
- Prayer strengthens our relationship with God
- Prayer builds faith
- Prayer brings peace
- Prayer empowers the saint
- Prayer intercedes for others
- Prayer is a spiritual weapon
- Prayer are the wings that the work of the church flies on
- Prayer changes me

Honest Assessment: If you are not praying, who is?

Therefore, in order to have an average to good to awesome prayer life - it is important to start somewhere.

In this journey you will learn to,

"PUT PRAYER IN ITS PLACE."

First, I want us to work on the **logistics** of your prayer life without really talking about the actual praying part.

If you don't work out the logistics of prayer, you will not be able to effectively pray the way you ought...

You will get:

- Frustrated
- Upset
- Embarrassed
- Angry

So, lets avoid all of that.

Let's PUT PRAYER IN ITS PLACE and work on how the Lord told us we ought to be praying.

There are 3 logistical things that **must** be worked out before you begin to pray and I want us to examine Scripture with each:

1. There is the Time of Prayer—When are you going to pray?

Psalm 5:3	<i>"My voice shall thou hear in the morning, O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."</i>
Matthew 14:23 (NKJV)	<i>"And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there."</i>
Mark 1:35 (NKJV)	<i>"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."</i>
Luke 5:16 (NKJV)	<i>"So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed."</i>
Luke 6:12 (NKJV)	<i>"Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."</i>

So, here is what we can glean from Scripture and from the life of Jesus about prayer:

We should pray:

- Early in the morning
- All night long
- Often throughout the day
- At night

Ok - - let's get started! Sounds like all the time.

But, I think when you examine the passages we learn some things about when we ought to pray:

- **You ought to have a time of secluded prayer on a daily basis.** For the Lord, it appears that it was very early in the morning. There is no law that says it has to be early in the morning, but find a daily time to spend with the Lord in prayer.
- **Especially during difficult or stressful times, you should “retire” throughout the day to spend time in prayer.** Jesus did that when the crowds pressed in. It would be a good practice for us to do the same. Find a place at work or home.
- **It is good to close the day in prayer.** It may not be the extensive kind of praying you do in the morning, but it would be a time of reflection, thanksgiving, and requests.
- **There will be times when it will be necessary to pray all night long or for long seasons of prayer.**

2. There should be a place of prayer

Matthew 6:6

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”

Jesus commanded us to go into our “closet” or room to pray. Jesus often went into the “wilderness” to pray. I think the point is that it was a place of seclusion.

If you are going to pray, it will have to be in a secluded place.

It will not be in a crowded place or a place where you are afraid of interruptions.

3. There should be a plan of prayer

Matthew 6:9 *"Our Father, who art in heaven..."*

That was the whole point of the disciples prayer...

Jesus was laying down a plan for the disciples to follow about prayer.

Now you should have the same kind of plan for your prayer life.

**"A good prayer life always involves a pencil,
paper and plan."**

Those are the logistics of prayer that you must deal with before you even start praying!

SO LET'S MAKE THIS PERSONAL!

1. When are you going to pray?

- Think about the time of day that—normally— you could spend 17 minutes in prayer. Early? Late? Lunch? Car? Desk?
- When are some other times of day when you could steal away for a minute or two of prayer?
- How would you pray all night?

2. Where are you going to pray?

- Do you have a room in your home?
- Can you pray on your drive to work?
- Desk?
- In the warm months, do you have a place you can go outside?
- Is there a time during the day when you are home alone?

3. What is your plan when you start to pray?

- Do you have a list?
- Format?
- How do you keep track of the prayer request you hear and are given?

All of those questions you have to answer in one way or another for you to put prayer in its place.

Do you see why you can't pray when you say to yourself, "I'm going to pray today. Let's see, `Dear God..."

There are some things you have to work out before you can attempt to have a prayer life, and most people don't and that is why they don't pray.

We will work on this in the next lesson.

SO, I WANT YOU TO IMAGINE WHAT YOUR PRAYER LIFE COULD BE LIKE!

- You could spend quality time with the Lord every day praying for yourself, family, church, pastor, lost, world, missionaries.
- You could be the type of person that retreated quietly several times during the day and spent time alone with God
- You could close your day in prayer thanking the Lord.
- Imagine having an intense burden and spending the night in prayer.

That could be you!

Because of your new found prayer life you could:

- See people come to Christ
- Witness as God answered the very prayer you have been praying for
- Experience a relationship with Christ that only comes through regular communion
- Build your faith as a Christian

But, you have to **PUT PRAYER IN ITS PLACE.**

So:

1. Where will you pray?
2. When will you pray?
3. How will you pray?

**Answer those, and you are well on your way
to an effective prayer life!**

MY PRAYER ROAD MAP

“When you come to a fork in the road take it..”

Yogi Berra

This Is Your Prayer Fork In The Road—Take It!

Therefore, when you pray.....

When: _____

Where: _____

Get A Plan, Stan

How To Spend 17 Minutes In Prayer Tomorrow

Well, how have you done so far with your:

- Place
- Time..... of prayer?

It is very important to settle those before you begin attempting to pray. However, once you have those settled there is still a matter of the plan.

Now, when it comes to the plan of prayer-there are two inherent dangers.

- Over planning-this is the person who makes a very detailed prayer list and obsesses over it. They spend more time with the list than they do with the Lord!
- No planning-that is, bow your head and here we go. This person won't pray the way they ought because they won't remember things and are easily distracted.

Both over and no planning will lead to frustration in your prayer life. Instead, it takes a healthy combination of both.

I know one pastor who made out a new prayer list every time he prayed. Most keep the same prayer list and add to and take away from it regularly.

Please realize that there will be times that as you are praying you will stick to your prayer list.

However, there will be times of prayer when people and situations will come before your mind that are not on a prayer list—items that need to be lifted up on wings of prayer.

- Hospital
- Special requests
- Grieving

As with all successful journeys, a plan or roadmap is an important part of the journey. In addition, with the destination in mind, an organized prayer plan is critical.

But, stay flexible. There are things on your prayer plan that will rarely change and there are things that will change often with the circumstances. Be ready to take a detour!

REMINDER: You are talking with God.

Therefore, spend a moment preparing for the conversation as you would whenever preparing to speak to anyone important.

I want us to talk in some measure about both.

First, what we are going to touch upon are the factors that make up a good prayer life. Remember, it was Jesus who taught us to pray (Matthew 6:5-15).

This is the basis for praying that Jesus laid down. So, let's look at that foundation and some other scriptural references to see if we can develop a plan.

What are we going to include in our plan?

1. Praise—"Hallowed Be Thy Name."

It is good to begin to praise God and worship Him for Who He is. Therefore, start off your prayer time with a time of praise and worship to God.

Psalms 100:4

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful to Him, and bless His name."

Praise Him for His:

- Name
- Righteousness
- Creation
- Word

The Bible says that the Lord inhabits the praise of his people. Therefore, begin with praising the Lord and inviting his presence into your prayer life. Praise Him for Goodness, His Love, His Grace.

You can accomplish this praise through: declaration-singing-Scripture reading (Psalms 145)

2. Confession

However, remember your prayer life will never rise above your personal walk with Jesus.

That is why it is important to have confession times where you are taking a daily inventory of your walk with the Lord.

Psalms 139:23-24	<i>"Search me, oh God and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."</i>
I John 1:9	<i>"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."</i>

Allow for a time of heartfelt and Spirit directed confession.

Perhaps a good discipline is to write out your sins in sentence form so they can be seen in black-and-white.

3. Warfare

Ephesians 6:10-18

Another good idea in prayer is the area of spiritual warfare. You need to put on the whole armor of God and pray specific Bible verses regarding spiritual warfare.

Remember, you are under the obvious and subtle attacks of the adversary.

The demons of hell have a daily scheme of your life!

Galatians 5:16	<i>"This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."</i>
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With great deliberation, put on the armor of God and ask for the filling of The Spirit to prepare for spiritual warfare!

POINT: If you knew you were going into a physical battle would you prepare.

**May we echo the words of the Psalmist,
"Lead us not into temptation..."**

4. Intercession-This Is Prayer For Others

Our prayer life should not be consumed with praying only for ourselves

- Family
- Salvation
- Spiritual condition
- Ministries' needs
- Government
- Church — "Thy Kingdom come thy will be done..."

We are privileged to spend a good amount of our time talking to God for others! Interceding on their behalf.

5. Personal Requests

It is perfectly acceptable to pray for things in life!

Pray for:

- Your own relationship with Christ
- Physical/financial/spiritual requests
- Goals
- Relationships
- Roles in life
- Ongoing requests
- Daily bread

Philippians 4:6

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto to God.”

**A problem not worth praying about
is not worth worrying about.**

Anonymous

6. Thanksgiving

But, prayer is more than just asking God for blessings and presenting personal requests for yourself and others. We also want to give thanks—thanks for answers, thanks for blessings, thanks to the Creator.

Psalms 100:4

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts, with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”

Thanksgiving equals appreciation of blessings in one’s life—**Count Your Blessings**, list them on paper—make sure you have enough paper.

Personally, I try to thank God for the **miraculous** and the **mundane**.

- Food
- Vehicle
- Church
- Country

Now, a prayer life should be an evolving thing. You will add and subtract from it. I’m just trying to get you started so, let’s put it all together and look at it.

Your prayer times should include:

- ⊕ Praise-worshiping God for his person.
- ⊕ Confession-being honest with God about your sins and confessing and forsaking them.

- ⊕ Warfare—a time of putting on the armor of God and getting ready for battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil.
- ⊕ Intercession—a time when you are praying for others.
- ⊕ Personal requests—talk to God about your needs and goals in life.
- ⊕ Thanksgiving—include a time of thanking God for what He has already done.

So, now I want you to imagine your prayer life.

You have found that “special place” (closet) to pray. You have found that time when you can steal 17 minutes to pray.

HOW CAN YOU PRAY 17 MINUTES?

1 minute of praise
2 minutes of confession
3 minutes of warfare
4 minutes of intercession
5 minutes of personal requests
2 minutes of Thanksgiving

= 17 minutes of prayer

Also, there are other things you can and should begin to add to your prayer life:

- Praying Scripture
- Listening
- Singing

Use of these disciplines make a difference too!

Eventually you’ll be able to pray for half an hour—hour.

TIP: Use a watch or egg timer to add one minute at a time!

MY PRAYER ROAD MAP

**"The person who kneels in prayer
can stand in any situation."**

When the heart is kneeling in prayer, there is:

Praise: _____

SAMPLE

Getting Rid of The Roadblocks

You are probably excited about your new and improved relationship with God.

But, there will be a problem in the future. Satan will not just let you keep praying.

You may:

- Run out of steam
- Get discouraged
- Windup too busy
- Simply forget
- Something will get you off track and you will find it hard to get back on track.

It happens to the most well-meaning Christians!

Whether they are preachers, church staff, deacons, Sunday school teachers—people who have walked with God in the past.

Eventually you'll discover that your current life will come under heavy assault from the enemy!

These feelings, emotions, distractions, discouragements, result from the spiritual attack planned by the enemy!

Well, you're not alone. You're in good company because the devil will go after those who walk with God in prayer!

- You think the plan is great-but you can't get started.
- You prayed one day-it was great-can't seem to get it going again.
- You prayed and grew in praying and now the embers are dying.

So let's look at his plan of attack. And really-it's not just his plan. That is because the world, the flesh and the devil form a unholy trinity to stop your prayer life.

I Peter 5:8

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

So what is going to stop us from kneeling?

1. No sense of urgency “Matthew 26:26-45.”

- Jesus has already told Peter that Satan was coming after him (Luke 22:61)
- Jesus is praying for the greatest trial of His life
- Peter, James and John are sleeping after Jesus asked them to pray for Him!
- Jesus found them asleep three times instead of praying!

The disciples were praying at the hour of greatest need in the history of creation!

Why? They had no sense of urgency about them!

If you are going to keep praying—you’ll have to develop a sense of urgency about you as well.

Time is short. Satan, the father of lies, is attacking the church in a battle—the world is crumbling—pray!

A sense of urgency will drive you to your knees!

**“A straying man will stop praying and
a praying man will stop straying.”**

*-Leonard Ravenhill
Modified*

If there is a medical emergency or house fire, there are no delays in calling 911. The voice reflects the emergency, the adrenalin is flowing, and the lack of calmness in the voice reflects the crisis. Also, there is no chit-chat or small talk about the family or the weather or the 911 operator’s voice.

No! It's a panicked plea for help.

If you don't sense the urgency concerning your prayer life-you will quit praying!

You may not feel urgent about things in your life, but what about events and situations in the lives of others?

2. Sin (Isaiah 59:2)

If a Christian has unconfessed sin in their life they will quit praying!

We will keep praying as long as we are confessing and forsaking, but the moment we quit being sensitive to our sins—our prayer life will come to a halt! Why?

Because deep down inside we know God will not hear our prayers with unconfessed sin in our lives.

EXAMPLE:

A kid gets promised a bike if he makes straight A's in school. At the beginning of the semester, " the child is excited. "Hey dad/mom, can I pick the bike out? Can I get a red one? Etc."

However, three weeks before the semester is over, you can tell how the school session went and the grades he/she expects. How can you tell what grades they have earned without looking?

Are they mentioning the bike at home? If not, the young child knows there is no use!

The same thing happens with our prayer lives...sin will shut down our praying.

Luke 22:61-62

"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

3. **Selfishness** (James 4:3)

Is it okay to ask for a personal request? Sure. God expects it! But, it is not okay to be selfish in our praying!

Selfishness is the act of placing one's own needs over the desires or needs of others.

We are selfish when we want what we want regardless of what others need or God desires!

EXAMPLE:

There are those who won't eat the last bite of food. But, imagine bringing all the purchased groceries into one's bedroom and not sharing. The attitude is that "It's mine!" Do you reward that? Of course not!

Neither will God.

4. **Laziness** (Luke:18:1-8)

You cannot be a lazy prayer! That means you have to be persistent!

You have to **ask-seek-knock** before the Lord! Why? Is God torturing us? No!

God doesn't want to be Santa Clause. In the persistent requests God views it as relationship building!

EXAMPLE:

If your wife asks you to take a walk, it is not about the destination—the where is not important. It is about a time together—the relationship built on the journey is the goal.

So, be persistent, stay focused, be determined not to give up!

God wants to take a walk with you in prayer!

5. Broken Relationships (Mat. 5:23-24)

When we have broken relationships in our lives, we hinder our prayer life.

Peter said that if man is not right with his wife, this will hinder his prayers!

Have you ever gotten into an argument with your spouse and not gotten things straightened out and had to meet with someone else? You can't focus!

Ephesians 4:26

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:"

The same is true with the Lord.

You just cannot seek his face while you do not have things right with others!

Now, those may not be all the reasons you don't pray, but they are probably the main ones!

So, let's do an inventory to see what might be stopping us from prayer!

Taking stock of our lives!

1. Do you have a sense of urgency for your needs and the needs of others?
 - You should!
 - You ought to go to prayer with a little 911 urgency in your heart!
 - Whenever the devil tells you not to pray, remind yourself how urgent the hour is!
2. Is there un-confessed sin in your life? Many people with sin in their life will try to pray to ease their conscious!
 - It won't work. Your conscious will work over time trying to stop you from praying!
 - Immorality, habit, gossip/tongue, attitude

3. Selfishness—do your prayers have a “me only” tone to them?

- If you recorded your prayer life, what would it sound like, “Lord I need...and Lord, I want...”
- We would probably be shocked at those that pray for their benefit without considering the benefits of others!

4. Laziness—are you expecting a whispered prayer miracle?

- “Dear Lord, make me a millionaire. Amen.” - dollars start falling from the sky!
- It won’t happen. God is far more interested in the relationship than your list!
- Be persistent in your praying. Enjoy the journey!

5. Is there a relationship you need to mend before continuing.

- If someone’s face keeps coming to your mind when you pray, make things right!

Inventory Check List...

- ✓ Urgency
- ✓ Unconfessed Sin
- ✓ Selfishness
- ✓ Laziness
- ✓ Strained Relationship

Now, Imagine Your Prayer Life

- Find that right place—maybe several places
- Your praying throughout the day—but you have that special time.
- You have a great plan that enables you to touch the world with your prayers. You are praying for a minimum of 17 minutes a day.
- You are constantly fighting the devil to do it but you are urgent, removing sin, repairing relationships, praying for others, and being persistent.

**In other words, you are walking
with God every day.**

**That Is An Effective
Prayer Life!**

PUT PRAYER IN ITS PLACE!



JOEL SOUTHERLAND is a Church Consultant in the Evangelism Department of the Georgia Baptist Convention .

Joel has been the pastor of 2 growing churches. At his last church, Liberty Baptist in Dalton, Georgia, it experienced great growth – even to the point of having to relocate. Liberty was recognized as 1 of only 5 churches to grow 2% for 10 consecutive years. It was in the top 25 fastest growing churches for one three year period. During his last year there they had a baptism rate of one baptism for every 11 members. The national average is 1:43!

He is married to his beautiful childhood sweetheart, Sherry, and they have 2 girls.

Joel has a Masters in Leadership at Liberty University.

In 2010 Joel was the Chairman of the Committee on Committees for the Southern Baptist Convention. He has served on the Administrative and the Executive Committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention. He has been the chairman of the Nominating Committee of the GBC.

His personal web-site and blog helps churches with Social Media and Ministry and can be found at www.JoelSoutherland.com.

He and his evangelist friend, Scott Smith, have a website and podcast that is devoted to Preaching Effectiveness and Time Management for those in ministry. Check it out at www.Sermonators.com.

If you would like to inquire about Joel coming for a revival or speaking event, you can contact him at joel@joelsoutherland.com.

Joel on  : <http://www.facebook.com/joel.southerland>

Joel on  : <https://twitter.com/joelsoutherland>

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Presented by:

JOEL SOUTHERLAND