

# *The* **BATTLE PLAN** *for* **PRAYER**

FROM BASIC TRAINING TO TARGETED STRATEGIES

## **LESSON 1**

### **HOW: The Postures of Prayer**

“Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” (Ps. 95: 6)

Prayer is not dependent on certain decibel levels or body positions. God’s clear emphasis is not on externals but on the heart. And yet He’s created us to be a complete, unified whole—body, soul, and spirit. All of our various components feed and affect all the others. We hear of professional golfers who study with coaches to make even slight alterations in their stance or grip, hoping to achieve another fifteen yards off the tee or better control around the greens. How much more should we study the Word to see how our posture might intensify our praying?

**Bowing.** To bow, for example, is a physical expression of honor and allegiance. In the second of the Ten Commandments—an admonition against serving or creating other gods—the Lord said, “You must not bow down to them or worship them” (Exod. 20:5 hcsb). The action of bowing is associated with worship. Even just the bowing of our heads communicates to our mind that we’re addressing the One to whom we’ve pledged our complete loyalty. When the Lord came down in a cloud around Moses on Mount Sinai, “Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship” (Exod. 34:8). King David, centuries later, said, “As for me . . . I will bow down in reverence for You” (Psalms 5:7). Bowing is an appropriate posture of prayer.

Many other biblical references speak of dropping to our knees in prayer. Solomon’s monumental prayer at the dedication of the temple was given while he “knelt down in front of the entire congregation of Israel” (2 Chron. 6:13 hcsb). Daniel, even at the risk of death for defying the king’s order against praying to anyone other than the king himself, “continued kneeling on his knees three times a day” at the open window of his home, “praying and giving thanks before his God”

(Dan. 6:10). And one day, we're told, "every knee will bow" before Christ—"in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil. 2:10)—even those who refused to kneel before Him.

**Lying prostrate.** Sometimes bowing our heads or bowing on our knees still doesn't quite reflect the devotion we intend. When Ezra the priest gave an all-morning, public reading of the law to the returned exiles in Jerusalem, "they bowed low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground" (Neh. 8:6). Jesus, agonizing in the Garden of Gethsemane before His torture and death, "fell on His face and prayed" (Matt. 26:39). And when John later saw Him in His resurrected, glorified form—as described in the apostle's Revelation on the island of Patmos—he admitted he "fell at His feet like a dead man," totally prostrate before the power of God (Rev. 1:17). Yet just as prayer often drives us lower to the ground in bowed surrender, it also pulls us up, raising us from our earthbound existence.

**Lifted hands.** Many prayers from Scripture were made with uplifted hands. The idea of folding our hands, while meaningful, is actually more recent in history. But the Bible does talk about raising our hands—"the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering" (Ps. 141:2). Paul said, "I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension" (1 Tim. 2:8). Both Solomon and Ezra, whom we mentioned earlier, prayed while falling to their knees and lifting their hands—at the same time—a position of total, physical worship and praise.

**Lifted eyes.** While closing our eyes is a good way of limiting distractions and maintaining focus in prayer, a common biblical expression was lifting the eyes toward heaven, like when Jesus "raised His eyes" before praying at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:41), or when "looking up to heaven" as He blessed the five loaves and two fish before multiplying them for the crowd of five thousand (Luke 9: 16).

**Silence.** Beyond physical postures, what we do with our voices in prayer is also important. Sometimes the best thing we can do in prayer is be still and know that He is God . . . without saying a word (Ps. 46:10). When awed and amazed, one is often in silence. Psalm 62: 1 says, "My

soul waits in silence for God only; from Him is my salvation.” Psalm 4:4 speaks to silence also: “Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still.” When the Bible described the prayer of Hannah, in anguish as she prayed for God to give her a child, “she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard” (1 Sam. 1:13). No one could hear her silent prayer. But God did. And answered her request.

**Lifted voices.** Along with lifted hands and lifted eyes, the Bible also exhorts us to lift our voices to the Lord in prayer. “Give ear to my voice when I call to You,” David prayed (Ps. 141:1). “My voice rises to God, and He will hear me” (Ps. 77:1).

**Crying out.** “Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud” (Ps. 55:17 nkjv). This crying out is a frequent descriptor of prayers spoken in the Bible. Jesus, we’re told, during His life on the earth, “offered prayers and appeals with loud cries and tears to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence” (Heb. 5:7 hcsb). Various translations of the original words for crying out carry the idea of shrieking in pain, or making a sound like an animal in danger, or wailing with deep emotion of spirit. It’s intense and loud. Heavy and heartfelt. Nearly half of the times when John’s Revelation talks about words being spoken in heaven, they’re explicitly identified as a “loud voice”—twenty times in its twenty-two chapters.

Again, posture isn’t everything. It’s not mandatory or specifically prescribed. But we all can identify the difference, can’t we, between the prayers we make while flat of our backs, fighting sleep— and the prayers we make while deliberately kneeling, or raising our hands, or speaking aloud. Our body sends signals to the rest of our system, reminding us we’re truly in His presence. Truly dependent on Him. Truly His servant. Truly worshipful. And if anything can help us stay this anchored and concentrated on Him, can it really be insignificant?

Consider your own postures of prayer. See how they affect the nature and clarity of your praying. If your religious background, culture, and personal temperament lean toward a particular style—whether quiet

and reserved, or loud and demonstrative— think about employing one or more of these biblical postures, perhaps one that's somewhat different from your usual method. Ask God to use it as a way of helping you recognize some previously unnoticed aspects of His character. Helping you further develop your relationship. Helping you strengthen your confidence in Him. Helping you focus your praying so you're not just talking in general but staying on subject. Deliberate and specific. Small adjustments can often yield substantial changes and results.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, take all of me— my hands, my eyes, my feet, my voice. Use all of these gifts You've given me so they return to You as clear expressions of my worship, love, devotion, and submission. I so easily lose sight of You, going through the motions of religion. Lord, turn even my posture of prayer into a means of steadying my wandering mind and opening my ears to Your voice.*

*Kendrick, Stephen; Kendrick, Alex (2015-07-05). The Battle Plan for Prayer: From Basic Training to Targeted Strategies (Kindle Locations 813-818). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*

**HOMEWORK:**

- 1) Prayer or God's clear emphasis is on:
  - a. body positions
  - b. externals
  - c. heart
  - d. certain decibel
  
- 2) God created you to be a complete, unified whole what?
  
- 3) All of our various components [body, soul, and spirit] \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ all the others [body, soul, and spirit].
  
- 4) How much more should we study the Word to see how our posture might \_\_\_\_\_ our praying?
  
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_: **For example:** To bow is a physical expression of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.



*“Don’t bow down and worship idols [gods]. I am the LORD your God, and I demand all your love. If you reject Me, I will punish your families for three or four generations.” (Exodus 20:5 CEV)*

6) The action of bowing is associated with \_\_\_\_\_. Even just the bowing of our heads \_\_\_\_\_ to our mind that we’re addressing the One to whom we’ve pledged our complete loyalty.

When the Lord came down in a cloud around Moses on Mt. Sinai, “Moses quickly bowed down to the ground and worshiped the Lord.” (Exodus 34:8 CEV)

King David said, “Yet, I, by Your loving grace, am welcomed into Your House; I will turn my face toward Your holy Place and fall on my knees in reverence before You.” (Psalms 5:7 VOC)

7) Bowing is an appropriate posture of \_\_\_\_\_.

8) It speaks of ‘dropping our \_\_\_\_\_ in prayer’.

☞ Now, as all the people watched, King Solomon knelt down, reached out his hands toward heaven, and prayed this prayer. (2 Chronicles 6:13 TLB)

☞ Even though Daniel was aware the king had signed the ordinance into law, he continued to do what he always did. He would go home, ascend the stairs to the upper room—which had windows facing toward Jerusalem—and get down on his knees three times a day and pray to His God and praise [or thank] Him. (Daniel 6:10 VOC)

☞ “So that at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow [in submission], of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” (Philippians 2:10 AMP)

9) \_\_\_\_\_: Sometimes bowing our heads or bowing on our knees still doesn’t quite reflect the devotion we intend.

- Then Ezra called out and blessed the Eternal [God], worshiping God’s greatness. With their hands raised to the heavens, the people called out loudly in response, crying, “Amen! So may it

be!” Then they fell to their knees and bowed. With their faces to the ground, they worshiped the Eternal [God]. (Nehemiah 8:6 VOC)

- Then Jesus walked a short distance away, and overcome with grief, He threw Himself facedown on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if there is any way You can deliver Me from this suffering, please take it from Me. Yet what I want is not important, for I only desire to fulfill Your plan for Me.” Then an angel from heaven appeared to strengthen Him. (Matthew 26:39 TPT)
- John “fell at His feet like a dead man”. (Rev. 1:17) It totally prostrate before the power of God.

10) Yet just as prayer often drives us lower to the ground in bowed \_\_\_\_\_, it [prayer] also pulls us up, raising us from our earthbound existence.

11) \_\_\_\_\_: Many prayers from Scriptures were made with ‘uplifted hands’.

David said, “Consider my prayer as an offering of incense that rises before You; when I stand with my hands outstretched pleading toward the heavens, consider it as an evening offering.” (Psalms 141:2 VOC)

12) Paul, Solomon, and Ezra, prayed while falling to their knees and lifting their hands—at the same time—a position of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ worship and praise.

13) \_\_\_\_\_.

☞ While closing our eyes is a good way of limiting \_\_\_\_\_ and maintaining \_\_\_\_\_ in prayer,

☞ A common biblical \_\_\_\_\_ was lifting the eyes toward heaven,

- When ‘looking up to heaven’ as Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the five loaves and two fish before multiplying them for the crowd of 5000 men. (Luke 9:16)

14) \_\_\_\_\_. Beyond physical postures, what we do with our \_\_\_\_\_ in prayer is also important.

David said, “I stand silently to listen for the One I love, waiting as long as it takes for the Lord to rescue me.” (Psalms 62:1 TPT)

David also said, “Tremble in awe before the Lord, and you will not sin against Him. Be still upon your bed and look deep into your heart.” (Psalms 4:4 TPT)

15) The prayer of Hannah, in anguish as she prayed for God to give her a child, “she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice not heard”. (1 Samuel 1:13) No one could hear her silent prayer, but who did and answered her request? \_\_\_\_\_

16) \_\_\_\_\_. Along with ‘lifted hands’ and ‘lifted eyes’, the Bible also exhorts us to lift our \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord in prayer.

David said, “My voice rises to God, and He will hear me.” (Psalms 77:1) While He lived on earth, anticipating death, Jesus cried out in pain and wept in sorrow as He offered up priestly prayers to God. Because He honored God, God answered Him. (Hebrews 5:7 MSG)

17) \_\_\_\_\_. This ‘*crying out*’ is a frequent descriptor of prayers spoken in the Bible. Various translations of the original words for ‘crying out’ carry the idea of

- \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_, or
- making a sound like an animal in \_\_\_\_\_, or
- wailing with \_\_\_\_\_ of spirit.
  - It’s intense and loud. Heavy and heartfelt.

18) Your posture isn’t everything. It’s not mandatory [law] or prescribed. But you all can identify the \_\_\_\_\_:

- ☞ you make while flat of your back,
- ☞ you fighting sleep...the prayers you make while deliberately kneeling or raising your hands or speaking aloud.
- ☞ your body sends signals to the rest of your system, reminding you that you’re truly in where?

- ☞ Y N NS: Are you truly depend on God?
- ☞ Y N NS: Are you truly His servant?
- ☞ Y N NS: Are you truly worshipful [feeling or show worship]?
- ☞ Y N NS: Is this can be insignificant for you to stay anchored and concentrated on God?
- ☞ Y N NS: Have you ask God to use it as a way of helping you recognize some previously unnoticed aspects of His character?
- ☞ Y N NS: Have you ask God to use it as a way of helping you further develop your relationship with God?
- ☞ Y N NS: Have you ask God to use it as a way of helping you strengthen your confidence in Him?
- ☞ Y N NS: Have you ask God to use it as a way of helping you focus your praying so you're not just talking in general but staying on subject?

You just deliberate and specific. Your small adjustments can often yield substantial changes and results.