

Refreshment and Peace through Prayer

God created us to have a loving relationship with us and prayer is how we have that relationship. Many Christians don't experience the kind of loving relationship God wants to have with them because they don't understand what prayer is. Your church members are learning what prayer is and how to pray in the **Foundations Grow** section. This lesson includes more advanced concepts of prayer that will give us continual refreshment and peace.

I. Pray Continually

We pray in several environments. We pray alone in a quiet time with God, in our Foundations Groups, in worship services, in prayer services, etc. But God also tells us in His Word to pray continually:

- "Pray continually". 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- Pray prayers of praise continually: "Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise". Hebrews 13:15
- Thank God continually: "We also thank God continually". 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- Thank God for others continually: "We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith". 1 Thessalonians 1:3)

What does it mean to pray continually? God wants to be involved in our lives all of the time, not just when we have a special time of prayer set aside, or we have a need, or we happen to think about God. We all have thoughts going through our head all of the time. We are actually talking to ourselves and God wants to be included in our self-talk. This has been called "Practicing the Presence of God". Develop the habit of including God in your thoughts on a regular basis. This will truly revolutionize your thought life and allow you to keep God in control of your life on a continual basis.

II. Extended Time of Prayer

Another good habit to develop is to get away by yourself periodically for an extended time of prayer. This can be for a half day, a day, or even longer. Here are some good reasons to spend an extended time in prayer:

- For extended fellowship with God. Being with and having a dialog with God. Letting Him speak to you from His Word and then responding back in prayer to Him.
- For renewed perspective. To see the world from God's point of view. "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18
- For catching up on prayer for others. Family, friends, neighbors, workmates, pastors, missionaries, etc.
- For our own lives. Personal inventory and evaluation. When facing an important decision or evaluating our personal and ministry goals.

Divide your time into three parts:

1. Wait upon the Lord. To wait on the Lord means to seek His presence. There are three ways we can wait on the Lord
 - a. To realize His presence. Read Psalm 139.
 - b. To receive cleansing. Ask God to search your heart to bring to mind sins that needs to be confessed and cleansed. Read Psalms 32 and 51 and claim 1 John 1:9 for cleansing. If you remember that you have sinned against someone, make a note of it and plan to confess to the person as soon as you can.

- c. To worship Him. Praise Him by reading Psalms 103, 111, and 145 and Revelations 4 and 5. Remember the things God has done for you and thank Him for your salvation, spiritual blessings, family, friends, opportunities, ministry, etc.

Here are some verses that encourage us to wait on the Lord

- “But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31
 - “Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!” Psalms 27:14
 - “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.” Psalms 62:5)
2. Prayer for others. Family, friends, neighbors, workmates, pastors, missionaries, and use a map to pray for people in other countries.
 1. Ask specific things for them such as spiritual strength, courage, physical and emotional health, etc.
 2. Pray using the prayers of Paul in Ephesians 1 and 3, Philipians 1, and Colossians 1.
 3. Pray for yourself.
 - Let God speak to you first by reading a book of the Bible to see how you can apply it to your life and by meditating on verses you have memorized.
 - Review lessons in this workshop and seek guidance and wisdom from God.
 - How is your progress in your Personal Mission Statement?
 - Are there areas in your life that are out of balance?
 - What is your progress toward achieving goals you have set?
 - What new goals do you need to set?
 - What changes do you need to make to your weekly calendar?
 - If you are seeking God’s will, use the worksheet at the end of “Know God’s Will”, Chapter 5 of the Grow Leader Guide of Foundations,

Other helpful hints:

- Variety is important. Alternate reading, praying, and walking.
- Take notes. This will help you focus and help you remember important discoveries you want to remember.

At the end of your extended time in prayer, you should have some answers to two important questions:

1. “Who are you, Lord?” Acts 22:8. You will know God better.
2. “What shall I do, Lord?” Acts 22:10. You will know God’s will for your life better.