

THE PRAYER HAND

Prayer is the main way I communicate with God. I talk to God and I listen – just like I communicate with others. It sounds simple. Often for many Christians, it sounds something like this.

“God, help me fix my computer.”

“God, help to feel better, I think I am catching flu.”

“God, I don’t really like my boss. He is so mean! Please help him not to be so bad today.”

“God, help me. I just had a fight with my wife! Please help me sort things out.”

That is what prayer sounds like for most people, but it can also be more.

The Prayer Hand shows us 5 different ways we can pray and 1 important area that we need to make our prayers more complete.



PRAISE

Praise literally means to express a favourable judgment of or to glorify. We praise God by agreeing with Him about who He is. For example: “God, You are holy, just, good and powerful.” In praising God we not only acknowledge who He is but we also remind ourselves who He is.

The word praise in Hebrew: one definition (habal) means to celebrate and another definition (yadah) means to revere or worship. Therefore, one can define praise as a celebration from a properly prepared heart of who God is and what He does.

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving means to give thanks for all that God has done. We often forget all the good things that the Lord has done for us and thanksgiving both expresses thanks to God and reminds us of what He has done.

*"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."
(1 Thessalonians 5:18).*

God's will for your life is very important to you. In this verse, He tells you that it is His will for you to be thankful for everything. Some people are not naturally thankful. They have to work at it. Being thankful gives us a proper perspective. When something bad happens, we can have a bad attitude. The sooner we start thanking God, the sooner we get the right perspective. Being thankful almost immediately changes how we see an event or a person or what someone said.

Asian people are normally negative and negative people tend to see the bad rather than the good. Therefore it is even more crucial for Asians to learn to be thankful – by learning this has help to change my life for the better!

INTERCESSION

Intercession means to pray for others. This is a powerful way we can love and help others. Often at times there is little we can do to help others but prayer is a significant way we can impact their lives. There are many things we can pray for people: their salvation (for those outside the faith), protection, health, strength, growth in their faith, etc...

When I say, "What can I pray for you?" I am agreeing to intercede with God on your behalf. When someone is praying for me, they are interceding with God on my behalf. An intercessor is a go between and, in this case, a go between the person and God.

Paul said, "God is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times¹."

Again Paul said to the believers, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light²."

¹ Romans 1:9-10

² Colossians 1:9-12

You may even want to make a “Prayer Book” so you can record down your requests that you are praying both for yourself and for others.

Someone said that joy is:

- Jesus first
- Others second (and)
- Yourself last

CONFESSION

Confession is to agree with God regarding our sin, failures, and shortcomings. God already knows what we have done, so in confessing our sin we are merely agreeing with Him about what we have done. God has forgiven us and paid the penalty for our sin through Jesus’ death on the cross. Thus confession is an acknowledgement of our need for Jesus.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

A wise man once said that he thought 1 John 1:9 was the most important verse in the Bible. We sin every day. Usually, several times a day that we are aware of. We need to be able to ask God to forgive us. We need to believe that He does. 1 John 1:9 provides that. We need to tell God when we have done something wrong. He encourages us to do that because He knows that only with forgiveness is there freedom from guilt and shame. And we don't really want to carry that around with us.

PETITION

Petition means to make our needs known to God. Since He knows what we really need already, this is more about us coming to grips with what our needs really are. For instance, when we are in a stressful situation do we need to get out of the situation or do we need grace to see things through? As we seek the Lord for what our needs truly are, He reveals them to us. Ask God to guide and help you become the person God wants you to be.

I think it is important for us to figure out what God wants us to ask Him for and then ask for those things. Whether I am praying for me or I am praying for you.

LISTENING

Listening to God is important. Most of the time we do all the talking and miss what God is wanting to tell us. He does not force His way into our lives and thoughts, we must allow Him the opportunity. It is important to spend some time in silence just listening for God.

Now as we pray we may not cover all these elements each time we pray but we will certainly cover some of them. Generally the more you cover the richer your prayer experience will be.