## **Patterns in Prayer**

#### Luke 11

Do not be behind on prayer when nighttime comes. Get started on prayer in the morning. Maybe, rather than complain about that old alarm clock dragging us out of bed every morning, we can get up and say, "Oh, Father, thank you for a good night's sleep. Help me spend my time and energy wisely today. Help me be aware of opportunities that might come." Do we have a pattern of how to start a day with prayer, how to end a day with prayer and how to get through a day with prayer? Working on this pattern will take us a lifetime because we will have to daily adjust. If we have a general pattern in mind though, that will help us get started.

The men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking Him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, He will be in the last place the remainder of the day. (E.M. Bounds, Complete Works, 464)

## **Patterns in Prayer**

#### Luke 11

When we wake up at night, we pray! If the devil wakes us up, we must start praying. He will put us back to sleep if he can. Suppose the Lord knows that a need must be met. He knows that tomorrow we will be so busy that we cannot really concentrate. He wakes us up and gives us half of an hour or an hour of quiet (no phones ringing, no one talking, no animals fussing, no children crying). We are able to meditate, think and give some quality time to prayer. The Lord may then give us rest so we are not overly exhausted the next morning. (The Lord can give His people sleep. Can't He?)

The Lord might see a need for prayer. Who is the Lord going to wake up to pray? When God burdens our hearts, we pray. Maybe someone is facing danger. Maybe someone has wicked designs on one of our missionaries. We may not know until we get to Heaven that we kept them safe by prayer. God works through the prayers of His people.

## **Patterns in Prayer**

#### Luke 11

Some patterns of prayer are based upon the seasons of the year. We pray for certain things more in the winter than we do in the summer. When do we pray about people that might face danger in commuting in the ice and snow? That does not sound like August praying. We pray in the winter for that kind of request. We do not ask God for certain opportunities in June that we might ask for in September. If we are going to pray that we can help students as they go back to school, when are we most likely to pray for that opportunity? When are we most likely to pray for people coming home from vacation to get back in the habit of attending Sunday School and church? I do not ask God for a cold glass of lemonade in January like I might in June or July.

Other patterns of prayer are based on the seasons of life. Do we pray for baby's safety when the kids are all grown and there are no grandchildren yet? Things going on in life around us affect our praying.

## **Points of Prayer**

#### Luke 11

There are certain points we reach in prayer. Do we know the point to which we have come? At first we are praying and trying to get some direction. Then, we are asking specifically. Later, we get to where we can trust God for His best. Finally, we get to a place where we can thank God for His answer.

To what point have we gotten in praying for money for missions? To what point did we arrive in prayer about the new project that the Lord has laid on our hearts? Some people have not gotten to the point of starting Faith Promises. Some have started. Others have made progress, and still others have made great progress. There are points to reach in prayer, and we need to consider how much progress we have made.

## **Points of Prayer**

#### Luke 11

Consider the points for which we are praying. These include countries and particular places. Do we pray for our town and neighborhood and ask God to give us opportunities to reach the lost? Points for prayer include works, missionaries, the lost, the church (the evangelization by the church, the testimony of the church, the church people, the church finances, and the church leaders).

The possibilities of prayer cover not only individuals but also reach to cities and nations. They take in classes and peoples. The praying of Moses was the one thing which stood between the wrath of God against the Israelites and his declared purpose to destroy them and the execution of that divine purpose, and the Hebrew nation still survived. Notwithstanding Sodom was not spared, because ten righteous men could not be found inside its limits, yet the little city of Zoar was spared because Lot prayed for it as he fled from the storm of fire and brimstone which burned up Sodom. Nineveh was saved because the king and its people repented of their evil ways and gave themselves to prayer and fasting. (E.M. Bounds, Complete Works, 179)

## **Points of Prayer**

#### Luke 11

Do we know how to find the point of victory in prayer? Do we know how to battle in prayer and know that God is going to act? Do we know how to find this point in prayer, or do we pray like a child stumbling in the fog hoping he will not fall over a cliff? If I talked with some that have been involved in sports, I think they would tell me that a point of crisis comes in a game. Sometimes the crisis is in the first minute, and the game is over. A close match also comes to a crisis point. What happens at that point determines how the game is going to end. Sometimes the defense and sometimes the offense make the difference, but there is a given turning point. At that point, the outcome of the game is settled. In prayer, do we know how to find the point where we know that God is going to act? Victory is certain.

## **Points of Prayer**

#### Luke 11

Napoleon did not always have the greatest army, but he had the greatest strategy. He knew what points to take. From these he could get a victory. They say that if Stonewall Jackson had not died, General Lee would have easily won at Gettysburg. In the battle at Gettysburg, there were two hills called Little Round Top and Big Round Top. When General Lee saw Big Round Top and the view it would give, he seized it. However, those that understood Stonewall Jackson knew that Jackson would have seized Little Round Top because that hill would become the critical point in the battle. The outcome of a three day battle was really determined by a decision made at the beginning. In our praying, do we know how to get to the important point? Some praying is almost pointless. Such praying is just a general grinding out of requests. We must pray about the issues that are going to bring God on the scene. Joshua, Moses, Abraham, Daniel, and Paul knew how to pray and bring God on the scene. Jesus also prayed this way.

# **Pictures of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

The Bible is a picture book. It uses pictures to teach us the most basic and necessary truths. Pictures of prayer abound.

One picture of prayer is the priesthood. The purpose of the priesthood was to represent people to God and God to people. The priests were to perform a number of actions which pictured prayer. A study in particular of the Levitical priesthood and a study of the Melchizedek priesthood will help us to understand prayer. The priest's garments speak of prayer. The restrictions that are given speak of prayer. (Some of the restrictions might not seem to inhibit someone from performing the priesthood services. That is because we do not look at things as God does. God is concerned about things that are seemingly insignificant to mankind. Lev. 21:21) Those in the priesthood were people who served God. We do the same in the matter of prayer.

Some examples of the above would include linen garments instead of wool to remind us it is not our sweaty efforts that accomplish results. The breastplate, with its names, remind us of bearing people's names and families before the Lord. The urim and thummim tell of God's uncovering what we don't know.

### **Pictures of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Another Biblical picture of prayer is the soldier. Whether he understands or not, the soldier marches on. In prayer, we have to march on. The soldier battles when he needs to. We must battle in prayer. The soldier represents his sovereign. We represent our Sovereign in prayer. The soldier looks to his leader for direction. We do the same in prayer. A good soldier is obedient.

...Faith is obedient; it goes when commanded, as did the nobleman, who came to Jesus, in the day of his flesh, and whose son was grievously sick... Obedience helps faith, and faith, in turn, helps obedience. To do God's will is essential to true faith, and faith is necessary to implicit obedience. (E.M. Bounds, <u>Complete Works</u>, 15)

### **Pictures of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Jacob prayed, and a ladder extended from earth to heaven. On the ladder, angels were going up and down. This is another Biblical picture. It is a picture of Christ being both God and man--hypostatic union. God has built a ladder by which we can ascend into the heavenlies. We can ascend into the heavenlies by the means of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. The angels moved up and down the ladder. They started here, and they moved up to heaven and came back. Angels are ministering spirits for all those that will be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14). We can have assistance even as Christ did in the Garden of Gethsemane. We have angelic assistance. We have even greater help in the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus representing us. This picture lets us know that there is an unseen connection between heaven and earth. "Asking, seeking, and knocking are ascending rungs in the ladder of successful prayer." (The Necessity of Prayer, 74)

## **Pictures of Prayer**

Luke 18:1-8

Another picture of prayer is found in the altar of incense in the tabernacle. The priest burned the incense so that the pleasant smell would waft up to God. There was no real substance to the incense but just a wafting of the odors up. This pleasant smell pleased Almighty God. According to the book of Revelation, our prayers come up as incense in the nostrils of God and are a pleasing thing to Him. Our prayers may not be great or mighty; but they please our Heavenly Father. God delights in them.

### **Pictures of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Israel was battling the Amalekites. Moses interceded on Israel's behalf with his arms raised to Heaven. He became weary; and when his arms came down, Israel would lose. Then Moses would struggle to get those arms back up and the battle would turn in favor of the Israelites. Aaron and Hur held up Moses' arms so that victory could be won. This is a Biblical picture of prayer.

Once there was a young minister struggling. Two women covenanted to pray together for this young fellow. God began to help him and bless in the church. The church began to grow and make progress. The young minister did not understand what had happened, but the praying women understood. They knew that prayer made the difference. The minister got older; and, sadly, he grew proud of what he had done. The two women felt the Lord had been offended; so they quit praying. Things went back to what they had been. It was prayer that had made the difference!

Often a missionary or a preacher will be handicapped by his human failings and limitations. Somebody is praying somewhere and holding up one of his arms. Somebody else is praying somewhere and holding up the other arm. That missionary or pastor can move forward. Whose arms are you holding up in the battle for souls?

### **Pictures of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

In a large, influential church, the pastor had to retire for health reasons. The church looked around and found a gifted, well-educated young man with energy. They brought him in as pastor, but things were not going well. The deacons discussed this problem and decided that if this continued, the ministries of the church were going to collapse. As much as they loved their pastor and sincere as he was, the current arrangement just was not working. The deacons told the pastor that things were not going well. The pastor knew that this was true. They told him that they thought he would be able to pull the load but it looked like it is too big a load for him to pull. They said that they had come to a conclusion that action had to be taken. The pastor understood and agreed. The deacons told him, 'We have decided that we are going to pray for you that you would be what we need." That pastor was Dr. Wilbur Chapman. God turned him into a flaming torch for the gospel because the deacons held his arms up in prayer.

When we pray we may not think we are accomplishing much. Yet, we feel a heavy load. Yes, Aaron, that is Moses' arm you are holding up. Hur, that is Moses' arm you are lifting up. If we could just see what is happening in the valley because we are holding another's arm up, we would better understand the heavy load.

### **Pictures of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Moses' rod is another Biblical picture of prayer. The rod was lifted up, and the Red Sea was divided. The sea bed became dry ground. The sea walls congealed in the desert. God froze the walls so the fish would not come flopping out into the open air. There was ice, and they were walking on dry ground with hot wind. The Israelites had free air conditioning as they crossed the Red Sea. When the Israelites had crossed and the prayer rod came down, the Egyptians tried to copy what had been done by prayer. The wheels came off of their chariots, the walls came crashing down and the Egyptians all drowned. The greatest threat to Israel was destroyed.

Do you remember when Moses went in to Pharaoh? Moses' rod became a serpent. The magicians were in partnership with the demons who can do miraculous things too. The magicians threw their rods down, and their rods became serpents. Moses' rod (our picture of prayer) swallowed the other rods. Those magicians never got their rods back. What the devil seems to accomplish can be swallowed by proper praying. "...Greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

### **Pictures of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

A widow went to an unjust judge. She was not making any progress, but she persisted. That widow believed that if she would persist, she would get an answer. We are told by Jesus that this story is a picture of prayer. If we really believe God, we are going to persist in prayer until we get the answer.

What did Jesus mean when He asked if He would find faith on the earth when He came back? Without persistence, there is no genuine faith. We need to press on and press forward in prayer. Remember the man who went next door to his friend to borrow some bread. That man stayed with it and stayed with it; and the Lord honored that persistence. The Lord said that that is the right way to pray. We must learn to ask and to seek and to knock in order to receive answers.

# **Pictures of Prayer**

The child that asks his father for a gift is also a Biblical picture of prayer. The child wants some bread or an egg. Is the father going to give him a serpent? Is he going to give him a stone? No! If evil men know how to give good gifts, our Heavenly Father knows how to give so much more. We ask for something and receive it because we have a Good Father that will certainly give us good gifts. Gifts that are over and above what we might receive any other way. Remember Abraham who had that altar built and was trying to protect it from the birds that came. He went through darkness and pain and kept the birds off until there was an answer for the sacrifice. Sometimes we will have to go through hard times, battle all kinds of forces and become exhausted. Do not forget that God will hear and answer. God will supply for us. Remember Hannah who wanted a child. "...Ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2).

## **Pictures of Prayer**

Remember Deborah who was asked to go to battle. She would not go without Barak. The two went together. We need the presence of God when we go into battles. We need to ask for His presence rather than going on our own.

God promised Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Exodus 33:14). Moses' response to God was, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Exodus 33:15). Have we learned the futility of going forward without the presence of God?

# **Personalities of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

How very often in the Old Testament do we see Moses praying, and we can learn from his prayers.

And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them (Exodus 2:23-25).

The very next verse begins the story of Moses and the burning bush. God raised up Moses as a leader because of the prayers of God's people Israel.

Moses became a mighty intercessor on behalf of God's people. His prayer life impacted his character.

Marvelous was the effect of the character of Moses by his marvelous praying. His near and sublime communication with God in the giving of the law worked no transfiguration of character like the tireless praying of those forty days in prayer with God. It was when he came down from that long struggle of prayer that his face shone with such dazzling brightness. Our mounts of transfiguration and the heavenly shining in character and conduct are born of seasons of wrestling prayer" (Bounds, Complete Works, 507).

## **Personalities of Prayer**

"Moses' prayers are often found relieving the terrible stroke of God's wrath" (Bounds, <u>Complete Works</u>, 508).

Pharaoh asked Moses to pray on his behalf.

And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me. And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh.... Exodus 8:28, 29

• Moses prayed on behalf of the children of Israel after they made and worshipped the golden calf. God was intent on destroying them. "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them...." (Exodus 32:10). Yet, God had mercy because of His servant's prayers.

Israel as a nation would have met their just destruction and their just fate after their apostasy with the golden calf had it not been for the interposition and unfainting importunity of Moses' forty days' and forty nights' praying! (Bounds, Complete Works, 507)

 When Korah led a rebellion against Moses, the Lord was once again ready to consume the children of Israel. Moses and Aaron "...fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" (Numbers 16:22).

## **Personalities of Prayer**

The assumption, pride and rebellion of Miriam, sister of Moses, in which she had the presence and sympathy of Aaron, put the praying and the spirit of Moses in the noblest and most amiable light. Because of her sin God smote her with leprosy. But Moses made tender and earnest intercession for his sister who had so grievously offended God, and his prayer saved her from the fearful and incurable malady. (Bounds, Complete Works, 509)

The rebellion of Moses' own brother and sister probably cut much deeper than that of Korah and deeper than Moses' other struggles along the way. Yet, once again Moses steps in as intercessor and sees God answer.

And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee. And the Lord said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again (Numbers 12:13-14).

How do we respond when others rise up against our leadership?

# **Personalities of Prayer**

The children of Israel are infamous for their murmuring and complaining. Exodus 15 tells how quickly they forgot their supernatural deliverance from Egypt through the Red Sea. Three days into their journey and not having found water, they arrived at the bitter waters of Marah. "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree..." (Exodus 15:23-24). Faced with hardship, the people murmured against Moses. Moses immediately turned to the Lord. Just as quickly, the Lord gave the solution needed.

This was not the only circumstance where Moses met the grumbling and complaining of the Israelites with prayer. God always met the need (water from a rock, manna from Heaven, quails). How do we respond to the bitter situations that face us?

## **Personalities of Prayer**

Psalm 90 is attributed to Moses. The first part of his prayer is spent looking at the greatness of God and the lowliness of man.

GOD	Man
Dwelling place for man	Days are spent in labour and sorrow
From everlasting to everlasting	70 years is normal lifespan
Calls for man to return	Secret sins are known by God

### The writer then makes these requests:

- Teach us to number our days
- Return, O Lord
- Satisfy us early with Thy mercy
- Make us glad
- Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants and Thy glory unto their children
- Let the beauty of the Lord be upon us
- Establish the work of our hands.

## **Personalities of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

In Joshua chapter five, Joshua looked up and saw an unexpected guest. The Captain of the Host has come to speak to him. Joshua met with God Himself (just like Moses at the burning bush). It is amazing what God might do when we pray.

#### There is also,

...the incident in Joshua 10 where the very heavenly bodies were made subject to prayer. A prolonged battle was on between the Israelites and their enemies, and when night was rapidly coming on, and it was discovered that a few more hours of daylight were needful to ensure victory for the Lord's hosts, Joshua that sturdy man of God, stepped into the breach with prayer. The sun was too rapidly declining in the west for God's people to reap the full fruits of a noted victory, and Joshua, seeing how much depended upon the occasion, cried out in the sight and in the hearing of Israel, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.' And the sun actually stood still and the moon stopped on her course at the command of this praying man of God, until the Lord's people had avenged themselves upon the Lord's enemies." (Bounds, Complete Works, 497)

## **Personalities of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

David's prayers are well known. God recorded many of them in the book of Psalms that we might be encouraged, stimulated, and taught in the matter of prayer.

Psalm 51 teaches us about deep repentance; confession of sin; and God's abundant, merciful forgiveness.

Psalm 95 as well as many other psalms teaches us about worship.

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms.... O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker" (Psalm 95:1, 2 and 6).

Psalm 23 teaches us about our wonderful Shepherd who meets our every need.

David's prayer life was consistent. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17).

## **Personalities of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Samuel, the mighty intercessor in Israel and a man of God, was the product of his mother's prayer. Hannah is a memorable example of the nature and benefits of importunate praying. No son had been born to her and she yearned for a man child. Her whole soul was in her desire. So she went to the house of worship, where Eli, the priest of God, was, and staggering under the weight of that which bore down on her heart she was beside herself and seemed to be really intoxicated. Her desires were too intense for articulation. 'She poured out her soul in prayer before the Lord.' Insuperable natural difficulties were in her way, but she 'multiplied her praying,' as the passage means, till her God-lightened heart and her bright face recorded the answer to her prayers, and Samuel was hers by a conscious faith and a nation was restored by faith." (Bounds, Complete Works, 498)

Samuel interceded for Israel until he was laid aside. He said, "God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you" (I Samuel 12:23). Oh, how Samuel continued to pray even in his waning years. May we learn from those that prayed at various ages.

### **Personalities of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Solomon prayed a majestic prayer of dedication at the temple. He started with his hands lifted up to God. He ended on his knees, face before God, and crying out. The record of that prayer is several chapters long. As Solomon poured his heart out, he prayed not only in thanksgiving but also in supplication for the generations to come. He was not a perfect man, but he was a praying man.

And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made they servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing (I Kings 3:7-10).

## **Personalities of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Gideon was trying to discern the will of God. Should he go against an innumerable multitude with 30,000 recruits? God said no. He decreased Gideon's army to 10,000. Gideon did not get more recruits, but he got less so that God would get the glory for the victory. In the end, Gideon had 300 men. God told him to put a lamp in one hand and a trumpet in the other hand of each of the 300. They could neither defend themselves nor attack anybody. What kind of army is unable to protect itself or attack the enemy? This was how God wanted it. A great victory was won, and God received all of the glory.

Sometimes, as we pray, it seems our situation worsens rather than improves. Perhaps God is allowing our circumstances to get to a place where we cannot fix them. This allows His power to be clearly seen, and He will be glorified.

### **Personalities of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Jacob was a man that was transformed through prayer. He fled from home after deceiving his father. That night he met with God. The next morning Jacob vowed to God,

If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee (Genesis 28:20-22).

Years later Jacob decided to leave his father-in-law's home and return to his homeland. The night before he met his brother Esau, he begged God for help.

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan: and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children." (Genesis 32:10-11)

Jacob continued in prayer until daybreak.

## **Personalities of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Paul began his Christian life with three days of prayer. When God spoke to Ananias about visiting Paul, God said, "Arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold he prayeth" (Acts 9:11).

Paul and Barnabas were sent out as missionaries with prayer and fasting.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away (Acts 13:2,3).

Prayer then became a large part of Paul's ministry.

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed (Acts 14:22-23).

"Paul lived, toiled, and suffered in an atmosphere of prayer. To him prayer was the very heart and life of religion, its bone and marrow, the motor of the Gospel, and the sign by which it conquered." (Bounds, Complete Works, 552-553)

## **Personalities of Prayer**

#### Luke 18:1-8

Acts 16 shows us more of the part prayer played in Paul's life and ministry. In verses 6-11 Paul is repeatedly guided by the Spirit about where he should go next. After the Macedonian vision, Paul obediently went to Philippi. On Saturday he and Silas went to the riverside where some ladies had a prayer meeting. That day Lydia and her household were saved and baptized. A young lady was later delivered.

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying...But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. Acts 16:16, 18

The young lady's bosses were angry and had Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God..." (Acts 16:25).

The earthquake trod along the path made by the mighty forces of Paul's praying. He did not go out when his chains were loosed, and the stocks fell off. His praying taught him that God had nobler purposes that night than his own individual freedom...God's mighty providence had opened his prison door and had broken his prison bonds, not to give freedom, but to give freedom to the jailer. (Bounds, Complete Works, 554)