

Recipe for Prayer Devotional

Is there a “perfect” recipe for prayer? Depending on who you ask, the answer might be a resounding yes, and it is found in Jesus’ model prayer in Mt. 6:9-13 (commonly known as the Lord’s Prayer). However, others might say it’s found in Peter’s “straight to the point” prayer in Mt. 14:30 (where he cried out in desperation, “Lord, save me!”). Of course, if we are making a list, we mustn’t leave out Paul’s life changing “transformational” prayers, a few of which can be found in Eph. 1:17-19a, 3:16-19; Phil. 1:9-11; and Col. 1:9b-12. And who wouldn’t agree that David’s powerful and faith filled prayers in the book of Psalms are indeed worthy of our attention. Then you will find those who might say, my grandma always prayed the best prayers, or my mom, or pastor, mentor, or dad; but, what do they all have in common? I believe the common denominator is a heartfelt desire to personally communicate with our God, the Creator of all things (Gen 1:1; Neh. 9:6; & Rev. 4:11).

Ultimately, genuine heartfelt prayer of any kind is “perfect.” If we approach the throne of God in humility while giving Him all honor and glory, we don’t have to worry about a secret formula or “recipe.” God knows our hearts (Ps. 139:1) and He knows what we need before we even ask (Mt. 6:8); therefore, the pressure is off! We can feel free to talk to Him knowing that He so desires to hear from us. Jesus’ example of spending much time alone with God in prayer shows us that praying often to the Father is good and desirable.

In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians he urges God’s people to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Eph. 6:18). So, what does it mean to “pray in the Spirit”? It means that we are to pray in the power and realm of the Spirit (Ref. Jude 20). In Romans 8:26-27 we learn that “the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans . . . the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.” Praise God, I am so thankful that when I am crying out in desperation with words that are haphazardly spoken, I can rest assured that the Holy Spirit is mediating on my behalf to the Father with eloquence and purpose.

Recipes that are handed down to us become our own when we add a little of our own “flair.” Similarly, when we take what we have learned from our Biblical heroes’ prayers and add what’s in our heart, that’s when it becomes our own personal prayer offered up to God, our Father in heaven. Prayer is a privilege that we need to take advantage of often. It *expresses our trust* in God and helps to *increase that trust* as well. And I believe right now, more than ever, we need to pray in one accord (Acts 1:14) for God’s perfect will to be done (Mt. 6:10); and as we lean into Him during this challenging time of uncertainty, let us desperately seek out what God has for us in such a time as this.

Heavenly Father, we earnestly pray that you will bring an end to the COVID-19 pandemic in a timely manner, sparing our nation and world from any additional suffering and death. Lord, soften our hearts, open our eyes, and perk our ears to what you have for us to learn and grow from in all of this. May we be poured out like a drink offering to use as you see fit, for your honor and glory. Let us be a light in a world that is struggling to find the good in all of this; work through us to share your love with every person we communicate with this week. We love you and seek you with all our heart. I pray this in the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.