

Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. A teacher will teach from the Bible that a disciple of Jesus prays. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme.

Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7). Paul says, "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). And James says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). The Bible teaches much about prayer. The second series of 6 teachings is about "The focus of prayer". There are prayers that focus on God, prayers that focus on your own needs and prayers that focus on the needs of other people. Every topic will be in two parts.

Today we will learn about "A DISCIPLE PRAYS FOR HIS OWN NEEDS - PART 2". Although all prayers are directed to God, in these prayers, you ask things for yourself. The prayers that focus on your own needs can be divided into four kinds: prayers for your human needs, prayers for your spiritual needs, prayers for your ministry needs and prayers for your family needs". In part 1 we studied "a disciple prays for his human needs". In part 2 we will study the following three needs.

POINT 2. A DISCIPLE PRAYS FOR HIS SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Every human being is created in the image of God and has a body and a spirit. With your spirit, you can know God, fellowship with God, know the difference between right and wrong, sense evil and danger and invent and create new things. However, because of sin, the human spirit is dead (Ephesians 2:1). A person with a dead spirit does not know that God exists, does not differentiate between good and evil as God does, does not sense wickedness and danger and also does not create things that will last forever. However, when he accepts Christ into his heart and life, then God's Holy Spirit comes and dwells in his heart. Then his spirit is "born again" and made alive. Then he knows God, discerns what is really important, develops empathy and becomes creative. Therefore, Christians should pray for their spiritual needs.

The first spiritual need is spiritual healing. Pray for your spiritual healing.

Let us read Jeremiah 17:14, "Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved." Jeremiah 17:5,6,11 shows that Jeremiah is praying for a sick heart. The Israelites trusted in human leaders and they trusted in material things like making money by unjust means rather than trusting in God. When your priorities are wrong and also you rely more on people and on money than on God, you need to pray for spiritual healing. If you change your priorities and trust in God in every area of your life, you will experience how God will heal you spiritually. Jeremiah 17:7-8 promises that God will bless you and make you like a tree that is planted by the water. You will not fear when trouble comes, you will never wither spiritually and you will never fail to bear fruit! Pray together with Jeremiah, "Lord, heal me and I will be healed. Save me from my wrong priorities and I will be saved!"

The second spiritual need is living in God's presence. Pray for living consciously in the presence of God.

How can you restore the sense of God's reality in your life? How can you consciously experience the presence and nearness of God? Let us learn from king David. How does king David again and again restore the awareness of God's reality? How does he again and again experience the presence of God? How does he again and again feel the nearness of God? Let us read Psalm 27:4,8,13-14. "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. ... My heart says to you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek. ... I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." David's heart says to him, "Seek God's face!" Then David deliberately and consciously enters into God's presence. David stands or kneels down before God's face and begins "to gaze upon the beauty of God". That means that David meditates on God's wonderful attributes, that is, on God's beautiful character. While David thinks about God's love for him and God's faithfulness to him in the past, David patiently waits for God to act. David waits with expectation and with assurance that, in his own time, God will again make his nearness felt to him. This is how David practises the presence of God. This practising of God's presence is the one thing David seeks every day of his life. Likewise, practising the presence of God is something we should practise every day of our lives. Every day, seek God's face. Deliberately and consciously enter into God's presence. Meditate on God's characteristics. Wait with expectation and assurance that God will again make his reality, presence and nearness felt.

How I wish that every Christian would pray this prayer every day! David asked God for this *one thing*: to live consciously in God's presence every day of his life! Listener, write this verse on a piece of paper and paste it on your wall. Memorise this verse. Pray this verse many times in your life. The verse is Psalm 27:4.

The third spiritual need is living a holy life. Pray for living a holy life.

Let us read Psalm 51:10 and 141:3-4, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Set a guard over my mouth, ... Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil, to take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers." We know that at times when we live according to our old nature, we are not spiritual, but carnal and unholy. God also knows that. Therefore, we should pray that we might receive grace to live a holy life. You should pray for a pure heart, that is, a heart that does not dwell on immorality or pornography or any evil that wicked people devise. You should pray for a steadfast spirit, that is, self-discipline in your appetites and other physical desires. You should pray for a guard over your mouth, that is, control over what you say.

Let us also read Psalm 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." You should regularly ask God to examine your heart and your behaviour. God, who sees all your thoughts, motives, imaginations, attitudes and behaviour and hears all your conversations, will show you what is not pleasing in his eyes. Confess all your sins to God and ask him to fill you again and again with the powerful work of his Holy Spirit.

The fourth spiritual need is living a victorious life. Pray for living a victorious life.

Let us read Matthew 6:13, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Because we live in a wicked world and among wicked people, all Christians experience temptations. Therefore, Jesus taught Christians to pray for deliverance from temptations. Does God lead you into temptation? No. The Bible says clearly that God never tempts you to sin and that you are tempted by your own sinful nature inside you or by the sinful world around you or by the devil. A non-Christian is a complete slave of his sinful nature. But a Christian has received a new and spiritual nature that is no longer a slave of sin, but a servant of the Holy Spirit living in him. But when we Christians do not live in dependence of the Holy Spirit, we are prone to sin and often voluntarily run into tempting situations. Unless God intervenes sovereignly, we will give in to temptations! That is why we Christians should pray to God and ask him to intervene sovereignly and not to permit us to do what we would do by nature. Every one of us who relies on God and prays, "please do not permit me to run into a tempting situation", will be delivered from that evil. This prayer may be compared with the following prayer: "Lord, give me your grace to observe the rules of health that I may not become ill. But if you permit me to get sick, then give me the grace to stay close to you." That is why we should pray, "Lord, give me the grace to observe the rules of spiritual health and not fall into temptation. But if you permit me to be tempted by my sinful nature or the sinful world or the devil, then give me the grace to stay close to you." Conclusion. You should pray for your spiritual healing, for the grace to consciously live in the presence of God, to live a holy life and to live a victorious Christian life.

POINT 3. A DISCIPLE PRAYS FOR HIS MINISTRY OR SERVICE TO GOD

First. Pray for your Christian ministry or service to God.

Let us read 1 Thessalonians 3:10, "Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith." The apostle Paul had a great desire to meet his spiritual children and help them to grow. Like a mother, he wanted to care for their needs and hurts. Like a father, he wanted to encourage and stimulate them. And he never stopped praying for them. Likewise, you should pray for the people God has entrusted into your care. Pray that you may be for them and do for them what God wants you to be and do.

In Luke 6:12-13, Jesus spent the whole night praying to God, so that God would help him to choose the right leaders for the future Church. Likewise, you should pray that God would appoint the right Christian leaders in your ministry. Paul warns that we should not appoint immature Christians as leaders and also not to lay our hands too quickly on people in the church. Leaders should be men who qualify according to God's Word and have proved that God's hand is on them. In the next study on prayer, you will see how you should pray for Christian workers in your ministry.

Second. Pray when you experience spiritual warfare.

In 2 Samuel 5 we read how king David prayed before he acted. He asked God for guidance. He asked if he should attack the Philistines straight ahead and God said, attack them straight ahead. And God gave king David victory. Once more the Philistines attacked and once more David asked for God's guidance. This time, however, God said that he

should not attack them straight ahead. When David followed God's instructions carefully, God gave him the victory again. At another occasion, David's own son, Absalom, organised a coup against him and David had to flee. The counsellor of Absalom was a wicked man named Ahithophel. In 2 Samuel 15:31 David prayed, "O Lord, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness." And God turned this wicked counsellor's counsel into foolishness. Eventually it led to David's victory. In spiritual warfare, you too should ask God for guidance how to fight and ask God to confuse the plans of God's enemies. In Ephesians 6, continual prayer is part of spiritual warfare.

Conclusion. You should pray for your Christian ministry, for the people God has entrusted into your care and you should pray whenever you are engaged in spiritual warfare.

POINT 4. A DISCIPLE PRAYS FOR HIS FAMILY NEEDS

The difference in the sexes is not an evolutionary development, but a creation of God. God created man and woman in his own image and he created them male and female. Also marriage is not a social institution, but it is God's idea and God's institution. In Genesis 2:22-24 God brought the first woman, Eve, to the first man, Adam, and God commanded that a man should leave his parents, and be united to his wife and the two of them will become one flesh. Also the family is not a social institution that may be rejected in modern society. In Genesis 1:27-28 God blessed the man and the woman and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number". And in Deuteronomy 6:7-9, God commanded parents to teach their children the commandments of God. The Bible contains many passages in which God teaches Christians the responsibilities of parents and children. Therefore, Christians should pray for their families.

First. Pray for receiving the right wife or husband and children.

In Genesis 24, Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for his son, Isaac. The servant prayed to God for guidance and asked that God clearly point out who would be a suitable wife for his master. And God led the servant very clearly to the right woman! However, God may not guide you in the same way as he guided the servant. After the time of Abraham, God has given us many truths about who is the right kind of wife or husband. The Bible contains many passages that describe a godly man or godly woman. When you follow God's instructions in the Bible, God will also lead you to the right husband or wife. But whatever you do, you should pray.

Sometimes, a couple remained without children. Isaac's wife, Rebekah, was God's choice for him, as we have just seen. However, Rebekah was childless. So in Genesis 25:21 we read, "Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant." If you are childless, then pray to God. Maybe God will give you a child. Maybe God will give you the grace to adopt a child or to have great spiritual influence on other people's children through for example youth clubs.

Second. Pray for your children.

As children grow up, there are thousands of little and big problems. Pray for the health and protection of your children. Pray for their education and other areas of development. Above all pray for their relationship to God! What are the things that you could pray for your children? You could pray what King David said to his son, Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:9, "And you my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever." And when your children become adults, then pray that they may choose the right life-partner. According to 1 Corinthians 7:39 in the Bible, Christians may only marry another genuine Christian.

Third. Pray for your other family members.

Let us read John 1:40-41, "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah, that is, the Christ'. And he brought him to Jesus." You have been saved by grace. God put you in your specific family and town, so that you will be his witness to your family and to your town. Many family members in the world become Christians, because one family member started to witness by word and by life about Christ to his other family members. If you have another family member who is a Christian, then the two of you can get together regularly to pray for the salvation of your other family members. Like Andrew, you may get an opportunity to lead them to Christ! Conclusion. Every day you should pray for your marriage, your children and your other family members.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Pray every day for your spiritual needs like spiritual healing, living in God's presence, living a holy life and living a victorious life. Pray every day for your service to God and for the people God entrusted to you. Pray every day for your family, especially for your spouse and your children.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".