

# Steadfast: Prayer

## INTRO

We are spending the next 6 weeks in Psalms. The Psalms are a collection of 150 songs mostly meant to be sung together as a congregation. David wrote 73 of them. Other contributors were Solomon, Moses, Asaph, the sons of Korah, Heman, Ethan, and 50 psalms have unknown authors.

God is noted (in the ESV) as “**Steadfast**” in the Psalms 133 times.

Steadfast – resolute, dutifully firm, unwavering, not subject to change.

- God’s steadfast love – 123
  - Often in the phrase, “steadfast love endures forever.”
- God’s steadfast faithfulness – 9
- God’s steadfast justice, mercy – 1
  - “faithfulness,” “justice,” and “mercy,” are not alone. They always follow “steadfast love and \_\_\_\_\_.”

The purpose of the Psalms is not for us to feel good singing together, to vent emotion, or glean some principals for life. Their primary purpose is to give God glory and teach us His attributes. Their secondary purpose is to give us understanding on how to properly interact with the God we’re glorifying and learning about.

Over the next 6 weeks, you’ll hear from Jim, Pat, Jami, Jaime, Chad, and I. We are going to talk through the different genres of Psalms (ex. Trust, wisdom, lament, etc.) and look at how we can apply them in our regular time quiet times with Jesus. For example, it’s healthy to spend a few minutes in repentance. Jaime will discuss how the authors of psalms repented. It’s also beautiful for us to spend time worshiping God for who He is. Jami will show how the psalmists worshiped.

To get the most out of this series: 1) Begin the discipline of spending time with Jesus regularly, daily. 2) Take the genre presented each Wednesday and practice adding that to your time with Him.

I have the pleasure and honor to kick off the series with prayer. How did the writers of psalms pray?

## HOOK

Hotel room-service (meals, clothes washed/ironed, directions to landmark). We treat prayer like the ultimate room-service except we don't have to tip anyone, and it's all charged to our heavenly credit card. There are certainly times for petitioning God for our needs and for those things which are important to us. But even then, with our requests in front of us, prayer should still always be surrender.

“Prayer is surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boat hook from a boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.” – E. Stanley Jones

As we study the Psalms, we will see requests, cries for help, and even some cursing of enemies (\*flinch), but the authors are beautiful examples of being surrendered to God's will. Over and over, amidst the most heart-wrenching plea, the author will still include complete trust in the LORD.

## BOOK

**Philippians 4:6-7** - *The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

## LOOK

What is the difference between prayer and supplication? In the Greek, **supplication** (deesis) means to petition, but **prayer** (proseuche) simply means communication with God. It's an umbrella including many things.

“In the Bible, prayer is worship that includes all attitudes of the human spirit in its approach to God. The Christian worships God when he adores, confesses, praises, and supplicates Him in prayer. This highest activity of which the human spirit is capable may also be thought of as communion with God...” –New Bible Commentary

Prayer is the relationship building conversation with your Heavenly Father! How do you spell love? **T.I.M.E.**

**Phil. 4:5b** - “*The Lord is at hand...*” – Jesus is nearby, close to us, Emmanuel. That’s why we don’t have reason to be anxious for anything. Picture Him next to you.

What can we look forward to when we pursue God with these three (**1. Relationship, 2. Requests, 3. Giving thanks**)? *...The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding...*” (**Phil.4:7**)

Sometimes our minds and emotions run wild. The more we let them venture down the slope of fighting for control or throw themselves from the cliff of “what if’s”, the more anxious and out of control we feel.

**Phil. 4:7b** - *...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

- Paul was presently chained to and guarded by a Roman Soldier. That soldier’s job was to keep him under control at all times. Paul uses his situation as an object lesson. It is the peace of God through Jesus that guarded his mind and heart.

**What are the benefits of prayer (Relationship, Requests, Giving thanks) according to prisoner Paul?**

1. Expulsion of anxiety
2. Peace disproportionate to any situation
3. Minds and hearts under the guard of Jesus

**Psalm 86** (ESV) – read responsively. (Pink is Prayer; Green is Worship)

A Prayer of David.

**1** *Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me,  
for I am poor and needy.*

**2** *Preserve my life, for I am godly;  
save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God.*

**3** *Be gracious to me, O Lord,  
for to you do I cry all the day.*

**4** *Gladden the soul of your servant,  
for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*

**5** *For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,  
abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.*

**6** *Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;  
listen to my plea for grace.*

**7** *In the day of my trouble I call upon you,  
for you answer me.*

**8 There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,  
nor are there any works like yours.**

*9 All the nations you have made shall come  
and worship before you, O Lord,  
and shall glorify your name.*

**10 For you are great and do wondrous things;  
you alone are God.**

*11 Teach me your way, O LORD,  
that I may walk in your truth;  
unite my heart to fear your name.*

**12 I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,  
and I will glorify your name forever.**

*13 For great is your **steadfast love** toward me;  
you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.*

**14 O God, insolent men have risen up against me;  
a band of ruthless men seeks my life,  
and they do not set you before them.**

*15 But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.*

**16 Turn to me and be gracious to me;  
give your strength to your servant,  
and save the son of your maidservant.**

*17 Show me a sign of your favor,  
that those who hate me may see and be put to shame  
because **you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.***

### Structures of Prayer Psalms

#### **Psalm 86 (David)**

- Help
- Worship
- Help
- Worship
- Prayer
- Worship
- Help
- Worship
- Prayer
- Worship

#### **Psalm 90 (Moses)**

- Worship
- God's wrath for sin
- Prayer

#### **Psalm 102 (Unknown)**

- Help
- Worship
- Prayer for nation
- God cares for us
- Help
- Worship
- God cares for us

#### **Psalm 142 (David)**

- Help
- Worship
- Help
- Worship
- Help
- Worship

## Commonalities between Prayer Psalms

### 1. Interlaced with worship:

- a. remembering who God is, His steadfast attributes.
  - i. See chart above (ex. Psalm 86)
- b. Even several self-encouragements of who He is:
  - i. 86:7 – “You answer me”
  - ii. Mostly mourning and depression - 102:26 – “You will remain”
  - iii. 142:5 – “You are my refuge”

### 2. Requests:

- a. Often for spiritual/lasting things (God’s kingdom to be established, wisdom, to see His glory, spiritual growth, etc.)
  - i. 86:11 – “teach me Your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth.”
  - ii. 90:12 – “teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”
- b. Earthly needs (forgiveness, blessings on hard work, deliverance from enemies, etc.)
  - i. 90:8 – “You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of your presence.”
  - ii. 90:17 – “Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us”
  - iii. *Common theme*: Help from enemies.
    - a) 86:14 – “O God, insolent men have risen up against me; a band of ruthless men seeks my life.”
    - b) 102:8 – All the day my enemies taunt me.
    - c) 142:3b – “In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me.”

### 3. His glory:

- a. His deliverance/answers to prayer move us to glorify Him (the purpose of the psalms).
  - i. 102:21-22 (God is looking down to care for those whose sin has made them a prisoner to death) – “that they may declare in Zion the name of the Lord”
  - ii. 142:7 – “Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name”

Notice: I'm not proposing strategies to bump up your prayer in the call waiting line or magic formulas to get God to do what we want. Remember the example of the boat hook at the beginning? Prayer is submission. Aligning ourselves with His will.

### **God's answers:**

1. Yes.
2. Wait for it.
3. I have something better.

### Written by and unknown Confederate soldier:

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;  
I was made weak, that I may learn humbly to obey.  
I asked God for health, that I may do greater things;  
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.  
I asked for riches, that I may be happy;  
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.  
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men;  
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.  
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life;  
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.  
I got nothing I asked for but everything I hoped for.  
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.

## **TOOK**

**Challenge:** Beginning spending 15 minutes with Jesus every day. Between now and next Wednesday, incorporate prayer including 1) worship, 2) prayer for physical and spiritual needs, and 3) for His glory to be seen by others.