



Establish your personal house of prayer

God focus

Enter into His house with thanksgiving and praise

According to Psalm 100:4-5, the passport to enter the door of the house of God is thanksgiving and praise. Praise simply means to respond to God for what He has done. Praise and being thankful tells God that we believe He is in control of our lives and it pleases Him well. We are often quick to intercede, even fasting and praying for things that are important to us. Yet, we do not always take as much time to give Him thanks, nor do it with the same intensity and earnestness.

Focus on God's perspective: To make thanksgiving and praise easy, consider starting a prayer request book. Take a moment and make a few notes of requests you remember that God answered. Give thanks and praise Him; in your heart, in words, in writing down such prayers, in singing or whatever way you feel comfortable. But let no excuse hinder you in giving Him thanks and praise.

Enter into His presence by honouring His Word

We begin to see ourselves from the Lord's perspective when we meditate on His Word and the promises in His Word. The prayer of praise is our greatest weapon against a critical spirit. The Bible doesn't promise peace to those who dwell on the faults of others. It says: You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You (Isa.26:3, NLT). Fixing your thoughts on God leaves little time for thinking about other things!

Focus on God's perspective: It does not come easily to fix your mind on God. You literally have to exercise your thinking muscles to do this. One way is to spend more time with the Word of God, filling your mind with His thoughts. You can do this by reading the Bible, or listen to an audio version of the Bible. Whichever way works for you, make a special effort this week and just start doing it!

The LORD's Prayer

FAMILY FOCUS

Our Father in heaven

The 'Our Father' prayer is like a spiritual house. Over the next few weeks, we will trust the Holy Spirit to teach us to dwell in His house of prayer. The first 'room,' if you like, of this house of prayer is acknowledging Him as Your father. He is your Father in heaven, and He is available to you. He is never too

busy to see you. Whether you believe it or not He really likes you. To have a healthy prayer life, you have to be certain of your Father's love for you and live in a close relationship with Him. Only secure sons and daughters who are totally convinced that their heavenly Father loves them will have such a relationship with Him.

Focus on God's perspective: Do you feel this way about your heavenly Father? It is not a shame if your answer is a straightforward 'no.' The beginning of the restoration of that 'feeling' is speaking to God your heavenly Father as if He is real, as if He is in the room. Think of Him as real and there with you right now. Do not be in a hurry, but take time to think about these questions and speak to Him, even out loud as if He is right there. Tell Him everything in your heart. He truly desires your fellowship.

ADORATION

Hallowed be Your Name

Will we ever comprehend the full meaning of God's name? His name is not just something God is called by; it is who He is. His existence is from forever, His character and works are awesome, and though heaven is His throne and earth His footstool (Acts 7:49), God the Father and His Son choose to come and dwell within us (John 14:23). We are called to be holy for God is holy, to be like Him, in His image (1 Pet.1:16). The many names of God teaches us about His character. Meditating on His name helps us to know Him better. A book of remembrance is being written before God right now for those who fear Him and meditate on His name (Mal.3:16).

Focus on God's perspective: The name of everyone who accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, is written in that book of remembrance. It comes at a price. It will cost you time and dedication to study God by studying His names, asking Him for the deeper meaning. Are you willing? It will help you to settle in the second room of the house of the 'Our Father' prayer. Begin by reading the Book of Psalms and mark every place where any name relating to God is printed. You will be surprised to learn about God by looking back at the names you highlighted.

KINGDOM FOCUS

Your kingdom come

Entering this 'room' in the house of prayer is special. Envision a room from where you can watch over the Kingdom of God. Jesus is our advocate with the Father; He sits at the Father's right hand and intercedes for us. 'Your kingdom come' is an invitation to God our Father to guide us and rule our lives. It pertains to us, our families, the Church, nation and the nations of the world. The Kingdom of God is where He rules sovereign, where He is trusted as true and is not doubted, questioned or resisted. The phrase 'Your kingdom come' is not a pie in the sky that will drop if you concentrate hard enough and is then yours for the taking! It takes real steps of obedience by everyday people like you, continuously inviting God into different areas of your life until He is completely in control of it.

Focus on God's perspective: Is it true of your life that God is really in control of every area? Or are there areas you struggle to 'give up' to His rule? Most of us have such areas. The solution is simply to admit it, confess it and ask the Father to help you surrender until you have given up that 'area' entirely. Then His kingdom has come in that part of your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas like these and spend time to pray through these issues with the Lord.

SURRENDER

Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven

Surrender means to yield ownership and give up control over what we consider to be ours; our property, time and our rights. Surrender to God means we belong to Him. In the 'room' of surrender, we need to pause and consider the meaning of 'His will.' Christians make many claims as to what they believe is the 'will of God', often including comforts of the flesh to soothe the conscience. It is a willingness to be corrected if our mindset is wrong. Waiting upon the Lord requires all our attention. We cannot drift off into day-dreaming and call it 'time spent with God.' It requires our sincere attention and concentration to focus on loving God with all of our heart, mind, and strength (Matt.22:37).

Focus on God's perspective: Let us be honest – to spend time with God is the most challenging thing with which to continue for most Christians. So let us not feel sorry for ourselves. Let us, with other Believers, set our minds to run the race set before us to the very end. Pressing in with God is the spiritual race we run in our physical lives. It is "His will," therefore it must become our pleasure on earth as it is in heaven. Tell this to the Father; ask Him to show you real surrender that will give Him pleasure.

HIS PROVISION

Give us today our daily bread

This 'room' in God's house of prayer according to the 'Our Father' prayer, reminds us that He is committed to provide in our daily needs as we seek first His kingdom. But it does not say 'bread for the rest of our lives.' It says 'daily' bread. This is a hard thing, for it means we need to trust Him again tomorrow and the day after. We are never 'OK' to continue by ourselves. God can do 'immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine' (Eph.3:20); not necessarily in volume, but in variety and complexity of what we need, even things we do not consider as being 'provision.' Furthermore, He supplies 'more than enough' (3 John 1:2) so that we can have abundance not only for ourselves, but also to give to others. The surplus is not necessarily meant for us. It is for us to have so that we can provide. If we consider that all we have belongs to God, we are just managing it. With receiving (blessing), comes responsibility.

Focus on God's perspective: This is the most difficult 'room' in the house of prayer. Firstly because many do not believe God will provide for them as individuals as He does for others. Furthermore, because we often want more than our daily bread so we can relax, but we sometimes cover it up with: I want to have so I can bless, or it is for The Kingdom. Are you faithful with R10 or R100? Do you tithe and wisely use small amounts of money? The sincerity of your stewardship and mine is tested right here. God sees what

no man can see. What you do with R100,000 will just be an amplification of what is in your heart concerning R100. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you surrender in this 'room' in the house of prayer. Asking His guidance with a willing heart to surrender is one of the wisest things to do.

FORGIVENESS

Forgive us our trespasses

Forgiveness literally means 'to untie' or 'to let go.' To have your trespasses forgiven, you have to confess them. To admit what you have done wrong; to acknowledge that you are actually wrong. To be able to realize you are wrong, you have to consider your actions. The Holy Spirit helps you in this matter. Jesus died on the cross and shed His Blood to cover all the sins of mankind, but it is like having won a prize; you have to collect it. It is for free, but you do not have it unless you go and fetch it. You have to acknowledge your identity as a sinner and only then is it handed to you. In Christ, we have received the free gift of life and the cancellation of all our sin (1 John 1:7). Still, we need to humble ourselves and confess our wrongs every time the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, and ask forgiveness.

Focus on God's perspective: When last did you just sit down and think about your life, the way you relate to people, do business or speak to someone at a petrol station or in a supermarket? More than jotting down rights and wrongs, we need to find out what the truly hidden attitude of our heart is. It is from our hearts that our actions flow. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what is in your heart. Is there anger? Disappointment? Why? What happened? Write these things down and begin to pray for each one. Remember to speak to God as if He is in the room with you, because He is!

FREEDOM

As we also have forgiven those who have trespassed against us

Why do we need to forgive every day? Hebrews 12:15(NIV) says: See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. Keeping a short account will hinder small issues building up into larger ones. Forgiveness is the key to being restored to God's fellowship and being restored to others. Forgiveness is ongoing because once you have dealt with the past, new situations will occur in the present. None of us gets by without having our pride wounded, feeling offended or being hurt by someone.

These things leave a scar on the soul if not confessed, released and dealt with before the Lord. One psychiatrist recently said that she had seen more healing taking place since she started encouraging her patients to forgive others.

Focus on God's perspective: Getting rid of hurt or rejection because of what others have done to you is hard. But, the truth is, if you don't, it will be harder on you than on them. Its burden becomes so heavy. Although difficult to admit unforgiveness in one's heart, it is crucial for your own good to go through the process of forgiving others, even if they never apologize. Realising how easily you do wrong and how much

you want God to forgive you is essential when you and I struggle to forgive someone for something they have done to us or our loved ones. Take time and think about situations you have not resolved. There is no time like the present to begin dealing with these issues, by admitting you were wrong before God, asking His forgiveness and His help in forgiving.

PROTECTION

And lead us not into temptation

All of us are bombarded daily with self-centered desires. Although vulnerable and open to attack, we should see every temptation or time of testing as an opportunity to grow and find grace from God. Being tempted is not sinning; sin is a result of yielding to temptation. Praying this prayer means to ask God to help us not to yield to temptation (Jas.1:14-15). Temptation is not from God, nor does He tempt anyone (Jas.1:13). According to 1 John 2:16, we face three main areas of temptation. (1) Coveting – the cravings of the sinful nature; (2) lust – the lust/desire for everything we see; (3) pride – boasting about what we have and do. This 'room' in the 'Our Father' house of prayer is a secure place of safety from temptation when we dwell here with great humility and dependency on the Father. Here we pray for the godly opposite to rule our lives: Generosity, purity, and humility.

Focus on God's perspective: If you look at your life, can you identify with some temptations relating to these three areas? Write them down in a place where you may be reminded of them every day, such as inside your cupboard door, on the mirror, etc. Each morning, ask the Father to help you not to yield to temptation on that day, whichever way it may cross your path. Remember that you can have the victory through the Name of Jesus Christ in every situation. Apply it with confidence so that your life will truly glorify Him in every circumstance! Remember the armor God has given us (Eph.6:10-18).

DELIVERANCE

But deliver us from evil

In the previous prayer room, we asked God to keep us from falling into temptation. But we are also engaged in spiritual warfare which we can only win through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom.8:13). Spiritual warfare is a harsh reality (2 Cor.10:3-5), and it takes place daily, mostly in our minds. How does a Christian wage war? We use God's mighty weapons to knock down the devil's strongholds as we take every thought captive and learn to think godly thoughts alone. Scripture encourages us to be strong in the Lord and put on the whole armor of God so that we are adequately prepared to engage in our spiritual conflict, which is NOT a fight with people.

Also remember, it is not us against the devil, it is God in us who has the victory over the devil. To be set free from demonic bondage, we must resist the devil through prayer and proclaim God's Word as we call upon the Name of Jesus. James 4:7 teaches us to submit to God and then resist the devil. This is the key – if you are right with God, you have His power visible in you to resist the devil. The power of God alone makes the devil flee!

Focus on God's perspective: There is no space here to ponder on the wonderful provision God made for us through the armour of God as described in Ephesians 6:10-16. Spend time reading that today. Find more reading matter explaining the reality of spiritual warfare discussed in this portion of Scripture. When praying in this 'room' of the 'Our Father' house of prayer, remember to put on God's armour.

KINGDOM

For Yours is The Kingdom

When Jesus began to preach, his first sermon was, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt.4:17). As Christians, we are citizens of the Kingdom of God here on earth. But it does not belong to us; we are only sons and daughters (heirs) of the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. To find out how to live our lives practically as kingdom pioneers, when confronted with life's issues means to ask the well-known question: What would Jesus do? The Kingdom of God is expressed from within us (Lk.17:20-21) everywhere we go. The Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom.14:17). 1 Timothy 2:1-2 tells us that to pray kingdom prayers is to pray for everyone on earth. Prayer is the backbone of His kingdom. It is one of the most significant contributions we can make to advance the Kingdom of God as we admit our weakness depend entirely on Him and experience His powerful work, to the glory of His Name!

Focus on God's perspective: Two critical points to meditate on today are: (1) Do you ask yourself on every occasion during the day: What would Jesus do? Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you to do this and see how radically it changes the way you do things! It is truly an adventure! (2) Do you regularly pray for people other than yourself? This is how you and I help build the Kingdom of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind, teach and train you to begin praying for all people (1 Tim.2:1-2). Take time to study and find out what is meant by supplication, prayer, intercession, and of giving thanks in the Bible, and begin to include all these in your prayers. It will take some effort from you, but it's God's command, and if we obey faithfully, it will always result in blessing for us and others!

POWER

And the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

To enter into the fullness of what God has planned for our lives, we have no greater need than to be plugged into the power source of the Holy Spirit. For this to happen, we begin to pray for a new dimension of the Holy Spirit's power in our lives and those we are praying for (Eph.6:18). Praying with power can take various forms (1 Cor.14:5,15). It is important once more to mention that we do not have any power outside of God, other than through Jesus Christ expressing Himself through us, through the working of the Holy Spirit. This is why we boldly pray that God would grant us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man (Eph.3:16). Power belongs to Him.

Focus on God's perspective: Have you ever experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in your prayer life or at a meeting? Trust Him and allow God to fill you with His Spirit. Be sure to be on the lookout for

opportunities during the day where you can pray for someone in need. Remember, when God answers your prayers, to give Him the glory for His power.

When taking time in prayer every day, in this 'room' of the 'Our Father' house of prayer, remember to make a point of giving Him the glory for working in and through you every day.