

Types of prayer

This material has been written specifically for the lamps.

On the LAMPS DOWNLOAD page of visionworld27.org you will find a mp3 of Jim talking through this material.

Heart prayer: Hannah

All prayer comes from the heart. But for some, there is a deep move of the emotion in prayer. This is how it was for Hannah:-

In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. And she made a vow, saying, "O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."

"Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." She said, "May your servant find favour in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. (1 Sam 1:10-18)

This kind of prayer is:

*** Close to the heart of God.** He is an emotional God, who knows what it is to feel prayer. Look at these verses:-

*"How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I treat you like Admah?
How can I make you like Zeboiim?
My heart is changed within me;
all my compassion is aroused." (Hosea 11:8)*

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matt 9:35-36)

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." (Matt 26:36-38)

*** Moves the heart of God.** As he sees our commitment to prayer, pouring from our heart, so he is moved to hear and respond. He says to us through the prophet Jeremiah:- *"Call to me and I will answer you."* (Jer 33:3) We take this too simply. We do not just "call", we have to call with passion, with compassion, and with heartfelt sighs. We have to do as Apostle Paul teaches:- *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. (Rom 8:26)*

This is the kind of prayer which moves the heart of God:-

The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. (Ex 3:7)

*** Very costly.**

There is no point in pretending. If we pray from the heart, then it will be very costly. The Apostle Paul found it so, and we should reflect on this verse:-

"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure." (2 Tim 4:6)

Challenge prayer. Elijah

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." (1 Kings 18:36-37)

When Elijah prayed his great prayer, what was he really doing? Was he lacking faith, or did he think that God needed to be made to hear? What he was really doing was challenging faith - challenging the people to respond in faith to the move of the spirit which was to come, and challenging the principalities and powers to accept the absolute sovereignty of God.

We find the same in the commands of Jesus:-

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. (Mark 4:39)

Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." (John 11:43-44)

Such prayer, when inspired by the Spirit, releases the power of God. We have to be moved by the Spirit to pray like this - it must not come from our selfish hearts.

Crisis prayer Acts 12

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. (Acts 12:5)

Sometimes we have to stop what we are doing, and fight for a particular situation, with commitment and urgency. That is what happened in Acts 12. Peter was in prison, with a very real prospect of being executed. So the church gathered to pray, with concern, urgency and the need for God to act.

Sometimes only this passionate and urgent prayer can rescue a situation. The call to pray in this way is never convenient - it comes in a crisis, it is inconvenient and costly. But even so, it has to be done.

Warfare prayer. Gethsemane.

"Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia." (Dan 10:12-13)

Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you

*are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.
(Luke 22:39-44)*

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph 6:10-12)

Prayer is war! We are seeking the mind of God, and seeking to release the purposes of God. The enemy is opposed. Result - war. We see this at different levels

* **Gethsemane.** Here the war revolves around the human spirit. The enemy tried to get self to rule, but Jesus fought to let the will of God rule. This is a battle we have to fight it daily ,and one we have to win.

* **Prince of Persia.** Here we see how the enemy seeks to obstruct the prayers of man, and the responses of God. We have to learn to wait in strength and power, until God answers. This is hard to do.

* **Methodia.** The enemy has a strategy to obstruct us. He has method, (Gk “methodia”), and he will use every scheme and strategy against us. For him it is total war - a war to survive.

We have to use the weapons at our disposal:

- * We have to bind the strong man. (Mark 3:27)
- * Use the blood of Jesus. (See “Releasing the power of the blood on the lamps download page.)
- * We have divine power to pull down strongholds. (2 Cor 10:10)
- * We have to use the armour of Ephesians 6.

Believing/faith/risk prayer.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,²⁴ but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It's a ghost,”

they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." (Matt 14: 22-33)

Peter's request was high risk. But faith was high in him, so he found the courage to take an amazing step of faith. Sometimes, that's how it has to be in prayer. Moments come when we know that a high risk prayer is needed, and faith rises in us to make such a prayer.

At these moments, the enemy will sow doubt in the mind. He will try to convince us that we cannot do what faith is asking us to do. We have to take hold of this attack, and see it as an incentive to do exactly what faith is demanding. If the enemy is trying to stop us, we can be confident that it is a prayer he does not want to hear.

Of course it is a very big risk. We may get it wrong - but on the other hand we may get it right! Faith is always like this - we have to take the prayer risk and leave the consequences to God.

***Watchman prayer. Habakkuk:**

*I heard and my heart pounded,
my lips quivered at the sound;
decay crept into my bones,
and my legs trembled.
Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity
to come on the nation invading us.*

*Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,*

⁸ *yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Saviour. (Hab 3:16-18)*

There are times when we are called on to watch in prayer. This kind of prayer has

been devalued in our time. Today, God's people think only of action. Yet waiting is a powerful spiritual type of prayer. It generates an atmosphere of expectancy, in which the spirit can move. It is an attitude of confidence and joy - "God will do it, and I am ready to see what God wants to do." Most of all, it terrifies the enemy. He sees us waiting, and he knows that something is going to happen. But he doesn't know what. This sows panic, and forces him to divide his forces.

The great joy of this type of prayer is that we can do it any when, anywhere. Don't let's ever say "I'm just waiting." Let's always say "I am just waiting for God to move."

*** Sacrificial prayer: Shadrach**

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. (Dan 3:16-18)

We easily lose sight of the truth that prayer is sacrificial. It's not just a question of sacrificing time and effort. More it is the sacrificial lifestyle which intercessory prayer demands of us. Our daily prayers are relatively easy. Praying at a deep intercessory level is very costly. The enemy will attack - us, our health, our hopes, our families, our finances - the list is endless. We have to have the courage of Shadrach, and say "I knew that it would cost me when I committed to pray. I will pay the price." Easy to write, but not so easy to live.

*** Generational prayer. Hebrews 11**

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.(Hebrews 11:39)

We must not make the mistake of praying just for this generation. We have to believe that some of our prayers will be answered in the next generations. We have to take all our prayers, and throw them down the ages, knowing that, with God, no prayer is wasted.

©Jim Smith

November 2009

You may download this material, and use it for personal, group of church use. It is not to be changed, or resold.