

A Simple 3-Point Prayer Strategy to Deepen Your Intimacy With Holy Spirit

The Lord is working powerfully all across the nation to transform the way people pray, moving them from a rather mundane approach of simply seeking God's hand through a primary focus on requests to a life-changing experience of seeking His face through a worship-based experience. This delights the heart of Christ, since He was very clear in telling His disciples how they should pray. We see this both in Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2. He was not just giving them a soft suggestion but a very clear instruction about the nature of biblical prayer. The words of the two passages are not exactly the same but the pattern is crystal clear in both texts. We know it as "The Lord's Prayer."

He is Worthy! We are Needy!

The most fundamental breakdown of these two instances of Christ's model for our prayers is twofold. The first half of the model prayer is "Godward". It is all oriented around God: His fatherhood, His glory, His name, His kingdom and His will. The second half of the prayer is "manward." It is all about our human need for daily provision, authentic relationships and spiritual victory in the midst of a fallen and hostile world.

I like to describe this basic division in this way: "He is worthy! We are needy!" This is the simplest rhythm of New Testament prayer. We seek His face in worship, focused on His worthiness. Second, we trust Him for the pressing needs of our lives.

But, Those Forms!

This pattern is changing the way people pray. Pastors are seeking to embrace, model and teach this to their congregations. It is wonderful to see. But—there is a mechanism that is used in virtually every church, whether on the website or in the bulletin, that still teaches people that prayer is primarily (perhaps exclusively) request-based. This mechanism is the “prayer request form.”

By only asking for prayer requests via these intake forms, even pastors who embrace the New Testament pattern of worship-based prayer are subtly undermining their own efforts. The message these forms sends is clear: Prayer is primarily about man-centered prayer requests.

Praise, Prayer Requests and Purpose

So, what if churches reworked this form to actually represent the pattern and purposes Jesus desires for our prayers? This alignment could be a consistent teaching tool and mechanism to bring a better biblical balance in how the person in the pew embraces prayer. It might even be helpful to remind people of the definition of prayer each week to help shape their understanding. Here is a helpful adjustment:

Prayer Form

“Prayer is intimacy with God that leads to the fulfillment of His purposes.”

- I praise God because He ...
- In response to God’s character, I request prayer for ...
- I’m praying about this so that ...

Why the Change?

This approach communicates that prayer is, first of all, worship and praise. By guiding our people to first “seek His face” —even in submitting a prayer request—we begin to orient them toward the pattern Jesus required. This is an important

responsibility for a spiritual leader, even in the use of something so simple as a prayer form.

Of course, we then encourage them to express their need or the need of the person or situation for which they are praying. This is a vital part of prayer and best understood as a response to God's character. We always want to care for and honor these needs, which the form can facilitate. But this is the second part of biblical praying, not the only part. When the submitting of prayer requests is sandwiched between worship and the next prompter, it becomes much more meaningful.

Notice the "so that" portion of the intake form. This will take some teaching but will prove to be one of the most powerful tools to spiritually reorient the prayers of the people in your church.

So That!

A few years ago, my friend Dennis Fuqua provided a powerful insight to this point. He suggested that with every prayer request we should add a "so that." In other words, we should consider and express a God-glorifying, gospel-advancing, Scripture-honoring goal of the prayer request. Walt Henrichsen has noted, "God did not create you so that He can help you obtain what you want. He created you so that you can do what He wants." Our prayers are not about us explaining to God what we think He needs to do in order to structure the universe according to our specifications for a happy and comfortable life. Our prayers are the means of joining Him, through humble dependence, so that by His power we can fulfill His pleasure and purposes on this earth—in our walk with Him, our relationships, our work and our bodies. That, by the way, is the only reason He left us here after saving us.

Consider also the exclamation point given in Matthew 6:13: "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen.” This is the goal of all our prayers: the advancement of His kingdom, the display of His power and the glory of His name. This represents the “so that” of every prayer. A new “intake form” could be a practical, clear, and consistent tool to help congregations pray with a powerful “so that” in their lives, week by week. (To see a short interview where Dennis Fuqua explains this, [**click here.**](#))

Words Matter! Forms Matter!

Imagine what might happen if an entire church began to pray this way, even as it is encouraged by a prayer intake form. What would happen if we all learned to first seek His face, then trust Him with our needs, so that His purposes will be fulfilled in our lives? Words matter in even small things like a prayer form. Perhaps this could be the next step for a pastor, a church, a family, a small group, a Sunday School class or even a ministry team to change our praying to align with the clear command of Jesus. Perhaps something as simple as changing the way we pray by reworking a form could reorient a church in becoming a more authentic and gospel-advancing house of prayer. May it be! {eoa}

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