

# PRAY<sup>TO</sup>STAY

BY ED HARRIS

---

Over the years nothing has helped me strengthen my relationship with my wife more than prayer. Spending time in prayer with her has blessed our personal relationship with The Lord, with our children and in our congregation as well. I believe when one truly pursues after God in prayer, he will learn the heart of The Lord, thus increasing every other earthly relationship multi-fold. The goal of this article is to provide some insights and tips on how to do just that.

---



## THE ONE

Then God Said, *“Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created them.* Genesis 1: 26-27

Much has been written about the creation of man throughout the years. One of the things that I always like to think about is that when the Almighty created man, He was in direct communication with Him. This is one of the most beautiful things. The communication before Adam sinned was unbroken. Man was created in the image of God and with that was “given dominion” over all of the things that were made. This responsibility was more than that of the president of the United States, kings, queens or world leaders. This was the original hyper connection—the communication pipeline larger and much more powerful than a T1 line or sophisticated computer technology.

## PRAYER TO STAY

*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in time of need. Hebrews 4:16*

Do you often feel stuck in situations, or better yet do you sometimes feel like you are sliding down a slippery slope on which you cannot find sufficient footing? That is why we must pray. My friends, one of the most underutilized tools we have in this believing life is prayer. We actually are able to connect directly with the Creator through this magnificent tool! We don’t need the Internet, Skype, or iPhones. We just need to have willing hearts and minds and know that our Messiah has certified the line of communication for us! For He states:

*“if ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; [even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” John 14:15-17 KJV*

So, let’s get busy! Let us openly and honestly communicate with our Father. My slogan is, “We have to pray if we want to stay.” If we sincerely know that YHWH hears our prayers, then why don’t we pray more often? Why do we worry so much? Why are we not more engaged? Let us pray! Let us pray! Spend some time today praying and opening your heart to YHWH. Take some time out when you are at work on lunch or during the ride home to talk honestly and openly to our heavenly Father: Take the time to open your heart to Him. He hears His children. We should take every opportunity that we can to speak to Him.

*And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel. 1 Kings 6:13*

*No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Joshua 1:5*

## THE PRAYER OF FAITH [EMUNAH]

Prayer is something we often talk about, but it remains an underutilized tool in the body of Messiah. Think about our daily lives. When something happens, where is the first place our minds turn? A person, place or thing? Do we look at the circumstance first before turning to our Father? Are we quick to become overwhelmed with our situation, or do we stop, look and listen to the voice of Him Who created us?

*And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. James 5:15 KJV*

The key thing to remember is that we must have faith. Faith causes us to turn to YHWH in times of distress as well as times of extreme blessings. The person who prays to YHWH must consider first that

*He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:16*

---

## The Hebrew word for faith is Emunah.

אֱמוּנָה

Emunah has a range of meanings, one of which is the firm belief in a single, supreme, omniscient, benevolent, spiritual, supernatural and all-powerful Creator of the universe who we refer to as YHWH. Faith and prayer should go together, just as breath and life do; you can't have one without the other.

---

### THE ESSENCE OF PRAYER

Prayer is a gift that was given in the beginning to all mankind from our Creator. After Adam's (mankind's) fall, YHWH could have chosen to cut off communication with mankind. Instead, He has always desired to communicate with His most cherished creation. Prayer is two-way communication between us and YHWH, our Elohim.

### POSITIONS OF PRAYER

In the ancient days you would find the Israelites praying in at least two distinct ways: (1) prostrate or kneeling and (2) standing with the hands open and heart exposed. Both of these methods noted that the person praying is showing humility and great honor to our great King. In Lamentations 3:41, we see the idea of lifting the hands in prayer as a symbol of showing one's heart and that nothing was withheld from God. Make sure you are doing likewise, not holding anything from Him.

*"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." 1 Timothy 2:8*

This verse is an example of one of the methods of prayer that we discussed: the standing prayer. In this method of prayer, the person praying exposed the heart cavity saying, "Heneni:" Here I am, YHWH. One of the ways we define prayer is through the Hebrew word *hallel*, which means "praise." This is a great tip to remember that our prayers should contain self-judgment (Introspection) as well as "Praise unto our King".

### INTROSPECTION AND PERSONAL PRAYER

One of the most powerful weapons that we have today is the ability to pray to YHWH. It is a great miracle that we have access to Him and that we have the ability to speak to Him in our own language. No matter what time of day or the situation, we can speak to Him. He is always willing and ready to hear our prayers. One of the key ways to strengthen our faith and prayer life is through introspection (Personal Prayer). Personal prayer is just that—personal. Imagine if you could have a one-hour meeting with the Prime Minister of Israel or any of the top dignitaries that you can think of. Imagine if you could counsel with the top money manager or Biblical teacher in the world for one hour. Now consider that we have access to someone Who is so much more powerful than all of the most powerful people that we can think of combined. We have access to Him! Yes, the One Who ordained everything is willing to meet with us at any time.

Here is where we access the gift of personal prayer. In personal prayer we come before the King with praise (*hallel*) and adoration, but we spend time in introspection (*pallel*), judging ourselves and asking our King for help in the areas that we need it. Psalms 51: 1-19 gives us the perfect example of introspection. Here, King David is dealing with the weight of his sin. He soberly confronts his sin before the King. He is using the method of judgment that we have learned (*pallel*). He knows that the King is ever merciful and David is not hiding his sin. When we come to YHWH, likewise, we need to be completely honest with Him about our own sins and shortcomings. If we are unable to judge our own sins and shortcomings with the proper weight and measure, how can we expect to judge angels and judge the world? As Paul states:

*"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the very smallest matters?" 1 Corinthians 6:2*

The ancient sages believed that self-scrutiny and self-judgment lead to hope and mercy from God.

*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. **Matthew 6:6***

My suggestion is to find a quiet place where you can speak to YHWH all alone for at least one hour. Speak to Him, cry out and pour out your heart to Him. Confess to Him and ask for forgiveness. Take the time to listen to Him. Remember, prayer is a two-way communication. Try this. One hour of introspective prayer daily will change your life.

## **MODEL PRAYERS**

*After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth, as (it is) in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen! **Matthew 6:9-13***

There are many model prayers in the Bible that are considered model prayers; one of the more common is the Disciples' or Lord's prayer in Matthew. This prayer is a great model. Let's consider the structure of the prayer:

“Our Father which art in Heaven” – Adoration.

“Hallowed be Thy Name—Praise.

“Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven”—Kingdom based, Messianic authority.

“Give us this day our daily bread”—Petition.

“And forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors”—forgiveness and repentance.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from all evil”—Guidance and deliverance.

“For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever”—Praise.

From this we get an excellent model for our prayers. Take each piece and stretch it out. One suggestion is to use a journal to write down your thoughts for each. When alone, you can recite these until you are comfortable talking to YHWH in this way.

## **SET THE MOOD**

Take the opportunity to make your prayer time special. This is your time alone with Him who has created all things; the great I AM is willing to meet with you. You have the blessed opportunity to set the environment of the meeting. Get up early, go for a walk, or to an empty part of the house, turn on some praise and worship music. Do it up! It's a special time for you to meet the King of all kings and Lord of all lords!

## **THREE TIMES A DAY**

Evening and mornings, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice. **Psalm 55:17.**

There are three times a day ascribed to the Hebrew liturgical prayers. We know that the Jewish believers in the first century followed this prayer cycle. The prayer watch cycle also followed the schedule for the sacrifices during the times of the first and second Temple period. One fact to take into account is that whenever a sacrifice was made, prayers were always offered as well.

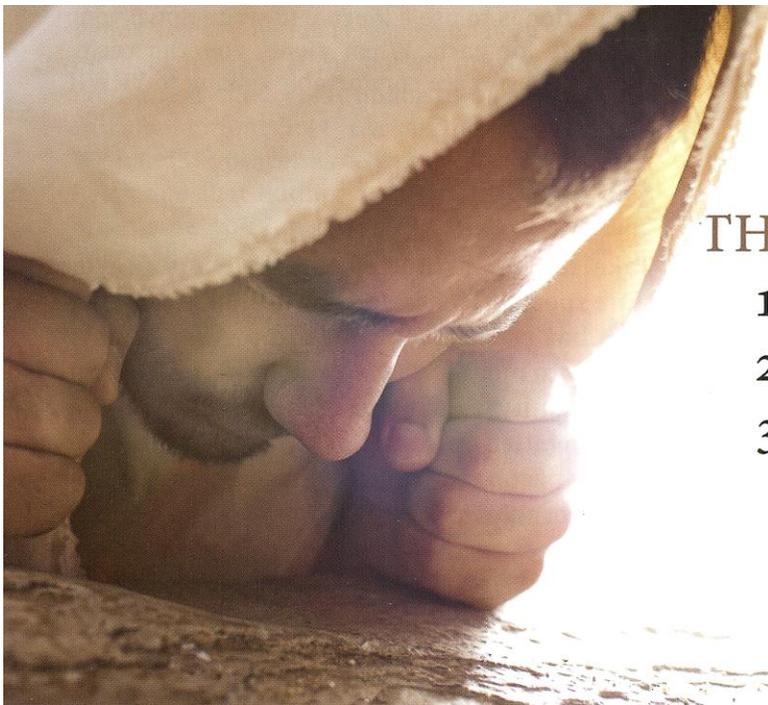
Take the challenge. Pray with your wife and family if at all possible, during these special times. If you cannot do it as a family, and you are otherwise occupied, pray alone. This connects us to the set-apart times that God created for the ancients. These are the times when Adam would meet with God before he

sinned. Remember, His Divine design was to connect heaven to earth. You can see in the model prayer that Messiah gave His students in Matthew 6:9-13 this same pattern of connection. As born-again believers, who are full of God's Spirit, we should likewise strive to meet according to these prescribed times. When we connect in this fashion, we are able to be the sacrifice that the Apostle Paul talks about:

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto "God, (which is) your reasonable service. **Romans 12:1***

These prayer times become more intense and meaningful when you do them with your spouse and children. When the two become one and are truly unified, the Heavenly Father allows blessings to come upon the home and blessings abound in the relationship.

**SUGGESTION:** Use the prayer outline in Matthew chapter 6 and design your own personal prayer that Father has placed on your own heart. You can also pray the Psalms or use a prayer book (Siddur) if you choose. The goal is to meet with the King during these appointed times.



## THE TIMES OF PRAYER:

1<sup>st</sup> - 6-9 am (Morning)

2<sup>nd</sup> - 12-3 pm (Afternoon)

3<sup>rd</sup> - 3-6 pm (Evening)

## MEDITATION

Meditation in the Hebraic understanding is reciting scriptures, prayers, or songs of praise and thanksgiving to the King. Praying aloud is a way of affirming the Word of God in your life. As you speak with a pure heart and conviction, you are actually speaking into your current reality and changing your future. Try adding this understanding of meditating to your prayers. It is wonderful and will certainly draw you closer to the King, as well as to your spouse and family at large.

## WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

An easy way to start establishing a strong and consistent prayer life is to start with a list of gratitude. You can use your phone or stationary notebook and write down things that you are grateful for. This is a wonderful exercise that can involve your spouse, family or friends. Get around a table and share your gratitude lists. When others share and you hear some of the things they are grateful for, write those things down! Add them to your list. Then when you sit down to pray, pull out your list of gratitude and start to give Him thanks. This is a way to start to strengthen your prayer time with the Creator. Of course, you can use scripture. Use the Book of Psalms, Proverbs or any other scriptures that you are inspired by. You can frame up your prayers and use the inspired words to reinforce them.

## **KAVANAH**

*And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. **Matthew 6:7***

Remember when you are praying, this is not a recording. Don't read, and not truly connect with what you are reading or speaking. There is a saying, "what comes from the heart, reaches the heart." Really focus on what you are saying to the Creator. When you pray, do so with intention. The Hebrew word for this is *Kavanah*.

Oftentimes before I start praying or doing anything for the Lord, I will start with a song, melody or hymn. This helps to quiet the mind and focus me in on Him.

## **PRAY WITHOUT CEASING**

First Thessalonians 5:1 simply says to pray without ceasing. What comes to mind when you think about this in a modern world? Do you think of a man in a tallit with his head covered, praying all day, never coming out for food or drink? This is not what this means at all. What this verse is referring to is the ancient understanding of short sentence prayers. An example of a short sentence prayer is "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want." In this prayer, there is an affirmation of YHWH and His ability to provide for His people. Another example of this is "Baruch HaShem" or "Bless the Name." These are short sentence prayers. They are prayers the Holy Spirit lays on your heart, or verses that God has led you to study.

These prayers keep you from having any other thoughts on your mind; they can also keep you focused on your job as an emissary to bring Heaven down to earth (Matthew 6:9-13). This also helps us to fulfill the words of King David when he says,

**"I will bless YHWH at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth" Psalms 34:1**

## **PRAYING WITH YOUR SPOUSE**

You should be focused on praying with your spouse. Think about it. Today, the Biblical marriage is the most attacked institution out there. With the ridiculous amount of divorces and separations occurring, we might want to rethink our strategy of prayer.

If you are just praying for yourself and for your spouse in personal prayer, that is wonderful, but we will truly experience the benefit of divine experience and marital strengthening when praying together as a couple.

## **A FEW OF THE REASONS COUPLES DON'T PRAY TOGETHER:**

- We are on two different schedules—Although this is a great "reason," we should remember that prayer is like air to our lungs and marrow to our bones. Prayer to YHWH with our spouses is an affirmation of covenant and will give the relationship that added strength.
- We don't get along that well—Many couples are faking it, acting like things are fine between each other. You might be one of them. Ask yourself the question, "Why don't I desire to pray with my husband?" He was good enough to marry, but he is not good enough to pray with? So, get busy and humble yourself before your YHWH and your sweetheart and get into prayer.
- I don't know how to pray—This is a classic one. We all know what Messiah did for His students in Matthew 6:9-14. He gave them the Divine outline for communication. Use this and follow the Psalms.

## **DESTROY THE EVIL AND NEGATIVE IMPULSES**

Prayer with the spouse is one of the main ways that you can destroy those strongholds that exist within the marital relationship. When something is happening in the spiritual, rest assured those who are in covenant with YHWH and have dedicated their marriage to His covenant, can definitely knock out major strongholds.

For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Messiah. **2 Corinthians 10: 4-5**

### **PRAYING FOR BELIEVERS IN THE WORLD**

As we look at the state of the world today, we see the evil of the world that seems to continue to saturate every area of our culture. Despite this, we know that YHWH is gathering His people from the four corners of the earth. We know that a mere mortal is not doing this. We know that this is not being done in the natural, but through the supernatural power of our Elohim. This is not the time to have a casual attitude towards prayer. It will be through prayer that we will strengthen our belief and faith in the King. Through prayer we are able to have the connection, hope, guidance, and deliverance that come as a result of being a child of the King. I hope that you have gleaned some concepts and additional ideas that will help you grow and mature in prayer.

As we are working to have better, more fruitful lives, let us not lose sight of the fact that we serve the supreme, omniscient, benevolent, spiritual, supernatural and all powerful Creator of the universe; and our trials, victories, growth and development are all a lot more clearly understood when we utilize prayer, the secret weapon.

*“Pray To Stay, Some Guidelines On Prayer,” Excerpts taken from *Romance By the Book* by Ed Harris*

# **PRAY WITHOUT CEASING 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1**

