

# SEPTEMBER



By Justin & Courtney Rose

Age 30 & 28 | Mayfair Community Church | Metropolitan Division



Often we think of prayer as talking to God. We can also think about prayer as offering up moments in our day and life as acts of prayer and service to the Lord. What during your day today can you offer up as prayer?

1

"Prayer is the gift of the Spirit. Often we wonder how to pray, when to pray, and what to pray. We can become very concerned about methods and techniques of prayer. But finally it is not we who pray, but the Spirit who prays in us." — **Henri Nouwen**

What role does the Holy Spirit play in your prayer life?

2

God reveals Himself to us in three primary ways: Through Jesus Christ, Scripture (Bible), and in Creation and the world around us. Think of times in your life that you've felt God show Himself to you through these three avenues.

3

"O voice divine, speak Thou to me. Beyond the earth, beyond the sea, First let me hear, then sing to Thee a melody of love." (Find the rest of the song in *The Salvation Army Song Book* 21 by Joseph Johnson)

4

Read **1 Kings 19:9-18** and see how God speaks to Elijah through "a gentle whisper" in the midst of wind, earthquake, fire, and discouragement.

5

"Compel yourselves; say the prayer; stop idle talk; close your mouths to criticism; place doors and locks against unnecessary words. Time passes and does not come back, and woe to us if time goes by without spiritual profit." — **Elder Ephraim of Philotheou**

6

The way we move our bodies can also be prayers. Many Church traditions cross themselves as a form of prayer. Crossing oneself can be a prayer recognizing the presence of God in a moment, or giving glory to God by honoring His name. Today, every time you refer to God or pray, cross yourself: touch your hand to your forehead, stomach, heart, then right side of your chest.

7

In moments where it seems like God is not hearing our prayer, it's often helpful to remind ourselves of the character of God: that God is just, God is sovereign, God is merciful, etc. Read **Psalms 10** and see how the Psalmist (writer) proclaims God's character, yet still questions when God will intervene.

8

We communicate with different people in different ways; the same is true for our relationship with God. In The Salvation Army we tend to emphasize intercessory prayer or listing our petitions to God. Another way to connect with God is by sitting in silence and focusing on Him. Try this for at least 5 minutes today.

9

Many times, God is speaking to us or answering our prayers, yet we don't take time to recognize or acknowledge the answered prayers. This week, write down your prayers or needs, and at the end of the week check back to see how God has heard and provided for you.

10

Read Jesus' words on prayer in **Luke 11:1-13**. Spend 5 minutes today praying the Lord's Prayer. Pray slowly, contemplating each line, or pray through it as many times as necessary.

11

"Let your prayer be completely simple. For both the Publican (**Luke 18:9-14**) and the Prodigal Son (**Luke 15:11-32**) were reconciled to God by a single phrase." — **St. John Climacus**

12

Read **Genesis 29:31-33:24** and notice the footnotes. Notice how many of Leah and Rachel's children's names are prayers or give homage to answered prayers. Contemplate how speaking someone's name can also be a prayer spoken over an individual. What does your name mean?

13

While it is true that God hears our prayers whether we pray once, or pray the same prayer every day, there are many stories in Scripture highlighting the power of persistent prayer. Read **Luke 18:1-8** to see how Jesus illustrates this through parable.

14

**1 Samuel 1:1-20** recounts the story of Hannah persistently asking of the Lord year after year. Verse 15 recounts that Hannah unashamedly "poured" her heart out before God. When was the last time you really poured your heart out before God?

15



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Sometimes, God speaks to us, but He doesn't give us the answer we really want to hear. Ask for strength to hear God's truth and to be open to God's will, rather than our own desires. Pray that the desires of our heart become aligned and tuned to the heart of God.

16

Draw strength in remembering that the Jews prayed for a Messiah for hundreds of years until their prayers were fully answered. When their prayers were finally answered, many people didn't realize the Messiah had come and rejected God's answer to their prayers. Have there been moments when you rejected God's answer to prayers?

19

Read **Matthew 21:12-17**, where Jesus drove out the sellers in the Temple who were taking advantage of the poor. Jesus says, "My Temple will be called a house of prayer." Pray today that your corps (church) would first and foremost be a house of prayer. Ask God to encourage your congregation into deeper prayer.

22

"There is no need at all to make long discourses; it is enough to stretch out one's hand and say, 'Lord, as You will and as You know, have mercy.' And if the conflict grows fiercer say, 'Lord help!' God knows very well what we need and He shows us His mercy."

— Abba Macarius

25

If you have unanswered prayers or a burden lying heavily on your heart, consider fasting for a day. Read **Matthew 6:1-18** focusing on verses 16-18. Fasting should be done in humility and without drawing attention to yourself. To learn more, talk to your corps officer or read Richard Foster's chapter on fasting in

*The Celebration of Discipline.*

28

Read **Lamentations 3**. Notice how the text progresses from the writer feeling like God has completely forgotten him, to later realizing that God has been faithful and remains faithful every day.

17

Listen to Sara Groves' song, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" and meditate on the words, "Prone to hear You and not heed it." Search for the song on YouTube through the SaraGrovesVEVO channel.

20

**Mark 9:14-29** recounts the disciples' difficulty in casting out an evil spirit. They ask Jesus for help and wonder how they are unable to perform the miraculous acts themselves. Jesus responds, "This kind can only come out by prayer." Have peace today that some things are out of your control and only God can really take care of certain problems.

23

It's great to have a discipline of daily prayer, but sometimes it's helpful to try something new. Today, go somewhere new to spend time talking to God. Perhaps go on a walk in nature, or go to a church with a prayer garden, prayer maze, or prayer shrine. A new environment can help provide new focus for prayer.

26

Prayer does not need to happen at a specific time each day. Try praying throughout the day today. When you hear a prayer request or see a request online, take a couple of seconds and pray for the need right then. Perhaps you can step out and ask the person if you can pray together for a minute or two. You will be in touch with God throughout the day, and won't forget to pray for people.

29

Today, commit to memory **Proverbs 15:29** to give you encouragement in moments when you feel like God isn't hearing your prayers: "The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."

18

In the Tabernacle and Temple in ancient Israel, the priests would light incense to represent the prayers of the people. Today in your prayer time, light a candle or incense as a sensory reminder and encouragement for you that God is hearing your prayers.

21

Consider Paul's words in **Romans 12:12**, "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer" (NIV).

How faithful are you to pray for those in your life or for the injustices in the world around you? Ask God to help you be more "faithful in prayer" for the sake of yourself and the world.

24

"Pray night and day. Pray when you are happy, and pray when you are sad. Pray with fear and trembling, and with a watchful and vigilant mind, that your prayer might be acceptable to the Lord; for as Scripture says, 'The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their appeal.'"

— St. Theodoros the Ascetic

27

Do you have a prayer partner or someone who can hold you accountable to pray? Talk to your corps officer or mentor about matching you up with someone who can appropriately encourage you to pray more, maintain a discipline of prayer, and who would hold you up in prayer.

30