

# PRACTICAL PRAYER

Lesson 7 for May 16, 2026

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“Trust in Him  
at all times, you  
people; pour out  
your heart  
before Him;  
God is a refuge  
for us”

(Psalm 62:8, NKJV)

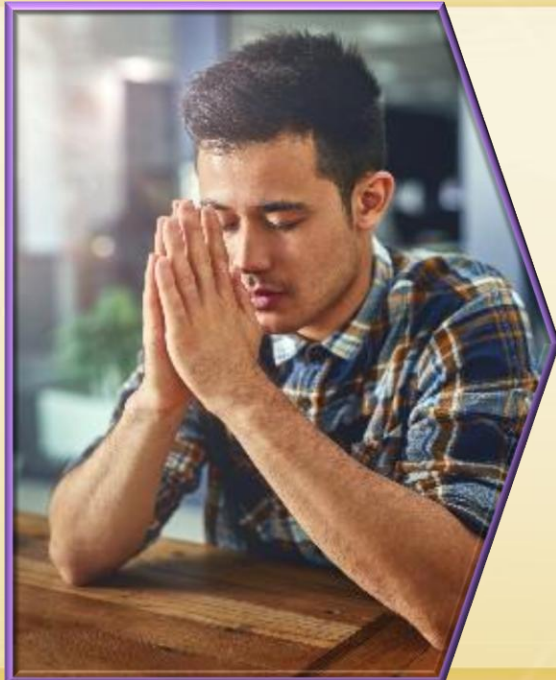
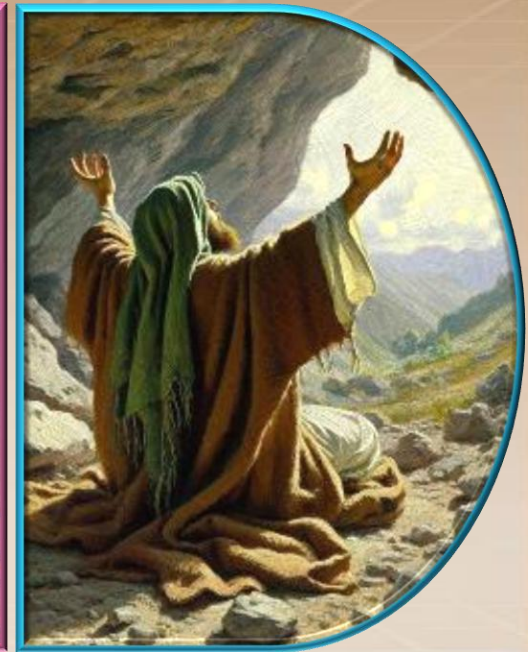
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Paul admonishes us to continue “praying always” (Eph. 6:18), even if our world falls apart; even if time passes and we do not see an answer to our prayers.

In circumstances like these, the prayers of Elijah and Hannah will help and encourage us.

But how should we pray? What should we ask for? Should we pray alone or with others? Does prayer only allow us to speak to God, or does it also allow us to listen to Him?



- Prayers in difficult times:
  - ▶ **Elijah:** Prayer in the midst of crisis
  - ▶ **Hannah:** An answer that never comes
- Model prayers:
  - ▶ **Jesus:** The content of prayer
  - ▶ **Daniel:** The structure of prayer
- Four questions about prayer



# PRAYERS IN DIFFICULT TIMES

# ELIJAH: PRAYER IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS

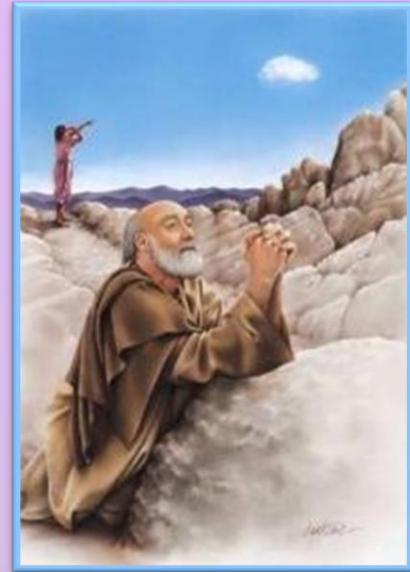
"He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.'" (1 Kings 19:10)



**How does God answer our prayers in the midst of crisis?**

**After a simple prayer from Elijah, God immediately responded with fire (1 Kings 18:36-38).**

**After seven prayers asking for rain, God sent a small cloud that turned into a powerful storm (1 Kings 18:42-45).**



**When Elijah asked for death, God remained silent, but sent his angel to feed him (1 Kings 19:4-8).**

**Downcast in a cave, Elijah finally heard the voice of God answering his desperate prayer (1 Kings 19:9-18).**

**One answer was immediate and miraculous. Another, after seven periods of prayer, sent the requested rain. Finally, after 40 days, a verbal and encouraging response. God knows how and when to answer in each of our situations.**



# HANNAH: AN ANSWER THAT NEVER COMES

*"I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him." (1 Samuel 1:27)*

Hannah's prayer for a child seems like a prayer answered quickly by God (after nine months of joyful waiting, of course) (1 Sam. 1:9-20).



However, when we read the previous verses, we observe that this answer took a very long time to arrive (1 Sam. 1:1-8).

Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, had "children"—that is, more than one son—and "year by year" she irritated Hannah because God had not granted her children.

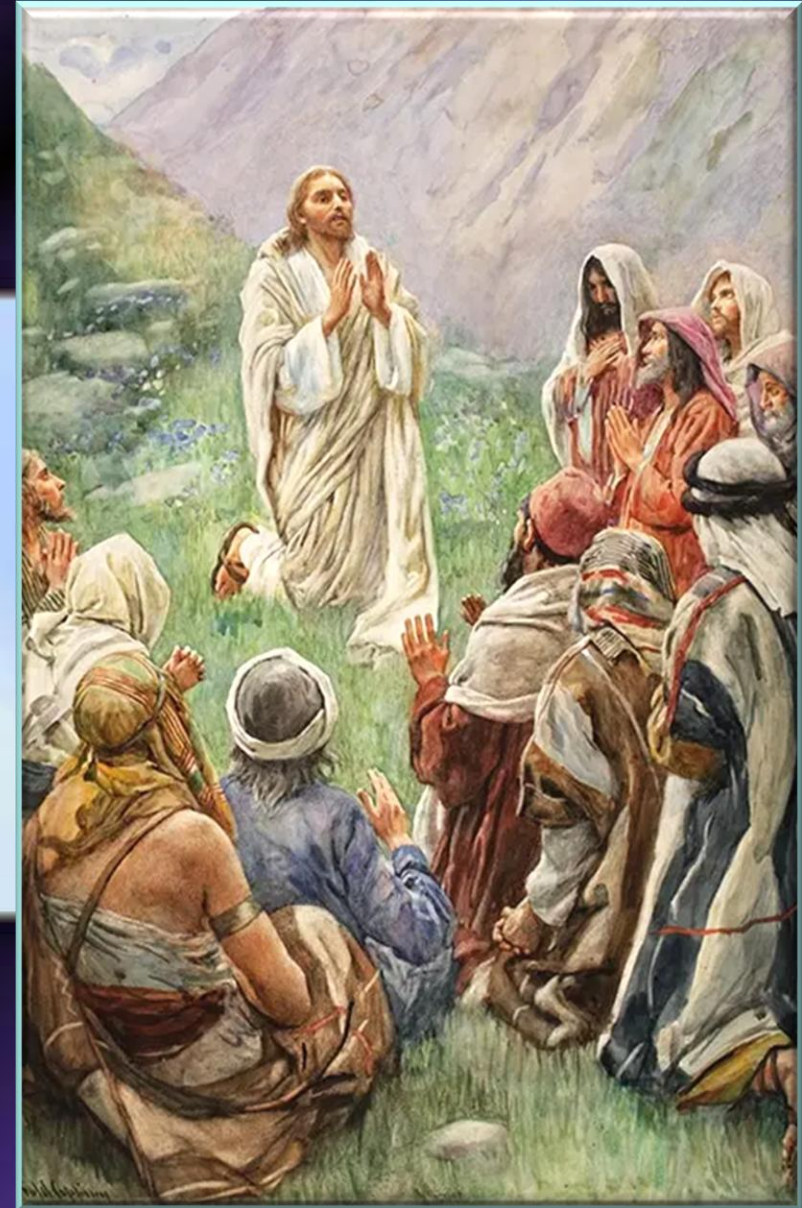
From this point of view, how many years did Ana spend asking for a child without getting an answer?

Sometimes, God's silence may be due to our selfishness (James 4:3); a cherished sin (Psalm 66:18); lack of faith (James 1:6); or, simply, it is not the right time.

In any case, God sees the whole picture and knows what is best for us (Jeremiah 29:11). He will always answer, in His own time and in His own way, the prayer offered in faith (1 John 5:14-15).



# MODEL PRAYERS



# JESUS: THE CONTENT OF PRAYER

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name’ ” (Matthew 6:9)



**Making long and elaborate prayers to impress and be praised by listeners is not the style of prayer that Jesus taught us (Mt. 6:5-8).**

**Our prayers should be sincere and simple, in everyday language. Prayer is a vital part of our lives.**



**“Learn to pray short and right to the point, asking for just what you need. Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you. Do not offer make-believe prayers, but earnest, feeling petitions, expressing the hunger of the soul for the Bread of Life.” (E.G.W. “Our high Calling”, May 4)**





# JESUS: THE CONTENT OF PRAYER



This is the model of prayer that Jesus gave us:

**“Our Father who art in heaven”**

**We need to recognize our personal relationship with the Father of all human beings**

**“Hallowed be thy name”**

**Recognizing God's holiness draws us closer to him with reverence and respect**

**“Thy kingdom come”**

**Let us long for the return of Jesus**

**“Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”**

**Let us accept divine sovereignty and ask that God's will be done in our lives and in the world**

**“Give us this day our daily bread”**

**Let us ask for what we need to live, both physically and spiritually**

**“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”**

**We need to repent, seek forgiveness, and forgive those who have hurt us, just as God forgives us**

**“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”**

**Let us ask for protection and shelter against the evil present in this world**

**“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen”**

**Let us acknowledge that everything we are, possess, and do belongs to God. He alone deserves glory and praise**

# DANIEL: THE STRUCTURE OF PRAYER

**"So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes"**  
(Daniel 9:3)

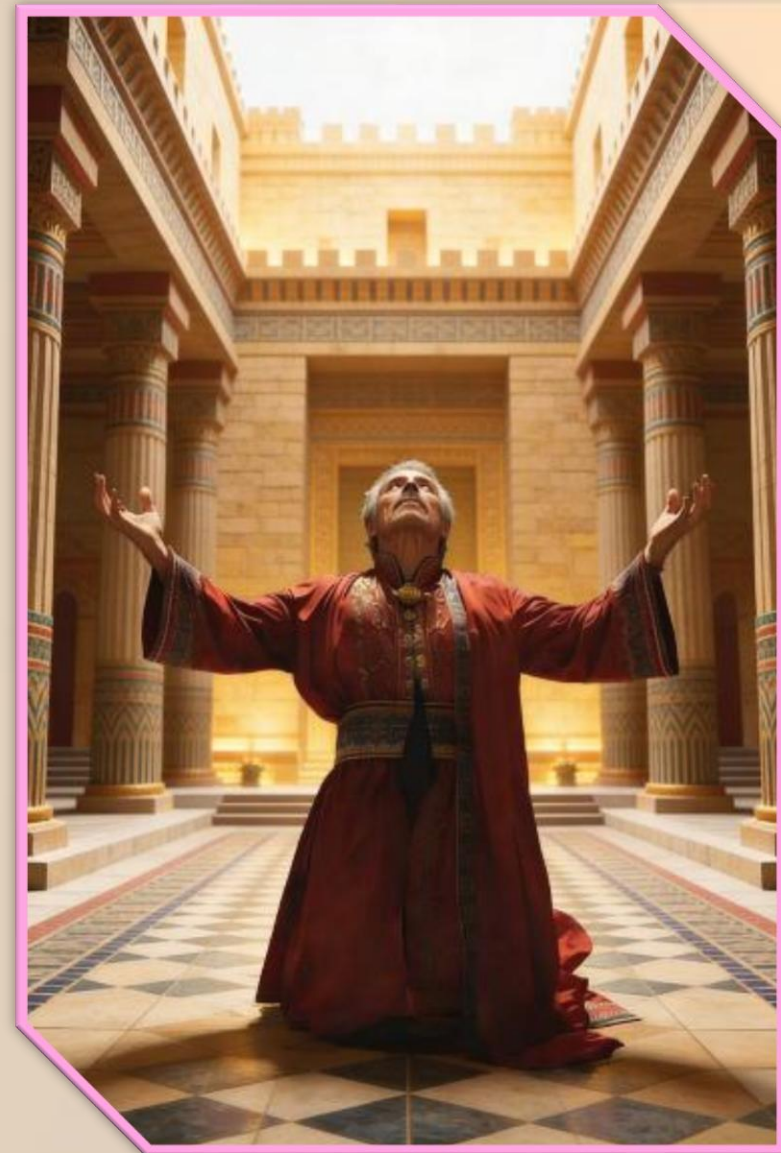
The prayer recorded in Daniel 9:4-19 presents us with the four fundamental parts of prayer:

**Praise (Dan. 9:4)**

**Petitions  
(Dan. 9:16-19)**

**Confession and  
forgiveness  
(Dan. 9:5-15)**

**Thanksgiving  
(Phil. 4:6)**



Daniel was interrupted by Gabriel before he could finish his prayer (thanksgiving).

This pattern applies to both our private and public prayers. Obviously, the section on "confession and forgiveness" should be adapted to the context of prayer.

This structure helps us to focus prayer on God, preventing it from becoming a kind of "shopping list" from the divine storehouse.





# FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT PRAYER

## Why should we pray if God already knows everything?

Prayer elevates us to the throne of God and compels us to examine ourselves and rethink our relationship with Him every day.

Even if we don't know what to say, the Holy Spirit helps us (Rom. 8:26).



## Why pray when everything is fine?

Angels who have not sinned worship God continually. How much more should we?

Thinking that we don't need God because everything is going well for us is being proud.



## With whom should I pray?

Depending on the moment:

1. In solitude. That is when our prayer becomes most intimate.
2. With family or in small groups.
3. In the church.



## How should I listen?

The clearest and safest way to do this is to combine prayer with Bible study as part of our personal devotion, avoiding emptying our minds or just listening to ourselves.



**“A deep sense of our need and a great desire for the things for which we ask must characterize our prayers, else they will not be heard. But we are not to become weary and cease our petitions because the answer is not immediately received. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12). The violence here meant is a holy earnestness, such as Jacob manifested. We need not try to work ourselves up into an intense feeling, but calmly, persistently, we are to press our petitions at the throne of grace. Our work is to humble our souls before God, confessing our sins, and in faith drawing nigh unto God.”**