

QUIET TIME

Theme: Making use of the Bible to pray

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understand.

- Day 1 Psalm 31:1-24
Prayer in times of affliction
- Day 2 Psalm 139:1-7,23-24
Prayer to examine self
- Day 3 Psalm 51:1-13
Prayer to confess sin
- Day 4 Psalm 15:1-5
Prayer to change
- Day 5 Psalm 103:1-14
Prayer to praise God
- Day 6^{BS} Romans 12:9-21
Making use of Bible teachings to pray. Practise with Romans 12:9-21
- Day 7 Psalm 94:1-23
Prayer calling down God's judgement
- Day 8 Psalm 20:1-5
Prayer invoking God's blessing
- Day 9 1 John 5:13-17
Praying in accordance with God's Word
- Day 10 Psalm 25:1-15
Prayer to submit to God's way

- Think about Psalm 27:4.
Are you asking this 'one thing' of God?
- Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: Praying God's Word

Read study 39 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: Making use of God's words in prayer

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passages are: **Psalm 15:1-5;**
Psalm 101:1-5;
Romans 12:9-21

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

PRAYING GOD'S WORD

1 John 5:14

This is the confidence we have
in approaching God:
that if we ask anything according to his will,
he hears us.

1 John 5:14(NIV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

39. Praying God's Word

In Acts 4:18-31 we read that Christians during the New Testament period used the words from the Old Testament in their prayers. They quoted verses from Psalm 2 which described their own struggle. Likewise we may use the words in the Bible in our prayers to God, because the Bible contains experiences that correspond to our experiences.

A. Making use of the Bible in your prayers. Why?

Read 1 John 5:14. Making use of the words in the Bible has two advantages.

1. You know what to pray for

Especially when you are a new Christian you do not always know what to pray for. You will find many prayers in the Bible and you may use them in your prayers to God. For example, you may pray the prayers in the Psalms, the Prophets, and the prayers of Jesus and the apostles. They express your thoughts, feelings and struggles in words which you may also want to use in your own prayers. The prayers in the Bible have formulated many questions which also you want to ask of God.

2. You pray with confidence

The Bible contains not only prayers, but also the will of God with regard to many important areas of life. The Bible gives us instructions, wisdom and promises. When you use the promises, wisdom and instructions in the Bible in your prayers, you will more often pray about the things that please God. You will more easily pray with confidence and ask things from God that are in accordance with his will. This will give you great assurance that God hears your prayers and a growing expectation that he will answer many of your prayers!

B. Making use of the Bible in your prayers: four methods

Method 1: Make use of the Bible in your prayer during quiet time.

Read a passage from the Bible. Choose a Bible verse and meditate on the truths in that verse. Use the thoughts of your meditation in your prayer to pray to God. Respond in your prayer to what God intended to teach you during your quiet time. Use the words of the Bible in your prayer. Pray your chosen Bible verse for yourself, for a family member, for someone nearby and for someone far away.

Method 2: Make use of the Bible in your prayer at the end of Bible study.

Study a Bible passage. Respond in your prayer to what God has taught you during the Bible study. Use the words of the Bible in your prayer. Pray especially how God wants you to apply these truths to your life.

Method 3: Make use of the Bible in your personal prayer.
Read a Bible passage and make sure that you understand what is written. Then pray the truths verse by verse back to God. Respond in your prayer to what God says in the Bible. Make special use of the thoughts, feelings and questions of the writer in order to formulate your own thoughts, feelings and questions to God.

Method 4: Make use of the Bible in your prayer together with others.

Read a Bible passage and make sure that you understand what God intends to say. Divide the group into small groups of two to three people each. Take turns to pray one Bible verse back to God. Respond in your prayers to what God says in the Bible.

EXAMPLES OF PRAYERS

C. Praying the prayers in the Bible

The Psalms contain many prayers. The prayers may be divided into three groups: prayers about your own needs, prayers about restoring or deepening your relationship to God and prayers about the needs of others.

1. Prayers about your own needs

The writers in the Bible were ordinary people like you and me. Sometimes they felt far away from God and at other times they felt close to God. Sometimes they grieved about their sins and at other times they rejoiced in what God had done for them. Sometimes they suffered under oppression and persecution and at other times they were angry with their enemies. Sometimes they prayed that God would guide them and at other times that God would transform them.

Let us consider some prayers you could use in your prayers. Read the accompanying Bible verses.

A prayer about abandonment – Psalm 13:1-4; 77:7-9

When you feel forsaken by God, express your abandonment in your prayer to God. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your anxiety, feelings of abandonment and rejection. In the right time God will once more come close to you.

A prayer about oppression – Psalm 31:1-5,9-22

When you are confronted by enemies (or any evil) that oppress and persecute you or face difficult circumstances, use this prayer in the Bible to express your anxious thoughts and feelings of pain. Do not forget that also your circumstances are in the hands of the Sovereign God. Later you may confirm David's words in verses 20-21.

*A prayer about self-examination – Psalm 139:1-10,
23-24*

When you feel or know that your life is not right with God, pray this prayer of self-examination. Use this prayer in the Bible to search your hidden motives and dark behaviour. Ask God to expose your anxieties, wrong behaviour or unhealed wounds. God knows what is going on in the deepest part of your heart, but he desires that you ask him to bring it into the light. Jesus says: “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). Even the truth about your deepest secrets can set you free!

A prayer about submission – Psalm 25:4-15

When you are tired of going your own way, pray a prayer about submission. Use this prayer in the Bible to surrender yourself to God’s perfect way. Then you will also experience what the Psalmist says in verse 12-14. You will be able to pray verse 15 with conviction. And you will experience God’s mercy and love!

A prayer about change – Psalm 15:1-15

When you desire to change and become genuine and blameless, pray a prayer about change. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your desire to walk blamelessly in God’s presence. Commit yourself to speaking the truth in love, to do what is righteous and to hate corruption. Maybe there are other areas in which you desire to become blameless. Pray these desires to God (Philippians 4:6-7). Ask God to change you and he will change you! Nothing is impossible for God (Luke 1:37)!

A prayer about guidance – Psalm 143:8-10

When you need guidance for the direction of your life or to determine what to do in difficult times, pray a prayer about guidance. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your desire to know what God wants you to do. Then you will also experience what God says in Psalm 32:8, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”

2. Prayers about restoring or deepening your relationship to God

The writers of for example the Psalms were also people who were growing in their relationship to God. They often struggled and felt guilty or ashamed about their sins. They confessed their sins to God. Sometimes they felt the nearness of God and at other times they doubted his existence. They sought God eagerly. They thanked God for what he had done for them. They praised God or dedicated themselves to God. Use these prayers in the Bible to restore or deepen your relationship with God. Also read the accompanying Bible verses.

A prayer about confessing sin – Psalm 51:1-17

When you know that you have sinned against God or another person or against yourself or when sins overwhelm

you, pray a prayer about confession of sin. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your guilt and shame, to ask God for forgiveness, cleansing and renewal. Nothing can cause you to feel more guilt, shame and abandonment by God than sin. Nothing can destroy your life more than sin (missing God’s purpose for your life)! Never put off confessing your sins! Pray this prayer of admitting your guilt and begging for restoration. Then you too will experience the truth of verse 17: “A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

*A prayer about realising God’s nearness – Psalm
16:2,8-11; 73:25-26*

When you doubt whether God is near or you cannot experience his nearness, pray a prayer about developing a growing realisation of God’s nearness. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your realisation that apart from God you have no good on earth or in heaven. Practise the habit of always setting the LORD before your eyes and realising that he is standing at your right hand so that you will not be shaken. Practise to deliberately and consciously live in God’s presence and nearness. Memorise Psalm 16:2,8 and Psalm 73:23-26. Pray these Bible verses every time you feel you have lost contact with God. Then you will also experience the truth of Psalm 16:11.

A prayer about praising God – Psalm 103:1-14

When you consider God’s wonderful characteristics, pray a prayer about praising God. Use this prayer in the Bible to praise God’s attributes and deeds. You may also like to express your admiration for God through singing and music. Tell other people about the God of the Bible and all the good things he does to people who seek him and honour him. The more you read the Bible, the more you will get to know God! And the more you get to know God, the more you would like to praise him!

A prayer about thanking God – Psalm 107:4-9

When you consider all the good things that God has done for you, pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God. Use this prayer in the Bible to thank God for his deeds. You may like to add your own list of things you would like to thank God for.

A prayer about dedication to God – Psalm 101:1-5

When you long to dedicate yourself to God or devote an area of your life to him, pray a prayer of dedication to God. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your decision to live a blameless life before God. Also you may pray what is written in verse 3 and 4.

3. Prayers about the needs of others

Sometimes the writers in the Bible bless God’s people and sometimes they call down God’s judgement upon their enemies. Also the New Testament contains prayers you may use to intercede for other people. Read the accompanying Bible verse.

A prayer about blessing people – Psalm 20:1-5

When you want to bless someone, pray a prayer which contains a blessing. Use this prayer in the Bible to bless someone else. All these blessings are of course for people who believe in the God of the Bible and put their trust on him.

A prayer against injustice – Psalm 10:1-15; cf. Psalm 94:1-11; Psalm 55:9; 109:8; Luke 6:27-28

When you see all the unrighteousness committed on earth, you could use some prayers in the Bible to express your indignation against such injustice. When you see or hear or read about injustice, you could use certain phrases of the Bible. Christians believe that God is righteous and hates unrighteousness (Psalm 5:4-5). And they believe that God is the almighty ruler of this world. Therefore justice and injustice are important for God. Not only God's grace, but also God's judgement is important in this world!

BUT: The New Testament commands Christians to do what the Old Testament did not yet know: Christians may never call down a curse or judgement upon people! Christians may never take revenge! Christians are commanded to pray for evil people that they may repent, turn to God and receive God's grace.

However when these people refuse to turn to God and carry on with their evil, Christians may pray that God himself will act against them, that God will confuse them and confound their speech and that God will remove them from leadership. Christians may not judge non-Christians, but they must judge people who call themselves Christians and do evil (1 Corinthians 5:11-13). Christians may not take revenge (Romans 12:17-21) or become terrorists.

A prayer making intercession – Colossians 1:9-12

When you intercede for other people, you could use this prayer in the Bible to pray specific things for them. Pray that they will know God's will. Pray that they will live a life worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that they will please him in every way. Pray that they will bear fruit in every good work. Pray that they will grow spiritually in knowing God better, personally and intimately. Pray that they will be strengthened with God's power. Pray that they will persevere in endurance and patience. And pray that they will be joyful and give God thanks in all circumstances.

D. Pray the teachings, knowledge, wisdom and promises in the Bible

In the Bible there are not only prayers that you may use in your own prayers, but also teachings, wisdom and promises that you may use in your prayers. Of course you need to understand and interpret these teachings, wisdom and promises in the way God intended them to be under-

stood before you pray them.

When you meet in a small group for Bible study and prayer, first read and explain the Bible passage and answer questions before you use it in prayer. Divide the small group in twos, threes or fours and pray the Bible passage verse by verse (cf. B method 4).

1. Prayers about God's character and deeds

Use the teachings, knowledge, wisdom and promises in the Bible concerning God and his characteristics and deeds in your prayer.

A prayer about God's care – Psalm 23:1-6

This Psalm speaks about God's care just like a shepherd for his sheep. Use this prayer in the Bible to ask God to care for you in such a way that you would not lack any important or good thing. Ask him to care for your basic needs like food, clothing and shelter. Ask him to guide you in the right way, to protect you when you travel and to help you in difficult circumstances. Ask him to clear you from the false accusations of enemies. And above all, ask him whether you may live in his presence every day.

A prayer about God's salvation – Psalm 34:4-22

This Psalm speaks about God's salvation. Use this prayer to ask God to save you from anxiety, guilt, shame and problems. Ask him to stay close to you when you feel broken-hearted (verse 18).

2. Prayers about the Christian life

Use the teachings, knowledge, wisdom and promises in the Bible to pray about how you should live as a Christian.

A prayer about mutual relationships – Romans 12:9-21

This Bible passage teaches about how Christians ought to relate to one another. Use this Bible passage in your prayer and ask God that you may love as he teaches. Ask God that you may focus on what is good, to care about the needs of others, to be hospitable, compassionate, harmonious and humble.

A prayer about the care of members – 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

This Bible passage teaches about how the leaders of the congregation should care for the members. Use this Bible passage in your prayers. Ask God for courage to proclaim the gospel, in spite of opposition and without seeking honour with people. Ask God to make you friendly as a mother and as encouraging as a father towards members of the congregation.

A prayer about encouraging members – Titus 2:1-15

This Bible passage teaches about the responsibility of leaders to encourage members in the congregation. Ask God that you will only teach people what is in full accord with the Bible. Ask God that the older Christians will be good examples for the younger Christians and that they will be eager in their ministries.