

Five Tools to Improve Your Prayer Life

Tool #1: Practice

We are commanded to pray (1 Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:6). If it is something Christians are expected to do, then getting in and doing it is important! Prayer does not have to be long or eloquent to be effective (Neh. 5:19; Matt. 6:7-8; Luke 18:9-14). Maturing in prayer life will find us developing the discipline of prayer so that we turn to God *first* in our lives when joys or sorrows or anything prevails (Jas. 5:13; 1 Pet. 5:6-7).

Tool #2: Pattern

Studying the prayer life of Jesus or some of the great heroes of faith like David, Nehemiah, Daniel, or Paul help in the *who, what, when, where, why, and how* of prayer. Nehemiah was skilled in seamlessly weaving prayers into his daily work in big and small challenges (Neh. 5:19). Pray while driving, cooking, working, etc. Withdraw, reflect, meditate, and worship Him!

Tool #3: Posture

Sometimes the standard posture, “let us bow our heads and close our eyes” can be more of a hinderance than it can a help. Sometimes when David prayed, he laid prostrate on the ground (2 Sam. 12:15-16). Some stood, some knelt, while others sat (Dan. 6:10; 1 Kings 19:4; Acts 20:6; Neh. 8:4-6). Jesus often looked up towards heaven (Mark 6:41).. When praying privately, there is wisdom in considering these other prayer postures.

Tool #4: Planning

Jesus would, in busyness of life, often retreat by Himself and spend time with His Father in prayer (Mark 1:35; 14:35; 5:16; 9:18). Daniel made a habit of praying three times a day to the point that his enemies knew his prayer life was a constant in his life (Dan. 6:10). For someone wanting to improve his/her prayer life: set an alarm on the phone or on the computer, retreat away from the daily grind, and plan to spend scheduled, meaningful time talking to Our Father in heaven.

Tool #5: Program

What do I pray for? I would pray, but I don't know what to say! For folks like these, begin with the question Jesus asked blind Bartimaeus, “What do you want Me to do for you” (Mark 10:51)? What pressing concerns can God address? What weights can God lighten? Bible reading and praying scripture to God is a great program as well. As a practical note, “Echo” is a free prayer app that a person can list their personal prayer requests and the app will keep those for remembering throughout the day (See Tool #4).

By G. E. Watkins