

**Jones Memorial United Methodist Church
1975 Post Street, San Francisco, CA 94115
Pastor Staci Current, Senior Minister**

Our Mission:

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

**Prayer and Fasting 101
February 6, 2010**

Prayers that aren't prayed will never be answered.—Joyce Meyer

- Prayer—is two-way communication with God.
- The Word of God and Prayer = a strong relationship with God.

Prayer was at the center of all that the early church did. (Read Acts 1:14 / 3:1 / 4:31 / 6: 4 / 10:9 / 12:5 / 13:3 / 14:23 / 16:25 / 20:36 / 28:8). These scriptures are just a few examples of how much the early church prayed. The church in the book of Acts was a praying church because: they loved Jesus, they were dependent on God and they knew that prayer made a difference!

Now, two thousand years later, prayer is still central in growing churches; and they expect their members to pray! (Thus the reason for this class today).

- Genuine prayer indicates love and dependence upon God.
- Prayer-driven churches depend on God.
- When we really believe that prayer makes a difference, we'll pray more!
- Prayer is "the engine that will drive the church."—Jim Cymbala, Brooklyn Tabernacle

Praying churches have:

- Praying pastors and leaders
- Make prayer a priority
- Believe that prayer matters and makes a difference
- Understand that prayer is a reflection of their relationship with God; they pray because they love Jesus.

Question: Becoming a praying church usually requires change. What do you think will be required in order for Jones Memorial UMC to become a praying church?

What will be required of you individually?

Taken from Serving in Your Church Prayer Ministry, by Charles E. Lawless, Jr.

The Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How of Prayer

Who Can Pray?

- Anyone can pray, but only those who walk in faith and obedience to Christ can expect to receive answers to their prayers.
- Persons who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. (John 14:6).

What Is Prayer?

- In its simplest form, prayer is communicating with God; inviting Him to talk to us as we talk to Him (two-way communication).
- Loving God; learning His character; wanting to know all about Him.

When Should We Pray?

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "pray without ceasing (NKJV); "Be unceasing in prayer—praying perseveringly;"... (AMP)
- Morning, Mid-day, Evening; which ever works best for you and your body (your most alert time of the day).

Where Should We Pray?

- It is not always necessary to be on our knees, or even in a quiet room to pray.
- We can pray in the car, while doing chores, on our jobs, shopping, prayer walking.
- Suggestion: Labyrinth/ Spiritual Prayer Path at Mercy Retreat Center, Burlingame, CA).

Why Are We To Pray?

- God's Word commands us to pray (Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; 1 Timothy 2:1-2).
- So that we do not fall into temptation (Mark 14:38).
- "Jesus led the way in prayer that we might follow His footsteps."—E.M. Bounds. (Matthew 6:5-7, 9-13).
- Prayer was important to Jesus.

How Should We Pray?

- We pray to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- When we pray to the Father, our prayers are accepted by Jesus Christ and interpreted to God the Father by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26-27, 34).
- Just talk to God; He's the best confidant you will ever have.
- "Praying is the best school in which to learn to pray."—E.M. Bounds

ACTS—Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication

Although prayer cannot be reduced to a particular formula, these certain basic elements should be included in our prayers time with God:

- Adoration—giving praise, honor and glory to God’s Holy Name and His characteristics. (See the *Names of God* bookmark). Out of all the abundant gifts God gives us, adoration and praise is the only thing that we can give to God that He did not give us! (Psalm 18:1-3; 34:1-3; 138:1-2).
- Confession—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9). We must confess and repent of the sins we commit before we ask of anything from the Lord. Confession opens the door to God hearing our petitions.
- Thanksgiving—“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” (Psalm 106:1, 107:1). Lift up prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving for the blessings you’ve received in answer to prayer. (Get your megaphone out and say, “THANK YOU JESUS!”).
- Supplication—to petition or request what you (or those that you’re praying for) need from the Lord. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 4:6-7. (Psalm 34:4; 138:8).

Excerpts adapted from: 7 Basic Steps to Successful Fasting & Prayer, by Bill Bright

Excerpts from: How to Speak and Pray in Public, by J. Vernon Jacobs

1. Prayers need not be long. (Matthew 6:7).
2. Any posture is acceptable. In Bible times, when people prayed, they:
 - a) Bowed down (Genesis 24:52)
 - b) Bowed the head (Genesis 24:48)
 - c) Fell on the face—prostrate (Numbers 16:22)
 - d) Knelt (Acts 9:40)
 - e) Stood (2 Chronicles 20:9)
 - f) Lifted hands (1 Timothy 2:8)
3. What shall I say?

In praying, you are not just saying words, you are talking to God. No need to use a lot of fancy words to make an impression on your listeners. Just talk to God like you would talk to your loved ones.
4. How shall I proceed?
 - a. Use sentence or “Breath Prayers” (see examples on following page) when beginning to learn how to pray. There is nothing wrong with writing out your prayer and reading it; as long as it is a prayer that is sincere and from the heart.
 - b. Ask yourself: “What do I have to be grateful for? What are the needs of the church? The world? What can God do for us personally—that will help the kingdom of God to grow and prosper? These questions should assist you in formulating your prayer.

Excerpts from Prayers That Avail Much, by Germaine Copeland

“Prayer does not cause faith to work, but faith causes prayer to work.”

“We cannot build faith without practicing the Word. We cannot develop an effective prayer life that is anything but empty words unless God’s Word actually has a part in our lives.”

“Using God’s Word on purpose, specifically, in prayer is one means of prayer, and it is a most effective and accurate means. Jesus said, “The words (truths) that I have been speaking to you are spirit and life.”” (John 6:63)

“An often asked question is this: “How many times should I pray the same prayer?” The answer is simple: You pray until you know that the answer is fixed in your heart. After that, you need to repeat the prayer whenever adverse circumstances or long delays cause you to be tempted to doubt that your prayer has been heard and your request granted.”

Breath Prayers

- “I trust You for the future, Lord.” (Jeremiah 29:11)
- “Give me endurance, Lord.” (Philippians 3:14)
- “Be my Father.” (2 Corinthians 6:18)
- “Lord, make me a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- “Give me a heart of courage, Lord.” (Psalm 118:6)
- “Help me to remember that I am free, Jesus.” (Galatians 5:1)
- “Draw me to Your healing presence, Jesus.” (Exodus 15:26)
- “Lord, let me trade in complaining for praise.” (Psalm 103:1)
- “Make me steadfast in Your Word, God.” (Isaiah 26:3)
- “Put a song in my heart, God.” (Psalm 149:1)
- “Lord, help me to hear Your voice.” (Isaiah 6:8)
- “Guide me in this decision, Father.” (Proverbs 3:5)
- “Cause my faith to grow.” (Romans 10:17)
- “My heart yearns for You, God.” (Psalm 42:1)
- “Open my mind to understand Your Word, God.” (Mark 24:45)
- “Lord, thank You for the beauty of Your world.” (Nehemiah 9:6)
- “Lord, teach me what to say.” (Psalm 45:1)
- “Lord I give You thanks.” (Ephesians 3:20)
- “Lift my heart with laughter, Father.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4)
- “I humble myself, Lord.” (James 4:10)
- “Make me whole, Jesus.” (Jeremiah 30:17)
- “Father, lead me away from temptation and deliver me from evil.” (Mt. 26:41)
- “I praise You, God Most High.” (Psalm 145:10)
- “Give me a heart of repentance, Savior.” (Matthew 5:23-24)
- “Lord, help me realize that I can’t do it without You.” (Philippians 4:13)
- “Heal my broken heart, Jesus.” (Isaiah 61:1)
- “Lord, I acknowledge Your blessings.” (Deuteronomy 28:2)
- “Father, help me hold on to You.” (1 Timothy 6:12)

Taken from Breath Prayers for African Americans—Simple Whispers to Keep you in God’s Presence, by Bordon Books

Notes

Prayer + Love = Transformation!