

How significant is it that Jesus specifically called the temple in Matthew 21:13 “a house of prayer” (quoting Isaiah 56:7) and not a house of worship, a house of praise, a house of fellowship, or some other description and why?

A.W. Tozer once said that “God cannot be persuaded to alter His Word nor talked into answering selfish prayer” and that “[p]rayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience.” Have I in some way(s) attempted to substitute obedience with prayer or tried to persuade Him to answer a selfish prayer of mine, and if so, in what way(s)?

Charles Spurgeon said during a message preached in 1871 that “[t]he church, again, consists of a praying people. Now prayer is that which links weakness with infinite strength. A people who can pray can never be overcome, because their reserve forces can never be exhausted. Go into battle, my brother; and if you be vanquished with the strength you have, prayer shall call up another legion. Yea, twenty legions of angels, and the foe shall marvel to see undefeated adversaries still holding the field. If ten thousand saints were burned tomorrow, their dying prayers would make the church rise like a phoenix from her ashes. Who, therefore, can stand against a people whose prayers enlist God in their quarrel? “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” We cry unto the Lord, and he heareth us; he breaketh through the ranks of the foe; he giveth us triumph in the day of battle: therefore, terrible as an army with banners (Song of Solomon 6:4) are those who wield the weapon of all-prayer.” If I believe that “prayer is that which links weakness with infinite strength” and that “the church...consists of a praying people”, then what, if anything, keeps me from participating in the church’s Thursday night prayer meetings conducted on Zoom?

John Piper once said that: “The devil hates prayer. Our own flesh does not naturally love it. Therefore, it does not come full-born and complete and passionate from the womb of our heart. It takes ever renewed discipline. Years ago, when I wrote “Let the Nations Be Glad”, I argued that prayer is a wartime walkie-talkie, not a domestic intercom. God is more like a general in Command Central than a butler waiting to bring you another pillow in the den. Of course, he is also Father, Lover, Friend, Physician, Shepherd, Helper, King, Savior, Lord, Counselor. But in this fallen “world with devils filled,” prayer will function best when we keep the frequency tuned to Command Central in the fight of faith.” To what degree do I agree with Piper that I am engaged in a “fight of faith” and why?

Pastor Wally spoke of praying the Scriptures, making the Scriptures the source of my prayers. To that end, John Piper gathered into one place all the things the early church prayed for to give him a “jolt” in his prayer life and suggested printing it off and putting this list in my Bible. He said that if I want to pray for what the early church prayed for . . .

Pray that God would exalt his name in the world.

“Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.’” (Matthew 6:9)

Pray that God would extend his kingdom in the world.

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)

Pray that the gospel would speed ahead and be honored.

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you. (2 Thessalonians 3:1)

Pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13; cf. Ephesians 3:19)

Pray that God would vindicate his people in their cause.

“And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night?” (Luke 18:7 RSV)

Pray that God would save unbelievers.

Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. (Romans 10:1)

Pray that God would direct the use of the sword.

Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. (Ephesians 6:17–18)

Pray for boldness in proclamation.

[Pray] at all times in the Spirit . . . and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel. (Ephesians 6:18–19)

“And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.” (Acts 4:29)

Pray for signs and wonders.

“And now, Lord, . . . grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness . . . while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” (Acts 4:29–30)

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. (James 5:17–18)

Pray for the healing of wounded comrades.

Let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. (James 5:14–15)

Pray for the healing of unbelievers.

It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him. (Acts 28:8)

Pray for the casting out of demons.

And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.” (Mark 9:29)

Pray for miraculous deliverances.

So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. . . . When he realized [he had been freed], he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. (Acts 12:5, 12)

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake. (Acts 16:25–26)

Pray that God would supply his troops with necessities.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” (Matthew 6:11)

Pray for strategic wisdom.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1:5)

Pray that God would establish leadership in the outposts.

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:23)

Pray that God would send out reinforcements.

“Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:38)

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:2–3)

Pray for the success of other missionaries.

I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints. (Romans 15:30–31)

Pray for unity and harmony in the ranks.

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17:20–21)

Pray for the encouragement of togetherness.

We pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith. (1 Thessalonians 3:10)

Pray for a mind of discernment.

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ. (Philippians 1:9–10)

Pray for a knowledge of God's will.

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. (Colossians 1:9)

Pray to know God better.

[We have not ceased to pray for you to be] increasing in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:10; cf. Ephesians 1:17)

Pray for power to comprehend the love of Christ.

I bow my knees before the Father . . . [that you] may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. (Ephesians 3:14, 18–19)

Pray for a deeper sense of assured hope.

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers . . . that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. (Ephesians 1:16, 18)

Pray for strength and endurance.

[We have not ceased to pray for you to be] strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy. (Colossians 1:11; cf. Ephesians 3:16)

Pray for a deeper sense of God's power within you.

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers . . . that you may know . . . what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe. (Ephesians 1:16, 18–19)

Pray that your faith not be destroyed.

"I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." (Luke 22:32)

"But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)

Pray for greater faith.

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24; cf. Ephesians 3:17)

Pray that you might not fall into temptation.

"Lead us not into temptation." (Matthew 6:13)

“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41)

Pray that God would complete your good resolves.

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power. (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

Pray that you would do good works.

[We have not ceased to pray for you that you would] walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work. (Colossians 1:10)

Pray for the forgiveness of your sins.

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)

Pray for protection from the evil one.

“Deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13)