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Spiritual Disciplines: Prayer

A.C.T.S.

This document lays out a simple acrostic to help Christ followers develop a balanced and disciplined prayer life.

Having a personal prayer plan can enhance your prayer experience. In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus teaches believers to pray in a certain way. A plan will provide direction and focus in your prayer life. Our desire should be to encounter the God who answers prayer. Believers should resist the temptation to allow this or any other plan to become a means to an end. Jesus warns against prayer being treated as simply a ritual or religious activity (see Matt. 6:7-8).

As you pray you can use the ACTS acrostic to guide your prayer time. These categories are broad enough to allow for adaptation to individual contexts. This acrostic contains the major elements given by Christ in the model prayer (see Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4).

A - Adoration

Spend time praising the Lord and adoring Him for who he is (Matt. 6:9). Use Scripture to praise Him (see Pss. 103, 145, 150; Rev. 4:8; 5:12-14). Love and cherish His presence and allow Him to work in and through your life (see Matt. 22:32-34). Be still before Him and enjoy His presence (see Ps. 46:10). Use this time to allow God to speak to you through His Word and Spirit (see Pss. 40:1-3; 90:12-17). Praise the Lord by praying scripture or songs back to Him (see Ps. 84; Rev. 4:8; 5:9-10, 12-13 and "Great is Thy Faithfulness").

C - Confession

Confession should be a part of your continual walk with Christ (see Matt. 6:9-13). Spend time asking Christ to search your heart for areas that displease Him (see Ps. 139:23-24). Allow God to cleanse your heart of any unconfessed sin (see Ps. 51:10-13). Be sure to spend time confessing and repenting of (turning away from) specific sins (see 1 John 1:9). Accept His forgiveness and cleansing (see Jer. 31:34).

T - Thanksgiving

Giving thanks for all things should be a part of our everyday lives as God's people (see Phil. 4:6-7). This includes thanking God for specific things such as blessings, people, open doors, guidance, etc. Also give thanks for His salvation and the privilege to serve such a wonderful Savior. Thank Him for his goodness, loving-kindness, and faithfulness (see Ps. 100:4-6).

S - Supplication

We are called as believers to intercessory prayer (see Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 18:1; Col. 4:2; 1 Tim. 2:1-4). Thus, we are to come before God on behalf of others (see Heb. 10:19-25; Rev. 1:4-6). Spend time praying for specific people, events, states, countries, missionaries, etc. (see Acts 12:5; Rom. 10:1). In addition, spend time praying for personal needs (see Matt. 6:11-13). Make prayer lists for your time of supplication. Be sure to include a place for answers to be recorded. Recorded answers can become items for praise and thanksgiving.

This information is adapted from: http://www.crcmin.org/prayerguide/acts_acrostic.htm, March 1, 2008.