



# PRAYER: POWERFUL POSTURES

*“5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

- Matthew 6:5-15

## **Prayer: Powerful Postures**

Never stop praying. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NLT) Pray without ceasing. This is our commandment, to never stop praying. There is no right or wrong way to pray, or one position of a prayer that is superior to another. The only thing that we, as believers must do is humble ourselves before the Lord, acknowledge His Lordship of our lives, and pray without ceasing.

The postures of our prayer can let God know that we are serious about specific issues. Again, we are observing the powerful and miraculous prayers of great men and women of the Bible. If Jesus needed to get alone on His knees to pray, why would we ever think that it isn't important for us to do the same?

As we combine our faith with our movement or put our "prayers in motion," we can recall ancient times and miracles as we move, breathe, and have our being. (Acts 17:28) If there is an urgent request, we can find ourselves in a prone position, flat on our face before the Lord as many were in scripture. Perhaps we find ourselves in a simple seated position to simply quiet our anxious thoughts and meditate on Him. You will read about all of these postures and what they mean. Keep in mind, there are no rules.

Sometimes it is not just about what we are praying, but how we are praying. The posture of our prayers can take our prayer life to a whole other level of intimacy with Christ. There is no mistaking that God hears all of our prayers, even if we don't speak to them at all. When we are born again and receive salvation, we become one with Christ. He dwells in us. His spirit is all consuming and envelops our every fiber. This is the time when grace piled upon grace enters into our lives and it becomes our [true] desire to live for God and cause Him to smile each day by our actions, words, deeds, gifts, and talents. Even if our prayers go unspoken, God can perceive our words before they are [actually] even thoughts, He knows our thoughts well before they are [actual] thoughts. (Psalms 139:2) I am sure you have experienced times when you do not know what to pray. God knows what you need before you even utter a word!

The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath. (Psalms 94:11) Sometimes when we cry, that is the only prayer needed. Often I have found the only prayer I can pray is

one word, “Jesus”. He knows the rest. Other times I simply hold the Bible up to my heart in silence and download all of His great and precious promises. Prayer is our lifeline. Without prayer, whether spoken or unspoken, there is no communication to the Life Giver.

Throughout scripture we see how prayer postures elevated the meaning of the spoken prayer. Regardless of any posture that you pray in, the most important posture is truly the posture of your heart. Keep this in mind as you read the following posture descriptions. To say that any one prayer posture is superior to another would be biblically incorrect. The bible teaches us that God loves variety, and He speaks to each of us differently. There are no rules, no right or wrong way, just as long as we pray! Always be spirit led and never led by anything or anyone else. Because whether we are standing, sitting, kneeling, or flat out on our faces, our heart must always be humbled in acknowledging the Lordship of Jesus Christ, this is more important than any external physical position.

### **Standing**

To “stand before” a ruler indicates that you have a legal right to be there, and you are equipped and well-suited to serve or be employed by that sovereign or other person. Only through the righteousness of Jesus Christ are we able to approach God as His children: “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:1–2). Although we have a right to stand before God, we also have a great need to come before Him as we depend on His mercy and grace. This position of prayer may reflect the following attitudes:

- It reaffirms one’s commitment to the Lord and His ways.  
After the Israelites returned from exile, they reaffirmed their covenant to serve only Jehovah. After standing to read the Law, confess their sins, and worship, praise, and bless the Lord, they made “sure” the covenant by writing it down and sealing it. (See Nehemiah 9:1–38.) Another example is when King Josiah led the people of Judah to renew their covenant with the Lord after years of neglecting Him and His Word. They stood to commit to God their desire to walk after Him and to keep His commandments with all their hearts. (See II Chronicles 34:29–32.)

- It demonstrates a readiness to serve.

Daniel and his companions were to be prepared to “stand before the king” (Daniel 1:5) and to serve him. As we follow the truth of God’s Word, we too can “be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (II Timothy 2:21). Since we have been “made free from sin,” we become the “servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:18).

- It petitions for help in time of battle (literally or figuratively).

When the Moabites and Ammonites rose up against them, King Jehoshaphat stood with all the people of Judah to plead their cause before Jehovah, their Righteous Judge and Protector, to demonstrate both their desperate need for Him and their readiness to battle for Him if He would be with them (see II Chronicles 20:1–17).

- 1 Timothy 2:8, In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.
- John 17:1, Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come.”
- John 11:41, Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.”
- Luke 9:27-32, The Mountain of Transfiguration, “But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.” Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him.
- Psalm 121:1, I look up to the hills from where my help comes from.
- 1 Sam 1:26, Hannah presented to the Lord her petition while standing, and the Lord answered her.
- Psalm 4:4, Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

- In Luke 18:10-14, God answered the prayers of sinners as they stood, prayed, and humbled themselves. “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. “The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ‘I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ “I tell you; this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

One of my most beloved stories in the Bible is found in 2 Chronicle 20. A story of how God answered Jehoshaphat as he and his small army gathered corporately and stood in prayer believing God would fight their overwhelming battle for them as they obeyed His commandment of standing still. God performed a miracle. Jehoshaphat and his people stood victorious in the face of their defeated enemy! When you have done all that you can do, stand!

- 2 Chronicle 20:5, Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord in the front of the new courtyard. Verse 13 continues, All Judah was standing before the Lord, with their infants, their wives and their children.
- Ephesians 6:13, So use every piece of God’s armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks, and when it is all over, you will still be standing up.

The Message Version “Be prepared. You’re up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it’s all over but the shouting you’ll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You’ll need them throughout your life. God’s Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other’s spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.”

### **Lying Prostrate before God**

No position symbolizes humility as much as being on our faces before God. This prayer position demonstrates being poor in spirit, which is the first heart attitude Jesus mentions in

His Sermon on the Mount. Jesus instructed His followers to learn from His example of being “meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29). Lying prostrate on our faces indicates we recognize our utter unworthiness to be in God’s presence. In Revelation 1:17, the Apostle John wrote about his immediate response to being in the presence of Jesus: “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.”

Interestingly, most occurrences of the Hebrew word rendered “bow” or “bow down” in the Scriptures refers to this type of bowing one’s whole body before the Lord. In today’s Christian culture, we tend to equate this word primarily to the act of bowing one’s head in prayer. However, the original meaning is that of falling prostrate bodily in the Lord’s presence.

One who bows in this way before God conveys an attitude of honor, gratitude, and worship, acknowledging that all things come from His hand. When Job suffered great losses, he bowed down on the ground: “Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:20–21).

A wise way that we may begin each day is to get on our faces before God. Humbly, we can acknowledge our unworthiness, inadequacy, and inability to accomplish His will without Him. We should plead for His mercy as a beggar destitute of his own resources and trust that His strength and goodness will sustain us throughout the day. Lying prostrate before God may express the following attitudes:

- It acknowledges our total unworthiness.  
When God made a covenant with Abraham, Abraham recognized his unworthiness before God and “fell on his face” before the Lord (see Genesis 17:1–3).
- It recognizes our need for God’s mercy.  
When the leper came to Jesus for healing, he fell on his face and begged for mercy, saying, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” (Luke 5:12).

- It shows a proper response to a serious crisis.  
Often when the leaders of Israel faced impossible situations and knew that only God could deliver them, they fell on their faces before Him and sought His aid (see Numbers 20:2–6 and Joshua 7:1–6).
- It expresses worship and reverence.  
When God answered the prayer of Abraham’s servant, the man “worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth” (Genesis 24:52).

Prone positioned prayers are also used for intercessory prayers, these are typically urgent prayers in themselves. When we find ourselves grieving over a loved one or need to stand in the gap for another brother or sister, these are usually prayers of urgency and desperation. Prostrated prayers are often used for repentance and confessing sins, sometimes this is an urgent task as well. In Samuel we see how a prone position pays honor and respect to a superior. This is also a position of true worship as we see in 2 Chronicles when Jehoshaphat bowed down face first.

- 2 Chronicle 20:18, Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshipping the Lord.
- Joshua 7:6, Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads.
- 1 Samuel 28:14, “What does he look like?” he asked. “An old man wearing a robe is coming up,” she said. Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.
- Matthew 26:38, Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.” And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”
- Deuteronomy 9:25, I lay prostrate before the LORD those forty days and forty nights...

- Revelation 7:11, And all the angels stood round about the throne, and [about] the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God

### **Sitting before the Lord**

In Scripture, we find that sitting before the Lord is a lesser mentioned posture for prayer. A seated posture could indicate a position of authority, such as that of a teacher (see Matthew 24:3) or that of the city rulers who sat in their official places to judge and to have their judgments carried out (see Deuteronomy 16:18 and Proverbs 31:23). While we do not exercise authority over the Lord when we sit before Him in prayer, this posture can reflect the position of authority we have as fellow-heirs with Christ. On the other hand, a seated position can demonstrate the heart of a learner receiving important instructions from his master or teacher (see Acts 22:3). Sitting together may also indicate friendship or fellowship (see Luke 24:29–30). Still also, there might be practical reasons for praying while sitting, such as weakness or fatigue. However, we note the following examples from Scripture:

- It reminds us that all believers are seated with Christ in Heaven.  
When we recognize our sinful condition before God, repent of our sins, and believe in Jesus Christ, we are adopted by God. We are seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father (see Ephesians 2:4–7).
- It displays a hearing heart and a teachable spirit.  
Once when the Israelites were desperate to hear and obtain direction from the Lord regarding their next steps for battle, they came to the house of God where they sat, wept, fasted, offered sacrifices, and enquired of the Lord (see Judges 20:26–28). On another occasion, David sat before the Lord in awe of a message received from the prophet Nathan that David's kingdom would be established and his son privileged to build a temple for the Lord (see II Samuel 7:18–29).
- It symbolizes intimate fellowship.  
At the close of Jesus' earthly ministry, before He was to suffer, die, and be separated from His inner circle of beloved disciples, He chose to sit with them and share His heart with them around the Passover table, where they enjoyed close fellowship (see Luke 22:14–16). We, too, can enjoy this type of intimacy with our Lord as we sit with Him and share our hearts with Him and He with us (see Revelation 3:20). Another



example is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who learned and worshipped at Jesus' feet. She also sat before Him as one who had an intimate friendship with the Lord (see Luke 10:38–42).

Prayer is a dialogue; it is not a monologue. He speaks, we listen. We speak and He hears us. As with any conversation, we must be quiet and listen to Him. Seated postures are used most often for meditation. While combining our faith with yoga, these are great postures to sit quietly in His presence and converse with the Creator of the Universe.... your Dad! Imagine climbing on your dad's lap and talking to Him. Maybe you just wrap your arms around Him and say nothing at all?

King David sat down before the Lord to inquire, "Why me Lord?" 2 Samuel 7:18, Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said: "Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"

- Ezekiel 8:1, As I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell on me there, and who is ready to serve Him.
- Judges 20:26 (AMP), Then all the Israelites, the whole army, went up and came to the house of God [Bethel] and wept; and they sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

Fasting is an expression of emptying oneself out to seek the Lord so that His word, will, and presence would be the one and only thing that would fill us up. Here, and in many other passages, we see the manifestation of miracles that occur when we couple our prayers with fasting. Combining a specific prayer posture with fasting can elevate the intensity of our requests and petitions. It will demonstrate to God that we are serious about His call on our lives.

- Psalms 46:10 Be still and know that I am God!

## **Bowing**

To bow is a physical expression of honor and allegiance. The action of bowing is associated with worship. Even just the bowing of our heads communicates to our mind that we're addressing the One to whom we've pledged our complete loyalty. When the Lord came down

in a cloud around Moses on Mount Sinai, "Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship" (Exod. 34:8). King David, centuries later, said, "As for me . . . I will bow down in reverence for You" (Ps. 5:7). Bowing is an appropriate posture of prayer.

## **Kneeling**

When we repent of our sins, we appeal to the Lord for His mercy and forgiveness. Kneeling before God indicates a heart attitude of meekness as we acknowledge both His majesty and power as well as our humble dependence upon Him. We are in the presence of the King!

Kneeling before Him is an appropriate response, as it can express the following:

- It acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus Christ.  
Kneeling before God provides a visual image of submission to His authority. In fact, at a future point in time, Christ's lordship over all will be acknowledged when one day every knee will bow before God, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God (see Philippians 2:9–11).
  - It indicates an earnest appeal.  
King Solomon began his lengthy prayer to God standing before the altar and his hands spread toward Heaven (see I Kings 8:22–23). However, by the end of his fervent appeal to the Lord for mercy, grace, and blessing upon the people and to bless the Temple, he was kneeling (see I Kings 8:54). Likewise, Elijah knelt in earnest prayer when he asked the Lord to send rain to end Israel's drought (see I Kings 18:41–46).
  - It demonstrates personal humility.  
The psalmist humbled himself before the Lord and encouraged others to do the same by kneeling and bowing in worship: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker" (Psalm 95:6).
- Ezra 9:5, And at the evening sacrifice I arose from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and
  - my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God
  - Psalms 95:6, Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker
  - Daniel 6:10, He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God.

- Acts 9:40, Records the miracle of Peter praying on his knees asking God to raise the dead to life. Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.
- Acts 20:36, When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed.
- Ephesians 3:14, For this reason I kneel before the Father.
- Philippians 2:10, That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.
- Exodus 34:8, Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped.
- 1 Kings 18:42, Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.
- Luke 22:41-42, He [Jesus] knelt down and began to pray saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

Jesus, Paul, Peter, Elijah, Moses and many other great men prayed as they bowed their knees and completely surrendered. If Jesus got on His knees, surely we should too!

### **Lifted Hands**

Many prayers from Scripture were made with uplifted hands. The idea of folding our hands, while meaningful, is actually more recent in history. But the Bible does talk about raising our hands—"the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering" (Ps. 141:2). Paul said, "I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension" (1 Tim. 2:8). Both Solomon and Ezra, whom we mentioned earlier, prayed while falling to their knees and lifting their hands—at the same time—a position of total, physical worship and praise.

### **Lifted Eyes**

While closing our eyes is a good way of limiting distractions and maintaining focus in prayer, a common biblical expression was lifting the eyes toward heaven, like when Jesus "raised His eyes" before praying at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:41), or when "looking up to heaven" as He blessed the five loaves and two fish before multiplying them for the crowd of five thousand (Luke 9:16).

## **Silence**

Beyond physical postures, what we do with our voices in prayer is also important. Sometimes the best thing we can do in prayer is still and know that He is God, without saying a word (Ps. 46:10). When awed and amazed, one is often in silence. When Hannah prayed in anguish for God to give her a child, "she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard" (1 Sam. 1:13). No one could hear her silent prayer, but God heard and answered.

## **Lifted Voices**

Along with lifted hands and lifted eyes, the Bible also exhorts us to lift our voices to the Lord in prayer. "Give ear to my voice when I call to You," David prayed (Ps. 141:1). "My voice rises to God, and He will hear me" (Ps. 77:1).

## **Crying Out**

"Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud" (Ps. 55:17). This crying out is a frequent descriptor of prayers spoken in the Bible. Jesus, we're told, during His life on the earth, "offered prayers and appeals with loud cries and tears to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence" (Heb. 5:7). Various translations of the original words for crying out carry the idea of shrieking in pain, or making a sound like an animal in danger, or wailing with deep emotion of spirit. It's intense and loud. Heavy and heartfelt. Nearly half of the time when John's Revelation talks about words being spoken in heaven, they're explicitly identified as a "loud voice"—20 times in its 22 chapters.

## **Lying Down**

Lying down and meditating on the Lord is a sweet and precious time with our Maker. Lying down, especially in bed, is one of our most surrendered and vulnerable positions anyway. Corpse pose, I like to call it "Resting Angel", it sounds slightly better than Corpse pose, is one of the most important postures in one's yoga practice. As we are on our backs, we are allowing the Holy Spirit to have His way in our body, heart, mind, spirit, and soul. We simply meditate on the fact that we are breathing and alive because of Him. All things are from Him, and because we were created to hear from our Creator, this is the perfect posture to do so. Allow His spirit to speak to yours. Our focus turns towards gratitude as we thank Him, spirit to Spirit, for the temples He has loaned us. This is the time to allow yourself stillness and a peace that passes all understanding.

- Psalms 4:4, Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your bed, search your hearts and be silent.
- Psalms 63:5-6, My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, For You have been my help, And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy.
- I Kings 1:47, Moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, 'May your God make the name of Solomon better than your name, and make his throne greater than your throne;' and the king bowed himself on the bed.