

# Prayer.

**Heathfield Young People's Meeting**

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

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It's nice to be here again. The subject is prayer, and I'll give you in a moment just a brief outline of what we will cover under that topic. But before I do, I just want to say a few words of introduction.

Some of you might think when I give these headings, that it doesn't apply to me, or it doesn't apply to you now,

I first gave this talk, or a similar talk, to Cranbrook young people seven years ago in 2018. And at that time, there would have been those similar in age to you now. And yet some of those that heard it, they now are parents, so they're holding family worship. When the husband is away, the wife will be praying with the children. So don't think that excludes you ladies. And then there are some that are church members, they're called upon to pray in church prayer meetings. Some, at least one, is now a minister of the gospel. So, within seven years, it may be you will look back and be thankful for at least some pointers in prayer in areas that you might not think are relevant to you now.

It is very seldom you get some instruction or teaching on prayer. So, the areas that I want to cover:

1. What is prayer?
2. Why is prayer so important?
3. Are there times we should not pray?
4. What things can hinder us in prayer?
5. Answers to prayer.
6. Encouragements to pray
7. Types of prayer
  - Private prayer
  - Family prayer and worship
  - Public prayer
    - Advice for those called on to pray in public.
8. If we have time, some examples of answers to prayer from my own life.

## **1/ What is Prayer**

But firstly, what is prayer? Prayer is calling upon the name of the Lord. We read in Genesis 4 verse 26, "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD."

So prayer is coming to God. Quite often the minister in introducing prayer will say, let us come before the Lord. And it is something I felt really impressed upon myself of late, though I've known it for years and years of course. But we are not just praying to God, we are coming to God. Just like we would come into the presence of an earthly king and present our petitions and the king is there and we are in his presence that's what we've got to remember in prayer it is coming to God and in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 6 we read, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

It is in prayer that we have communion with God. Our Lord spent whole nights in prayer with His Father in communion. In our services, when the minister is preaching, he is bringing the Word of God to the congregation. When in prayer, he is bringing the petitions and worship of the congregation to God. So those are the two main aspects of our worship. It is coming to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer is also coming to a high priest. In Hebrews 4 verse 14 to 16, we read of this: *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

We need to remember that we have one that speaks for us and we present our petitions through Him.

Under this heading, I want to think of what makes up prayer. While prayer is not a formula, and each prayer does not have to follow the same pattern, or even cover every point, but we should give thought to what prayer consists of according to the scriptures. People of the world will confine the subject of their prayers just to asking. They might not pray for anything for weeks, and then something is a trouble to them, some problem, and they'll just ask. When the Lord answers, they don't bother to come back and to give thanks. It is just one thing. But that's only really one part of prayer.

What prayer consists of can be remembered by **the acronym, ACTS**. Think of the Acts of the Apostles. Each letter standing for one thing to help us in prayer. And it doesn't mean to say that every prayer needs to have this ingredient, but we need to think of prayer in these terms. It helps us to remember the contents of prayer according to the Bible.

### **Adoration – or worship, praise**

In praising God for who He is and what he has done in creation, salvation and what He is doing. Beginning prayer in this way raises our thoughts to God and impresses upon us to whom we are coming.

*"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalms 107:31)*

And that praise often is in prayer. Sometimes, of course, it may be in hymns or in preaching, but also in prayer. Many of these points you will have noticed are in the pattern of our Lord's Prayer, He is following this pattern as well.

### **Confession**

We call to mind our sins, confessing them before God. There is a beautiful verse in 1 John 1:9 *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

### **Thanksgiving**

Something men are so backward in doing. You think of those ten lepers that our Lord cleansed. They'd all asked for cleansing, but as they were going to show themselves to the priest, one realised that he was cleansed, he turned back, and he glorified God, he was a Samaritan, but the Lord said, where are the nine? He was the only one to return thanks. And that so often is the case. In Colossians chapter four, verse two, *"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;"*

I will speak a little bit of this later, because if it is spiritual things, we are asking for sometimes we can easily overlook those blessings and just give thanks for providential ones, but not spiritual blessings.

### **Supplication**

This is asking the Lord for something. Our Lord says in John 14 verse 13 and 14, *"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."*

## **2/ Why is prayer so important?**

So why is prayer so important? The Bible tells us it is important, especially for salvation. If you and I desire and want to be saved, prayer is absolutely vital. The Lord told many parables with that aim. In Luke 18 verse 1, *"He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;"*

In Psalm 32 verses 5 and 6, *"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him."*

Then the beautiful verse in Romans 10, verse 13. *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* In Ezekiel 36, and I recommend that you read the chapter later when you get home, you read through especially the latter part of Ezekiel 36. God says he will do many things for those that ask him. He said He would take them from among the heathen, He would cleanse them from their idols, He would give them a new heart and a

new spirit, He would give them sorrow for sin and repentance, He would make them fruitful in blessing them.

And after he puts all of those things down, then Ezekiel, by inspiration of the Lord, says this, in verse 37 *"Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock."*

So there's all of those things that God says you would do. And the key to unlocking them is to ask it. Ask the Lord for those things.

Our Lord says in Luke 21 verse 36. *"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."* You cannot separate salvation and a hope of heaven from prayer, for they go together.

Nothing should hinder us in prayer; - If in doubt pray rather than not!

### **3/ Are there times we should not pray?**

At the end of the last point, I said that nothing should hinder us in prayer. But then we come to this point, are there times we should not pray? There are several.

**Firstly, if we are harbouring sin,** *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."* Psalm 66 verse 18. One example of this is Joshua falling before the Lord after the defeat of Ai, but God said, *"Get thee up, wherefore lies thou thus upon thy face?"* Joshua 7 verse 10. And the reason was, there'd been sin in the camp, and it was in the case of Achan taking the accursed thing. When it says, regarding iniquity in my heart, that is if we know we're doing something wrong and we come before the Lord in prayer, but there's something within us that says, "you don't touch that thing. You don't pray against it, you don't confess it, you don't mention that." You'll fill your prayer with everything else but that. The Lord won't hear that prayer.

But if you come to the Lord and you say, "Lord, I have this sin, and I love this sin, I don't want to give it up, and I don't really want to pray unto thee for it, but it is there, help me and deliver me from this sin that I don't really want to get rid of." That's not regarding it in the way of harbouring it, that's telling the Lord about the struggles that you have going on within, that is real. And Lord, will hear those prayers, but not if we're imagining the Lord can't see all what we're harbouring and he's going to hear us and answer in the prayers we want him to.

**Another way is if we have a quarrel with any and need to forgive or reconcile.** This is referred to in our Lord's Prayer. We read in Mark 11.25, *"when you stand praying, forgive, if you have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."* So it's a reminder to us when we are praying to think of the person we should be going and forgiving or confessing our sin with.

**Another thing is if we have a wrong motive.** In James chapter 4 verse 2 and 3 we read, “*Ye lust and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because you ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*” So it's asking for things, just for our own lust, our own ease. It's not for the honour and glory of God.

**Then there are rare cases,** as when Jeremiah who was told not to pray for the people because he would not be heard. “*Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.*” (Jeremiah 7 verse 16). The people were so wicked that the Lord God told Jeremiah not to pray for them.

There have been times, I think I've heard tell, perhaps a parent saying to a child, just because the child's been so wayward, look, we just can't pray for you anymore. And the thought that the parent was not going to pray for them anymore was the means of a conversion, because they were resting on the parent's prayers. And so sometimes it has worked for good.

In reality, as a parent, you don't cease to pray for your children, however bad, however much they've done, you do. But some have said it, that they won't pray for them anymore, and it's been used for good.

**The last one I'll mention is praying for the dead.** When a person is dead, it is too late to pray for them. The practice of the Roman Catholics praying for the dead is very wrong. They think there's a purgatory. They think there's some way that their eternal state can be changed after death. It cannot. Where the tree falls, there it shall lie. Where we are at death is where we shall be eternally. The time of grace ends at death. Those in heaven do not need grace. They were given it on earth and now they are with the Lord. Those in hell, there's no grace for them there.

#### **4/ What things can hinder us in prayer?**

**The devil,** he does try to stop prayer. One of our hymns, John Newton's 278 in Gadsby's,

*I know the Lord is nigh,  
And would but cannot pray,  
For Satan meets me when I try,  
And frights my soul away*

He can come with all sorts of reasons why God would not hear. He can come with accusations. He can fill your mind with worldly things, evil things, sidetrack you, get someone to knock on the door or the phone to ring. He will try everything he can to stop one going to prayer.

**Sin and a worldly spirit.** Our natural man, our old fallen nature, does not like to pray. And every one of God's people, you might look at one, the most esteemed, the most godly, they

have just as much a fight with the natural man, the old nature, as you do. They have the same heart. *"As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."* (Proverbs 27:19) and; *"He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works."* (Psalms 33:15) And our natural heart, it does not like prayer.

**Another thing that can hinder us is waiting to feel the Spirit** before we pray or to know that our prayer is indited. Someone is quoted as saying, if I have a newspaper lying on the table and a Bible next to it, I can choose which one I'm going to read. In the same way, we have the choice of whether to pray or not. We shouldn't be waiting for a sense of the Spirit before coming to prayer, when we have so many exhortations to pray in the Word of God. Remember it's the Holy Spirit that has inspired the Word of God. And so that should not hinder us.

I like what the Lord says; *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"* (Luke 11:13)

Are we coming in prayer and not feeling to have the Spirit? Then we can ask for the Spirit.

**Another hinderance is feeling the lack of faith.** Now, we are not very good judges when it comes to feeling our feelings in prayer. Certainly, we do need to pray in faith, and what an encouragement it is to know that even when we're feeling low in faith, know that; *"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."* (2 Timothy 2:13)

You think of those in the church when Peter was locked up in prison and they were praying in a church prayer meeting that he'd be let loose. The Lord let him loose by a miracle. And when he knocked at the door, and Rhoda, who went to open it, and she knew his voice, she said, it's Peter. And they said thou out mad. They didn't believe. and yet they have been praying for it. You might say how much unbelief in their prayers and yet the Lord answered them anyway.

Just as a caution here as well, we need to be very careful, just because we have great liberty in prayer doesn't mean to say that actually it's indited or the Lord has breathed it or the Lord is going to answer it. Because sometimes we can want something so much we have a lot of liberty because we want that thing.

**Another thing that can hinder us is if we're not sure that it is God's will.** Well, don't let that hinder us. The Apostle Paul had the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, and he prayed three times that the Lord would take that away. It was not God's will that He take that thorn away. Instead, He said to Paul, don't pray for that, I'll will give you grace instead. If we ask for wrong things in a genuine way, or things that are not the Lord's will, He will show us, and He will give us something better. That of course is if we are not praying for something completely contrary to the Word of God.

So don't let that be a hindrance, thinking, well, am I praying for something that's not the Lord's will? We must make sure that what we are praying for has not already been revealed to be wrong in the Word of God. But even then, if we don't realise the thing is already

revealed in the word, God is able to answer our prayer by directing us to where it is in the Bible.

## 5/ Answers to Prayer

This of course relates to the part of our prayers that come under the heading of supplication. If we ask something of God, we should expect and watch for an answer. It might be a providential thing or asking for spiritual blessings. Psalm 27 verse 7, *"Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy upon me, and answer me."*

We think of David at Keilah, David had gone into Keilah to rescue that city from the Philistines and then King Saul heard that he was there. David heard that he was going to come. So he asked the Lord, he said, will Saul come? And will the men of Keilah deliver me up to him? And the Lord only answered half his prayer. The Lord said that Saul will come. So David asked again. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up? And the Lord said, they will deliver you up. So they escaped out of Keilah. They took the warning.

But it's a good lesson that, because only half of David's prayer was answered, David didn't just say, well that doesn't matter, the Lord's chosen not to answer. He went back to the Lord to ask the other part that was not answered.

So, we think of ones like Hannah; *"For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:"* (1 Samuel 1:27) the Lord gave her Samuel.

Sometimes, the Lord does not seem to answer at all, but He may answer many years later. Often when the Lord is silent, there is a reason, a bit like Joshua at Ai. Sometimes He answers in strange ways, but He makes us to know it really was an answer to prayer. And sometimes the answer is no, like we've just said, with Paul's thorn in the flesh. but grace was given to bear it.

If we have an answer that is no, we should still give thanks to the Lord, it still is an answer to our prayers.

Always watch, especially for spiritual blessings. So, if we've been asking the Lord for peace, we've had troubled conscience, troubled mind, we've asked the Lord to give us peace, and he's given us peace. Or we wanted pardon and forgiveness, and the Lord has given us that. Or a hearing ear. You've been coming into the house of God, and your mind is distracted, you can't concentrate on the word at all. You ask the Lord to give you a hearing ear and you go to the Lord's house the next day and you hear and the preacher has your full attention, and you have the word drawn into you, that's an answer to prayer.

Calmness of mind, when we've been all troubled of mind. An answer to prayer. The Lord's teaching, where He's taught us something that we didn't know before. All thy children shall be taught of the Lord. Do we ask for His teaching? Those things perhaps are more likely to be overlooked as an answer to prayer than something that we've asked for in a providential

way. For instance, if we have asked the Lord to provide a home, or a job, or a wife, and the Lord has given us those things, but if we ask for spiritual blessings, and he's given us those, may the Lord help us to recognise those answers which really are more valuable, more precious, than any natural thing that one day will all go.

## **6/ Encouragements to pray**

The promise of the Holy Spirit. We are given then promise that the Holy Spirit will help us in prayer. Our Lord told the parables that really encourage us to be persistent in prayer. The unjust judge and the widow, or the man coming to his friend at midnight and asking for loaves, and he's not given the loaves because he's his friend, but because he keeps on asking and asking and asking. And the unjust judge, doesn't help the widow because she is a widow, but because if she keeps coming, she'll weary him. So, he just answers her, helps her, and resolves her case. And the Lord gives these parables to really encourage us to keep on and on in prayer.

We have the example of Elijah, that he was a man subject to like passions as we are. And yet we read when he prayed for fire from heaven, he prayed once and the fire came. And then to have the rain, he must go again seven times to pray before the rain comes. And it's good for us to think that; great man as Elijah was, he was still just like us, with fears, with dependence upon the Lord to answer.

Another encouragement is that our Heavenly Father is a better Father than an earthly Father. *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"* (Matthew 7:11)

Another encouragement is previous answers to prayer we have had. Some of us have been long in the way. It has been 42 years since I was baptized, on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1983 and throughout those years, there's been many, many answers to prayer. And as the Spirit brings back those memories, that is encouragement to pray on and to pray again.

## **7/ I want to look now at the types of prayer**

### ***Firstly, private prayer.***

Our Lord taught the need of secret prayer. We read of it in the Lord's Prayer. This is a real test. Is our religion just for show, or is it real? You put that test to your prayers, your private, closet prayers. Is your religion just a show, or is it real?

Ananias was told that Saul of Tarsus, later the Apostle, was praying. Well, that wasn't an unusual thing. He was a Pharisee. They made long prayers, public prayers. The unusual thing

is, it was in secret, and it was upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason why he had been hailing men and women to prison is because they had been calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the very thing he now was doing as the Lord had met with him.

Many things can be expressed in private prayer that should never be expressed publicly. Remember that, if any of you are called upon in public prayer. There are things in private that you do not pray, you cannot pray in public. You can lay anything before the Lord, whatever it is, in secret, but it's not appropriate, not good in public, especially when we're thinking of our own sinful thoughts, affections, whatever those things are. So private prayer is a sacred act of coming to God.

*"Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us."*  
(Psalm 62:8)

Now, the Lord spent those whole nights in prayer. But sometimes it's hard to find a solitary place. You read of those in history that used to go out in the hedgerows. They try and find a solitary place. Those of you in big families, it is difficult to find a place in a four bedroom home with eight, 10 children. And so you need to find some other places. The bathroom, for short prayers, even at work. While out walking. While cleaning the chapel alone. Use times when others are not around.

Some of us, well, sometimes if you were to listen to my dash cam, you'll probably hear a few prayers coming through that as well, as I am driving, using that time for prayer.

So try and find those secret times, and especially with the husband-wife situation, be mindful, and mindful really with children, that they need time for prayer, and don't organize a life so that there's no time for prayer. or you interrupt each other's prayers. Know that if one has gone downstairs for their private prayer and you're having yours in the bedroom, be very careful you finish earlier than them to not interrupt their prayers. It takes a bit of planning in the family to allow private prayer.

### ***So then, family prayer and worship.***

What makes a home a Christian home is not just going to chapel from it!

Now the Lord's command is there in Deuteronomy 11, 18 to 20 *"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:"*

In Proverbs 22 verse six, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

In Abraham's example, Genesis 18 verse 19, God says of him; *"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath*

*spoken of him."*

I want to give some helps to prayer in the family situation.

I know you will say I'm not in that yet, but like I said, there are a good number of those that heard a similar talk on prayer seven years ago. They have now married, they have families, they hopefully do have family prayer.

So just some things to bear in mind.

- Not long, not tedious. Very often the children may be itching to get off to school, or tired at the end of the day, and so not long and tedious.
- Consistently as possible. That's absolutely vital. If it's inconsistent, one day there's family prayer, the other day there's not, then the household tends to not be prepared for it. But when it is regular, then they are.
- When reading and prayer, read consecutively, if it's going to be of use. Either straight through the Bible or pick one book at a time but reading it so it can be understood in context.
- Keep prayer relevant to all the family's needs and concerns, remembering what is happening or due to happen that day, and that may be weighing on a wife or a child's mind.
- If you are the wife, support and encourage the husband's efforts in bringing the time of worship about.
- What about the wife leading in prayer? Well, not with the husband present with the children. But as it was with my wife and I. When the children left home, sometimes, especially if I'm not well, she will pray instead of me. And we'll pray for each other aloud in our worship. But if there were children home and they're present, then I would be the only one that led.
- But if the children were home, and I was away preaching, my wife would lead the prayers with the children. If there was a male child that was old enough, they would then take the prayers.
- The conduct of parents does convey a message too. It is vital that it's conveyed as a delight and not a chore. It's easy just for a few rough words, perhaps from a wife, "we haven't got time for it", or, "I hadn't thought about this," or just the attitude or just a thoughtless word will immediately destroy the beauty of worship and of times of prayer.
- Sometimes using the prayer at mealtimes, say if we're going to ask a blessing on the food, and there is something that we want to give thanks for or ask for, just use that very short prayer in asking a blessing on the food to ask for those things as well.

## ***But what about public prayer?***

The Bible is very clear in 1 Corinthians 14 verses 34-35, that the women keep silent in the churches and do not pray aloud. In 1 Timothy 2, verses 8 to 15, we read that it is the men that are praying everywhere. The picture is of the men praying, but the women are adorning themselves in modest apparel. It is how they look, how they act, what their spirit is, not their prayers.

Now, I want to give just some advice on public prayers.

I do not want to encourage a critical spirit. Don't go from here and listen to a prayer meeting or pastor and you're critical of his prayers. Everyone is different. But sometimes it is helpful, especially if there are those of you that in later years are called on in prayer, just to bear these things in mind.

And it's not just in the church either. What about family gatherings? What about birthdays or an anniversary time? A time when you've gathered friends together and you're the one that's asked to pray. It's times like that.

- Most of us get very nervous when asked to pray in public but try to use your normal voice in prayer. Certainly, don't put on an affected, holy voice. At the same time, don't speak in a familiar, irreverent way. We are coming before the Lord in prayer.
- A minister once said to me, as advice, he said, clear the decks for public prayer. If you've got things that are personally burdening you and you know you're going to be probably called upon in public prayer, go in secret and lay them before the Lord first and then come in public prayer. Leave those things alone and just pray those things that are applicable for the public prayer. I believe that's good advice.
- Again, keep it short. Chapel prayer meetings will depend on how many there are to pray, and the time available, but perhaps generally not more than seven minutes.
- Make sure that those who are listening can say amen. I know it's not our practice in the chapels to audibly say amen. I always like to do it. But you still should be able to give an assent mentally. If someone has been praying for someone specifically, but they haven't given their name, but they've given the colour of their hair and what clothes they wear and what shoes they wear, and you're left wondering right through the prayer meeting, who on earth are they praying about? But you can't say Amen, because you don't know who they're praying about. So, if you're going to be that specific, then use someone's name.
- It is best to just more be general in prayer, unless the prayer meeting is for a specific person. I always remember one time going to Blackboys chapel and asking the deacon, is there anyone I should pray for? And he gave me three or four, and I prayed for them. Immediately after the service, he said, your Aunty is just going into hospital,

straight from this service into hospital, I forgot to tell you. And I felt terrible. It would have been better to just do a general prayer for those that are unwell and sick than leave one out, the very one I should not have left out.

- Keep to the occasion. Although impromptu prayers - we don't write out all the prayers, but we need to consider beforehand to some extent who or what we are going to pray for. If you are going to a wedding reception, you need to think beforehand, if I'm called upon in prayer, what things am I going to cover? Am I just going to speak about one family and ignore the other? I'm going to mention someone's name, but then suddenly you think, oh, I've forgotten the other's name, and so I don't use their name. You've got to think how you're going to do it. A funeral, a birthday, meeting for confession and repentance, praying for a particular thing in the nation, a bill before parliament, you must think beforehand.

### **Some don'ts in prayer**

- Don't preach in prayer. Preaching is not praying, and praying is not preaching. Very easy to do so. Remember you are speaking to God, though men be listening too.
- Don't make announcements in prayer. Sometimes at Cranbrook, if there's been something that's happened, I know the congregation doesn't know about it, then at the reading or before the prayer, I say, friends, I'd like you to know this, because I'm going to mention it in prayer. So you're telling them first, and then you're praying about it.
- Don't tell people off in prayer, how easy it is to close your eyes and to tell people off in the attitude of prayer.
- And don't think you've got to cover everything, especially at a prayer meeting. Others will pick up what you didn't pray. If you've mentioned things nearest to your heart, just leave the rest. If you've been long on one point, then briefly cover those other points.
- Try not to use the same phrases, scripture quotes that roll off the tongue. Easier said than done. We all do it. I really highlighted it years ago when we had a little dog. We used to say, prayer Jack, and he'd leave playing with his toys and jump up onto the settee, and he'd sit up for the prayer. But then just before the end of the prayer he'd start to whine. And then when he got the amen, he'd jump off the settee, and he'd grab his toys again. And I thought, he knows when I'm coming to the end of prayer. I'm using the same phrases that lead up to the end, and this dog, he knows. But it's hard, it's very easy to do, and I know we all do it.

So those are just some pointers. If you are called upon to pray in public.

## **8/ Now some examples of answers to prayer from my own life.**

My first blessing that I really had was at my desk in my own study, and I was only 20, I was in my own house, I'd just got my own house, and I'd been really, really struggling with internal sin and wickedness and thoughts, and been praying about it for so long, and I just slumped my head on my hands on that desk, praying the Lord would take it all away, And in a moment, he just took it all out of my mind. It was just a huge weight taken off me, no words, nothing. But it was a very sweet, lovely blessing. I've still got that desk now. Brought it over from Australia.

Another blessing I had was when I was fearful of asking a blessing on my food at work. In the lunch hour we had our packed lunch, and I felt I wanted to bow my head and ask a blessing. (I was 20 then too) But I couldn't overcome the fear of man. And I went some three months praying and making resolutions. My thought was the Lord would answer me and take away the fear of man and help me to bow my head and pray. But He didn't.

He did it through blessing me in my soul at home. One night after I prayed before getting into bed, as I got into bed, the Lord showed me a view of my sins, and then Christ on the cross. This was repeated. A view by faith not sight. I had my father staying with me at that time, and in the morning, we spoke together of the goodness of the Lord. The sweetness of that blessing lasted three weeks. I went into work, and I didn't even worry about what the chaps were going to say. I just bowed my head. That blessing took away all fear of man. It was how God answered all my prayers. So, very often the Lord has answered a prayer, by blessing my soul, bringing me close to Him, taking away the fear of man. In this case, it wasn't in the way that I thought he would answer my prayers.

Unexpected job interviews. One of my colleagues knew I was looking for another Job. I had a couple of times where I came into work and just before lunchtime he said, oh, you've got to go for an interview across the road in 10 minutes time. I knew nothing about it; he'd arranged it all. I ended up getting that job, a job I'd never seen an advert for, never written a job application letter for, never prepared a CV for. I had that job for 12 years in Australia, and another three years when I came over to England. The Lord organised it all. But before those interviews, I went to the toilets and cried out to the Lord for help. I had little time, no place to hide and to go but there, and that's what I did.

And another time, and this one is prayer answered by prayer, and it was on an aeroplane. In Australia, we used the aeroplanes just like buses. So, I got on the aeroplane, and I was going from Melbourne to Sydney, and I sat next to this chap, and he was swearing and he was cursing. He had come down from Brisbane, and he'd fallen asleep. And the plane had landed at Sydney, and he was supposed to get off at Sydney, but he fell asleep, so the plane took off again, and he was still in it and now he had to go back up to Sydney again. And I thought, if I tell him off for swearing, he's going to get even worse. And I secretly cried unto the Lord, what am I going to do? How can I deal with this man? Well, the plane took off, and they brought round refreshments. I didn't even think, I put down my tray, the refreshments were put on it, and I bowed my head and asked the blessing of the refreshments.

He said, oh, he said, you're a Christian. He said, I've been swearing and cursing. Oh, I'm so sorry, so sorry. And he just changed completely for the rest of the flight.

Now if I had thought, he is so abusive, if I show myself to be in prayer asking a blessing on this food, he will be worse, and I didn't bow my head in prayer, I wouldn't have had my answer to prayer. The Lord answered my prayer by me continuing to do what years ago, what I've just told you, I could not do in the face of those who knew not the Lord.

Another one, and I'll tell you this one, because of how long you can go praying for something and not get an answer. My wife had depression for 10 years after our second child was born, and she had times of good health, but then times that she'd have days or weeks, very, very low. Many, many prayers were put up for her to be delivered from that, and seemingly no answer whatsoever. And then one night, over here in the UK, I had a dream. I dreamt I was praying, and I was praying for her. But I was so ashamed of my prayers. They were such poor, weak prayers. But as I was praying, I saw her getting better in my dream. And you know, within two weeks, the Lord brought her out of it, and she's been free of it ever since. And it is something I've never forgotten. The Lord does hear those prayers that are put up for years, and yet He can have a set time that He'll deliver you out of it.

Another one was when we were so praying for my wife, whether she should have heart surgery or not. We went to a united prayer meeting on a Monday, and the case of Jehoshaphat was read. "Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." So, we looked for an answer. Well, when we came for these scans at the end of the week, the doctor that was doing the scanning was very dismissive of the need for an operation. When he found out about my wife's mental issues with the depression, he just dismissed all her heart issues and wouldn't proceed with it at all. So, we didn't have an option, we didn't have to decide. The doctor would not proceed.

But because he offended us, because of what he'd said, which was unreasonable (Over the next two years she was seen at a more specialised hospital and had the treatment, including surgery, which she desperately needed), but because of his attitude, we didn't recognize that as an answer to prayer. So, on the Sunday, I said to my wife, "you have Mr. Ashby here at Cranbrook. I'm going up to Ebenezer Luton and in the afternoon, I'm going to hear Jabez Buss preach at Ampthill chapel. We will see if the Lord answers us through the ministry." Not recognizing that the Lord had answered us on the Friday.

Well, in the afternoon, I was taken by Alan Rayner to Ampthill chapel. We sat outside the chapel. The chapel doors were shut. It went past the service start time, and the doors were shut. And I turned to Alan, I said, "I know why those doors are shut, the Lord answered our prayers on Friday, and we refused to recognize the answer, and I've come here looking for an answer through this service, and that's why those doors are shut." He couldn't understand, but I've never forgotten that time. The Lord making me realize that he had answered our prayers, and that at this time we were to wait.

So those are just a few, there are many, many other times prayer was heard and answered.

