



**CAPITOL
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Reaching Capitol Communities for Christ

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1 Kings 8:22-53

The Components of Prayer

Studies show that technology designed to connect us has made communication more difficult. A 2021 study revealed a 1/3 of adults have fallen out with someone after misreading a text message. One humorous example of digital miscommunication is of a mother who texted her son, “Your aunt just passed away. LOL.” “Mom,” asked the son, “why is that funny!?” “It’s not funny,” she exclaimed. “Why would you even ask?” “LOL” he explained, “means ‘laugh out loud.’” “Oh no!” I thought it meant ‘lots of love.’”

We all know that communication is important to healthy relationships. Our spiritual journey is no different. No amount of technology can replace prayer and scripture reading and in this pivotal scene, Solomon demonstrates how to pray and what components should be included.

First, biblical prayer involves **Adoration** (vs. 22-24). Solomon highlights three truths about God. First, he is unique. Remember that Israel was established among polytheist paganism. Although each culture expressed their religion their own way, paganism was largely uniform. The gods were chaotic and often as wicked as those who worshipped them. Each god was powerful but limited in his power. Gods controlled the wind, the waves, and the womb, but could not control all three. Solomon declares that the God of Israel was unlike any other.

Secondly, God is faithful. The consistent message of Scripture is that God’s love is perfecting and steadfast as opposed to fickle and emotional. Solomon was aware of the flaws of his father but celebrates the faithfulness of YHWH. The history of Israel is a frustrating one. God proves faithful, while Israel proves unfaithful (see Deuteronomy 7:7-9).

Finally, Solomon highlighted God’s presence. The entire premise of 1 Kings 8 regards God dwelling with his people. He has declared and made them holy. He has come down to permanently dwell with them and he invites them in. Prayer draws us into intimacy with our Maker. The thought itself should draw us to adoration and worship.

The second component of biblical prayer is **Supplication** (vs. 25-30). If we’re honest, our prayer life is dominated by supplication, not adoration. Request-only prayer turns God into a type of genie or ATM machine, but that doesn’t mean supplication is wrong since our Father welcomes the needs of his children. The problem comes when our prayers are exclusively requests or limited by personal wants.

Solomon’s first request is for protection (vs. 24-26). He asks that God would continue to honor the Davidic Covenant. Remember, he just established that God keeps his covenants and shows “steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart” (vs. 23). He is not

doubting God's grace but reaffirming it. He is acknowledging his and his ancestors' failures. God's protection of the Davidic line is good for Israel.

Solomon also requests attention from God (vs. 27-30). He recognizes God cannot be contained to a room inside the Temple, yet, what the presence of God demonstrates is that YHWH listens to the cries of his children. When they approach him, Solomon asks that God always be ready to stoop to listen to them.

The third component of biblical prayer is **Intercession** (vs. 31-45). Solomon details seven scenarios for when the Hebrew people would cry out to God for grace. It is worth noting that Solomon intercedes before these actions are committed thus admitting "we're weak and will fail. Despite that, show us mercy."

The final component of biblical prayer modeled by Solomon is **Redemption** (vs. 46-53). Solomon addresses the ultimate punishment against Israel: expulsion from the Promised Land. Exile from the land was exile from God's presence. Remember that 1-2 Kings was written to an exiled people recounting the story of the Jewish monarchs. They were in exile because of their rebellion. Solomon interceded on their behalf while pleading with the reader to repent with the assurance that God would hear their prayer & deliver them.

Solomon shared the same pattern of grace we see throughout Scripture. First justice requires the judgment of sin (vs. 46). Despite deserving judgment, however, God welcomes repentance. Such repentance, according to Solomon, involves turning one's heart away from sin, repenting of our wrongdoing, and pleading for grace. In that moment of repentance, Solomon assures us, God extends grace (see vs. 49-50). God is always ready to forgive any and every sinner that repents.

This is, perhaps, the main point of the text. The purpose of the spiritual disciplines is to draw us into intimacy with our redeemer. Whether we are reading Scripture, praying, fasting, meditating, or worshipping, our focus should be on the God of the gospel. Spiritual health begins and ends at the cross of Jesus. The climax of Solomon's prayer was not for physical health or personal prosperity, but that God might demonstrate his love by saving sinners.

In northeast Portland, Oregon, hope takes the form of a horse chestnut tree. It grows on the corner of Morris Street and 7th Avenue, and its branches are full of wishes. The property owner wrote out a few wishes and hung them on the tree before leaving town in 2013. When she returned, the entire tree was covered in wishes. After that, the owner posted instructions to the tree on a wooden clipboard. The note read, "This is a wishing tree. Please find a blank tag. Write your wish for you, a loved one, the neighborhood, etc." Some wishes posted on the tree include, "I wish for everlasting love," "I wish for everyone to have what they need," "I wish my dad was nice," and "I wish to find my purpose and love for life again."

One can understand the sentiment. No doubt we've all made wishes before blowing out birthday candles or throwing a penny in a fountain. Prayer to a faceless, unknown entity won't get you far. We have the ear of God almighty, Maker of the Heaven and Earth. Do not neglect to go to him.