



## the 5 p's of prayer sermon outline

Based on Pray First  
by Chris Hodges

Prayer is the lifeblood of the Christian faith. But for so many, it's a struggle to make prayer a part of our daily lives. We are intimidated, uncertain, and at many times embarrassed about how to talk to God. Instead of being an awkward obligation, or your last resort, prayer can become your first response. Prayer keeps your faith alive, your hope in Christ strong, and your relationship with God healthy. Prayer helps you avoid temptation and resist the snares set by the devil.

The Bible repeatedly indicates that prayer is not optional—it's essential to knowing God. As you learn to make prayer the foundation of your relationship with God, it will naturally envelop all aspects of your life.

The key to allowing prayer to permeate your life is to put it first, literally. When the Bible instructs us to pray continually or constantly, the emphasis is not on perpetual repetition but on importance and consistency. God wants us to *pray first* in any and all situations.

Many believers struggle with the daily practice of prayer. They come to God in prayer like a nervous defendant approaching the stern judge in a courtroom. But He's not judging us; His Son has already lived the perfect life and made the sacrifice to pay for our sins. God simply wants us to talk with Him—about everything. He simply wants our whole hearts to depend on Him and rest in Him. We are God's own children who are urged to cry out, "*Abba*, Father" (Romans 8:15). Consider the 5 P's of prayer as you seek to connect more intimately with your Father.

## **The *Priority* of Prayer**

Jesus demonstrated both quality and consistency in His prayer life. Throughout His public ministry, Jesus knew the importance of getting away from the clamor of the crowds to connect with His Father (Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23; Luke 9:18; 22:39–41). Jesus also prayed in public (John 11:41–42), before choosing His disciples (Luke 6:12–13), before healing people (Mark 7:34–35), after healing people (Luke 5:15–16), and when feeding the 5,000 (John 6:11). Jesus taught on prayer and gave us the perfect outline for how to pray (Matthew 6:9–13). Prayer must be a priority if you hope to cultivate a lifestyle of prayer. Engaging purposefully *and* daily is key.

## **The *Place* of Prayer**

*Where* you pray on a consistent basis is important. Like all the other details of communicating with someone, your setting matters. Jesus had special places to pray, and we need one too—a place where you can have consistency and intimacy with God. In Matthew 6:5–6, Jesus emphasized the importance of place to make prayer relational and personal. A private place not only insulates us from interruptions and distractions, it also reinforces humility and focusing only on God. Where you pray is a matter of personal preference—as long as it helps you connect with God. And if your prayer life feels like it’s on autopilot, try different locations. Take God everywhere you go and keep the conversation going.

## **The *Plan* of Prayer**

Having a plan for your prayer time often gets overlooked. A plan shows an awareness of how important God is to you and how much you love communicating with Him. It pushes you beyond just asking for things to showing honor, respect, and love for Him simply for being your Father. In Luke 11:1–4, Jesus’ disciples wanted to learn to pray like Him. They overheard *how* Jesus addressed God as His Father in a tone that was probably personal, conversational, and intimate. Through the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus gave them a plan to follow, not just words to recite. Think of your prayer plan as a compass to help you navigate your relationship with the Lord.

## **The *Power* of Prayer**

The most powerful force on earth is God's power in answer to the prayers of His people. One of the first prayer gatherings of the early church can be found in Acts 4. After Peter and John healed a lame beggar, shared the gospel to a crowd where 5,000 people believed, were brought before the unhappy Jewish council then warned and released, they held a prayer meeting with their own people (Acts 4:23–31). This example shows us that to see God's power unleashed, we need to pray in unity, pray the promises of Scripture, and pray boldly. We can experience the same miraculous, dynamic power of God when we pray (Matthew 18:18–20; 2 Corinthians 1:20; James 5:16). This isn't a "name it and claim it" formula. When you pray the promises of God, you're focusing on God's power and limitless resources rather than the problem or your own very limited ability to solve it.

## **The *Persons* of Prayer**

There is a unique way we relate to the three Persons of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In order to be truly and fully relational, prayer revolves around intimacy with the vastness of who God is as three persons in One, also called the Trinity. Second Corinthians 13:14 summarizes the distinct role of each person in the Godhead: "The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you" (2 Corinthians 13:14 THE MESSAGE).

First, the grace of Jesus is the mediator between us and God—we pray *through* His intercession to the Father on our behalf (Hebrews 4:15–16). Just imagine Jesus praying specifically for you the next time you're praying.

Second, the Father's lavish love for us was the catalyst for sending Jesus to earth as a man to free us from the debt of sin (John 3:16). Our view of God determines our relationship with God. Knowing Him as Father allows us to connect, love, and approach Him with our worship (Psalm 103:8–13) and feel His arms around us (Luke 15:20).

Lastly, after you connect with the amazing grace of Jesus and the lavish love of the Father, then you're ready to experience the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent from heaven to be here on earth with you and in you. As you get to know Him more and more,

you can pray from the bond of friendship and fellowship you experience (John 14:26; Romans 8:26–27).

These are the fundamentals of prayer. If you make prayer a *priority*, if you create a *place* that is conducive for prayer, if you have an effective *plan* for your prayer time, if you recognize the *power* of prayer so that prayer becomes a powerful experience, and if you recognize the *Persons* of prayer in the Godhead, your prayer life will be transformed. Expect God to show up and do mighty things on your behalf. You will receive boldness and power from God so that you can know Him and share the message of Christ. It's time to discover the depth of joy, peace, and purpose that only comes when you *pray first*!