

emmanuelchurch



Connecting the Focus to the Framework

Belong to God

Prayer is the language of those who **Belong to God**. In prayer, we step into the life of the Triune God, not as outsiders but as beloved children. Paul reminds us that all who are led by the Spirit are sons and daughters of God, for we have received not a spirit of slavery, but the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, 'Abba, Father' (Romans 8:14–17). The early church father Origen wrote, "when we pray, we do not draw God to ourselves, but ourselves to God." Prayer begins not with bowed heads and closed eyes, but with the Father adopting us in love (Ephesians 1:5), the Son making us co-heirs with himself through His suffering and glory (Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:4–7), and the Spirit bearing witness that we truly belong (Romans 8:16). In prayer, we step into the God's throne room—not as strangers or servants, but as beloved sons and daughters.

Prayer is the Spirit's way of pulling back the curtain and letting us see the face of God more clearly. The early church understood this deeply. Irenaeus wrote, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive; and life consists in beholding God." That life is not achieved, but received. Augustine confessed, "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." Prayer is where the adopted find rest in their Father's presence, the Son's face, and the Spirit's power. In prayer, we remember whose we are, secure in the

Father's love, cleansed by the Son's sacrifice, and indwelt and empowered by the Spirit - a people who truly **Belong to God**.

Belong to the Church

Prayer is the lifeblood of those who **Belong to God**. In prayer, we discover our faith is never private, but shared. We are joined together as one body, with Christ as our head (1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 4:15–16). By one Spirit, we are baptized into this body (1 Corinthians 12:13), and at the Lord's Table we share one bread and one cup, proclaiming that we belong to one another in Him (1 Corinthians 10:16–17). In prayer, the Spirit binds us together across differences, shaping us into a dwelling place for God (Ephesians 2:22).

When we pray together, we join our voices with the saints before us and beside us, echoing the prayers of the Church through the ages. Origen wrote, "When many pray with one mind and one voice, it is as if they breathe together with the breath of Christ." Prayer calls us to forgive (Matthew 6:12), to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), and to step into the rhythm of life together. Prayer teaches us to say not *my* Father but *our* Father (Matthew 6:9)—reminding us that to **Belong to God** is to belong to His people. In prayer, the Church gathers together before the Father, united in the Son, and sustained by the Spirit.

Grow in Faith

Prayer is the passion of those who **Grow in Faith**. In prayer, we learn to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30), and to trust that He is at work in every corner of our lives (Romans 8:28–39). Through prayer, the Spirit teaches us to discern God's presence, to wrestle with our doubts, and to cultivate wisdom (James 1:5; Romans 12:2). Origen reminds us, "Prayer is the place where we are transformed from what we are into what we are called to be." Prayer shapes our hearts, renews our minds, and strengthens

our spirits. In prayer, we are drawn into the Father's care, guided by the Son's example, and empowered by the Spirit's work within us.

In the words of Gregory of Nyssa, "We must devote ourselves more to prayer. For prayer is like the leader of the chorus of virtues. Through it we ask for the other virtues from God. The person devoted to prayer has fellowship with God and comes in contact with him through a mystical holiness, a spiritual energy, and an inexpressible disposition. Taking the Spirit as our guide and fellow contestant our love for the Lord is kindled, and we seethe with longing. Since no satiety in prayer is found, we are always burning with passion for the Good and stirring up the soul."

Grow in Service

Prayer is the power of those who **Grow in Service**. In prayer, we discover the basic reality of our faith: loving God and loving others are inseparable (Matthew 22:37-40). The Spirit moves us to see the needs around us and equips us to act with compassion, generosity, and courage (1 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 5:13-14). In prayer, we are formed into the likeness of the Servant King, who came not to be served but to serve. (Mark 10:45)

But, before we move our hands, we must bend our hearts. Jesus Himself "often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16), showing that all true ministry flows from communion with the Father. Gregory the Great wrote, "He must first be purified in contemplation who would later pour himself out in service." Prayer transforms service from mere activity into participation in God's redemptive work. When prayer and service meet, the Church becomes the hands and feet of Jesus—serving not in our own strength, but in the power of the Spirit.

Reach At Home

Prayer is the focus of those who **Reach At Home**. To reach our homes, neighborhoods, and city begins not with strategy, but with intercession. The Spirit teaches us to intercede for others, just as Jesus is interceding for us (Romans 8:34). Jeremiah 29:7 calls God's people to "seek the welfare of the city" and to "pray to the Lord on its behalf." In prayer, our eyes are opened to see where God is already at work and where He calls us to join Him. John Chrysostom said, "Prayer is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings."

Prayer transforms the ordinary spaces of our lives into holy ground where the love of Christ is seen and felt. If we are going to **Reach At Home**, we must pray to see God's power unleashed in the lives of those around us—and then trust that He will guide us in how to be the hands and feet of Christ to carry that power to them (Matthew 9:35 - 10:45).

Reach Away

Prayer is the fuel of those who **Reach Away**. In prayer, we lift up nations, cultures, and peoples we may never meet, trusting that God's Spirit goes before us (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:14-15). Through prayer, we participate in God's global mission, interceding for the lost, the suffering, and the leaders of the world.

Before Jesus sent His disciples, He told them to wait and pray (Acts 1:4, 14). It is through prayer that the Church receives power from the Spirit to bear witness "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Every missionary movement in history has begun on its knees. Prayer connects us to God's heart for the world, sending us out not in our own

strength, but carried by the Father, following the Son, and empowered by the Spirit.