

Week 7 ~ Prayer Postures

"...so that nothing will hinder your prayers."

(1 Peter 3:7, NIV)

Peter, in this particular passage, is writing to a group of scattered believers concerning relationships between husbands and wives. Even more specifically, he says in this verse that if husbands do not respect and treat their wives as the partners and co-heirs God created them to be, then God will not answer their (the husbands') prayers.

Sometimes answered prayer comes with conditions. And while this portion of Scripture was written in context of marital relationship, the principle is true for so many things in our lives. James 5:16 says: *"The prayer of a righteous man [woman] is powerful and effective."* Notice the word "righteous." Effective prayer comes with the caveat of righteousness.

Don't get me wrong, God can answer any prayer of any person. He can, and often does, go beyond our human weaknesses and sinful selves to surprise us and wow us in response to our prayers. But there are other times that our prayers seem to go unheard, the silence deafening and frustrating. In those instances, it might behoove us to take a look at our lives to see if there are things hindering our prayers from being answered.

Do we have attitudes we fail to address or simply ignore and reason away because we don't want to change? Are there relationships in our lives that need work? Do we even know what Scripture has to say regarding the thing we're praying about (maybe it's not a prayer God would honor because it's an ungodly prayer)?

Sometimes God does answer with a resounding, "No." But other times our lives keep God from acting in the affirmative on our behalf.

Are you waiting for a prayer to be answered? Could it be possible that something is hindering your prayers? If so, I encourage you to confess your sin, and begin to work with God in establishing victory over that area of your life. Then you just might see an answer to your prayer.



Prayer Postures. The human body is one of God's gifts to mankind. Without it, we are unable to truly be alive on this earth. It is a good idea, therefore, that we take advantage of everything the physical body has to offer us. This week, this is our aim.

By incorporating physical postures into our prayer times, we seek to align the expression of the body with the expression of the heart and vice versa, better enabling us to bring our entire selves into the experience of prayer with the Lord.

Physical expression is nothing new to the human condition: we jump up and down and clap our hands when our team scores a touchdown; a man gets down on one knee when he proposes to the woman he loves; we lean in close, clenching our hands together, and holding our breath to hear a piece of news whispered in secret; we hold our foreheads and hang our heads low, sighing and moaning in a moment of humiliated frustration. A healthy individual has healthy physical responses to real emotions and situations.

It is in the absence of physical expression in relation to emotions that we experience a breakdown in communication. The person who says I love you, but never looks in the eye, hugs, smiles at, or even touches the other person is suspect to lying. The baby who doesn't engage, snuggle, or respond to touch is evaluated and tested to determine what might be wrong because such behavior isn't normal.

Certainly, there is a wide spectrum to how people outwardly express themselves; however, God did give us all bodies to house our spirits and spirits to inhabit our bodies. The two go hand-in-hand. You can't have one without the other. So while physical expression may not be new to the human condition, it may be uncharted territory for many when it comes to doing so in prayer.

So, this week, as you pray, think of ways you can use your body to add greater expression and dimension to your words and emotions. Then, do it. The following verses all have something to say about bodily involvement in the prayer process—waving, kneeling, dancing, bowing, etc. Check them out for yourself, and try them on for size.

- Psalm 95:6; Luke 22:41
- Psalm 28:2; 63:4; 119:48
- Psalm 47:1
- Deuteronomy 26:10; Psalm 5:7
- 2 Samuel 6:14-15; Jeremiah 31:4; Psalm 49:3
- Exodus 29:24, 26; Numbers 6:20
- Nehemiah 9:5
- 1 Kings 18:39; 1 Chronicles 29:20

My suggestion to you is this: if you are used to bowing or kneeling before the Lord, try a new prayer posture or two this week. Stretch yourself by getting out of your comfort zone.

Remember, this is an 8 Week Prayer *EXPERIMENT*; so, make some room and clear some space. Put your body into it and there's no telling what you might get out of it!

Reflection Questions

1. What did you most enjoy about prayer this week?
2. What was most challenging?
3. What prayer position(s) are you most comfortable with? Why do you think that is?
4. If prayer postures are a reflection of our prayers, what do your prayer postures say about you and your prayers?
5. In response to the above question, what changes, if any, might you need to make in order to reflect a more balanced and well-rounded prayer life?
6. What revelations, if any, did you receive in prayer this week? Were any directly related to praying in this way?
7. What are you most likely to take away from this prayer exercise?