

What Should Our Prayer Time Look Like?

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to the book of Psalms.

The book of Psalms. If you need a Bible in that chair in front of you, that black Bible, you can find page 403. Psalm 28.

Psalm 28. Psalm 28. As you're turning there, so I have been studying for Zephaniah.

So I got it read three, six, nine, 11 times. I'm trying to get to 15 times to read Zephaniah. And then I've read through some introductions.

I'm gonna start working through the introductions and then come up with a plan for us, how far it'll take us. I'm thinking maybe till end of September or something like that.

[1:04] Maybe mid-September or something like that. But I'm planning, it's the plan, the plan, to start the end of this month. So July 30th, excuse me, of this month, we'll start Zephaniah.

So that's the plan. Hopefully I'll keep with that plan. Right? So, but for now, for these next three weeks, 28, 29, 30, we're gonna do the Psalms and then we're actually gonna have a special presentation by Aaron that fourth Sunday, which is the 23rd.

He's gonna do a special presentation of his trip to Israel. So he's gonna have that for us. It's gonna be wonderful. So hopefully you're there for that Sunday. It's gonna be great. So make sure you're there for that. So that's what we're doing today.

I've got Psalm 28. I'm gonna work through this Psalm. Psalm 28, I'm gonna read and then we'll jump in and see what God has to say to us from his word. Psalm 28 of David.

To you, O Yahweh, I call. My rock, do not be deaf to me, lest if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.

[2:18] Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your holy sanctuary. Do not drag me away with the wicked and with those who work iniquity, who speak peace with their neighbors while evil's in their hearts.

Requit them according to their work and according to the evil of their practices. Requit them according to the deeds of their hands. Repay them their recompense.

Because they not regard the works of Yahweh nor the deeds of his hands, he will tear them down and not build them up. Blessed be Yahweh because he's heard the voice of my supplication.

The Lord is my strength and my shield. My heart trusts in him and I am helped. Therefore my heart exalts.

With my song, I shall thank him. Yahweh is their strength and he is a saving defense to his anointed. Save your people and bless your inheritance.

[3:29] Be their shepherd also and carry them forever. I'm sure you've probably heard the story of the woman who invited some people to dinner.

You've probably heard this story. At the table, she turned to her six-year-old daughter and said, Would you like to say the blessing? I wouldn't know what to say. The little girl replied, Just say what you hear mommy say.

The mother said. So the little girl bowed her head and said, Dear Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner? I'm sure you've heard that story. Or you've probably heard this story as well.

A mother said, When I gave birth to my youngest, a boy, my daughter, age six, she whined, but I prayed for a girl. Her brother, age four, replied, I prayed harder.

These are funny stories. They say funny things. But seriously, what should our prayers look like? Especially, when life is bleak, when enemies strike, or trials, they seem to be running after you.

[4:45] What should our prayers look like? And that's how this psalm can be titled, What Should Our Prayer Time Look Like?

Psalms 28. And this doesn't mean this is the only thing it should look like. But from the text, what rises from the text, Dave is going to give us three aspects.

Supplication, admiration, intercession. There's the three points. Now you can fall asleep and take your nap. Supplication, admiration, and intercession. David gives us three aspects on what a biblical time of prayer should look like.

And again, this trilogy of Psalms, 26, 27, 28, they put it together. And it probably was during the same threatening time, whether it was of Absalom's rebellion against David, or Saul's attacks on David.

I tend to think more in the line of Absalom's rebellion. But either way, David was running for his life. And that's what I love about the Psalms, don't you?

[6:00] They're so relative to things we're dealing with today. And then when you think times are hard for you, just stop and praise God that you're not David running for your life, hiding in a cave, and a king is about to kill you.

Or, you're not David running for your life, and your son is coming into your home to kick you out of your house and to take over.

That's what happened to David. So when you think times are hard, think about David. Excuse me, think about what he had to deal with, what he had to go through. That's why the Psalms are so good, because David takes you and pulls you into what he was feeling.

and he takes you and pulls you in to trusting the Lord the way he did, the way he had to. When we live lives of faith, we will anticipate that God will answer prayer according to his perfect will.

Dr. Stephen Lawson, which, again, I've said this to you before, I'll say it again, his short little commentary sent on the Psalms, get that, it would help you, it will benefit you, definitely.

[7:29] He says this, quote, faith believes that God will act in his perfect way. So, when life looks bleak, when enemies strike, when trouble runs after you, stop and bring your supplications to the Lord.

Give him the admiration he deserves and intercede for his people. That's how you can sum up this psalm.

These times of trouble are times for us to concentrate upon the Lord and then to care for his people. So, our prayers should have these three aspects.

Again, you'll see supplication, admiration, intercession. There's the three you'll see in that statement. And what a great time, too, as we come to this psalm because as we bring supplications and admiration, intercession, we bring our supplications when we come to the Lord's supper, the elements, and we say, Lord, I've sinned and I know I'm a sinner and yet we admire him because he sent Jesus Christ to forgive me of all my sin and we're thankful that Jesus is constantly interceding for us as his people.

Isn't that a good thing? So, when life looks bleak and enemies strike, trouble runs after you, stop. Bring your supplications to the Lord. Give him the admiration he deserves and intercede for his people.

[9:10] So, let's jump in. Our prayers should have, number one, supplication. And this is not the only thing it should have. I'm not saying your prayers should only have this, just what rises from the text are these three aspects.

Notice supplication. Verses one through five. Verse one, he starts, To you, O Yahweh, I call. My rock, do not be deaf to me.

I am uttering a loud sound to you. Please hear me. Please hear me. We criticize ourselves if we start our prayers like this.

Or maybe you had somebody criticize you. You shouldn't start your prayers like this. Well, maybe not all the time. But David does. I mean, he's in trouble.

I am uttering a loud sound to you. God, listen to me. Because it feels like you're not.

[10:19] Right? You feel that? You've ever felt that? I know you have. And yet, notice, even in the midst of it, he says, you're my rock.

He confided in God's assistance. He relied on God alone to be his help because God was like a solid rock, a solid foundation. Do not be deaf to me.

Because it seems like you're plugging your ears, Lord, and you're not hearing me. Look at what he says. Lest if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.

If you're silent, if you're not hearing me, I'm nothing if you leave me. Notice the desperation he brings in his supplication.

I need your help desperately. He was convinced of his inability to help himself. David did not rely upon the world.

[11 : 30] He didn't rely upon himself for help, but Yahweh. And he says, lest I become like those who go down to the pit.

If the Lord failed to answer him, he realized his doom was sealed. Death would overtake him, which would identify him with the wicked, not with those who trust Yahweh.

I'm uttering a loud sound to you. Hear me. Notice verse 2. Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to you for help.

He was so struck with anxiety, fear, that he brought his request, not coldly, but passionately, desperately. Psalm 140, verse 6, talks about the Lord giving ear to him.

Psalm 140, I said to the Lord, you are my God, give ear, O Yahweh, to the voice of my supplications. Give ear, turn your ear towards me.

[12 : 41] Notice the next part of verse 2 of Psalm 28. When I lift my hands toward your holy sanctuary, hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry to you for help, when I lift my hands toward your holy sanctuary.

The tabernacle, even more specifically, the Holy of Holies. This was the mark of the Lord's covenant with his people, the place where God dwelt with them.

it signifies Yahweh's presence with his people. And this lifting up of his hands, the hands that symbolize, the raised hands symbolize his dependence on God.

Reaching up to God with eagerness. Another correlating Psalm, Psalm 141, verse 1 and 2.

O Lord, I called upon you, hasten to me, give ear to my voice when I call to you. May my prayer be counted as incense before you. The lifting up of my hands is the evening prayer.

[13 : 53] And it could be where you're actually doing that, you're lifting your hands, but the idea when you lift your hands is dependence, it's like, I need you. That's the idea. That's what it's like. That's what he's saying. And for us now, we direct ourselves in prayer to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The living word who is the ultimate revelation of the presence of God. God is with us in his Son. God's with us by his Spirit. God, I know you're with me.

And I come out, come to you. I come with my hands lifted up to you. In dependence. Here is supplication. Notice verse 3.

Do not drag me away with the wicked. Do not draw down forcibly me, forcibly to destruction. And then he's saying, don't mingle me as the righteous with the wicked in the same judgment.

Don't mingle us together. He's proclaiming his innocence before God. The possibility that God would ignore his plight, sweeping him away with enemies, gnawed at him.

[15 : 09] He says the same thing in chapter, Psalm 26, verse 9. He says, do not take my soul away with sinners nor my life with men of bloodshed. The same idea.

Don't judge me in this way with them. Why is he saying this? Because that's the feeling, the circumstances seem like that's what God was doing to him. That's what Yahweh God was doing.

Notice, again, don't drag me away with the wicked. With those who work iniquity, who speak peace with their neighbors while evil is in their hearts. Those who were addicted to wickedness, who speak peace while evil is in their hearts.

they say one thing with their tongues while thinking something different in their hearts. And this could refer to Absalom's great hypocrisy. This is what Absalom did.

He stood there, he said, yes, David, you're the king, you're the king. And he'd go around back this way, so he'd say one thing to the king, to David, then he'd come around over here to the people and say, oh, I can be your king. I'll listen to you.

[16 : 23] Help, I'll help you. Come to me. I'll be your great king. Oh, look at David. He's blah, blah, blah. He's blah, blah, blah. He's blah, blah. But me, I'll do this. That's what Absalom did. So it's quite possible this is what he's talking about here.

The hypocrisy. Absalom's great hypocrisy. So the idea is they gave the appearance of outward godliness or loyalty, but their whole intention was to bring evil upon God's servant.

So, oh, Yahweh God, don't judge me with these hypocritical sinners because it looks like you are because you've not delivered me.

Absalom is doing this. I'm running away from my throne. This doesn't look good. God, you know, it reminds us even of our Lord with the religious leaders.

Their whole intention was to bring evil upon Jesus. And they did. They killed him. But the Father vindicated his son after he sacrificed himself for us.

[17 : 43] He brought him back to life. In the midst of it, it looked like Jesus was a failure. It looked like Jesus was weak. It looked like Jesus was nothing.

He was a nobody. And yet, all the while, the Lord is actually going to show that there was success. There was victory. He's my son. He brought him back to life. There's vindication.

And then notice what David does here in verse 4 and 5. He puts a curse, a curse on the enemy. Verse 4, requit them or literally give to them.

He says it twice. Give to them according to their work and according to the evil of their practices. Give to them according to the deeds of their hands.

Their work was the evil practices and the deeds of their hands. Bring your wrath upon them. God will judge men according to their works.

[18 : 50] Revelation 20 verse 12. Because their works or their practices reflect what's in the heart. Right? If out of the heart the mouth speaks.

David did pray for God's vengeance upon them and he prayed according to how these men were acting their deeds and how they lived their practices and he pled for God's cause.

Not my judgment, O God. Not me, but you. And if you remember, if this was during the time of Absalom's rebellion, you remember David's walking and one of Saul's relatives was throwing dirt and rocks at David and said, there goes you, there you go.

Oh, David, God's putting back upon you what you did to Saul. And then his right hand man said, you want me to go cut his head off? He doesn't do that to the king. He said, no, no, no, no.

David says, no. Maybe the Lord is having him say this for a reason. Don't do it. Don't do it. Why? David's thinking, the Lord's gonna bring judgment.

[20 : 01] The Lord's gonna do that. We're called to love our enemies leaving the judgments of our enemies for God. So supplication, petition should be a mark of our prayers to the Lord against people who may come against us.

We ask God to repay them their recompense. Notice, he says the end of verse four, repay them their recompense. What's due them because of their evil?

Not because we want to get back at them. But again, he pled for God's cause.

We should plead for God's cause too. Notice verse five. Because they do not regard the works of the Lord. Here's where David brings out. They don't look at the Lord.

They don't care about the Lord. They don't consider the Lord. They don't consider Yahweh.

Because they do not regard the works of Yahweh nor the deeds of Yahweh's hands, Yahweh will tear them down and not build them up.

[21 : 09] Regard means to discern, consider, to understand, to know with the mind. Here's the blinding ignorance of men. They left God out of their thinking.

They were atheists in practice. Maybe in profession too. They weren't God thinking at all. the works and deeds of Yahweh.

Although they proclaimed to know God in practice, they refused to acknowledge Him. That's what he's saying. And again, this is a possible reference to those who were trying to bring down David's kingly authority.

Authority that was given to him by Yahweh. Not from him. He's praying for God's vengeance and praying for God's vengeance comes from their blindness to God's just and merciful rule and from their disregard of the Lord and disregard of what He's doing.

And that's why he says, end of verse 5, He will tear them down and not build them up. God will judge them. They will not stand. God will, eventually, in His time and in His way, tear down those who stand against us and come against us because He loves His servants.

[22 : 31] He loves His people. So here is David. He's petitioning God. Not seeing results.

Not seeing the change of his circumstances. Because David knew and we noticed too. David knew and we should know, we should remember God will eventually in His time and in His way.

Not in your time. Not in your way. Taking this trial. Not in your time.

Not in your way. Taking this hardship. Not in your time. Not in your way. That's not how God does things. Sometimes it's in your way but sometimes, that time it's in His time.

Other times it's in His time but not your way. Other times you don't get either one. It's not your way, it's not your time. It's embracing that.

[23:36] It's embracing the Lord. It's embracing the Lord and trusting Him. So when life looks bleak, when enemies strike, when trouble runs after you, stop and bring your supplications to the Lord.

Stop and bring your supplications to the Lord. Cry out to God. It's okay to start your prayer that way. So supplication. Here's a second one.

Admiration. Look at how things change here in the Psalm. 6, 7, and 8. Praise be Yahweh.

So blessed could mean benefit, could mean happy, or could mean praise. So here it seems like better. Praise. Happy be Yahweh.

Happiness, not to come by, excuse me, praise be to Yahweh. Admiration. God possessive, pervasive power to preserve His people. You like all those Ps? So praise Him for it.

[24:46] Spurgeon said this, when we pray well, it'll cause us to praise well. God possesses His power to preserve His people.

Praise Him for it. He says, praise Yahweh. And notice what He does here first. There's individual admiration He has for Yahweh, for the Lord. Because He has heard the voice of my supplications. He heard me. Suddenly all His fears are conquered. His deepest concerns turn into highest celebration but get this, with no changing of His circumstances.

I mean, we know the circumstances change, right? Because you just flip the next page or two over in your Bible and you see, you know, Absalom and dead and you know, you know the end of the story.

Not David, he's living it, man. He's right in the thick of it. Day after day. No change of His circumstances. But what is it that drives Him to praise?

[25:56] Notice, why? Because you've heard me. You heard me. The change of attitude is due to answer prayer that would come, not had come.

Maybe you're here today and need God to save you so you can praise Him.

Maybe you're not a Christian, you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ or you're listening to this message, you don't know Jesus. You need to cry out to Him, say, God save me and He will and you can praise Him for it.

God will come, He'll save you, He'll forgive you through the Lord Jesus Christ. Repent and trust Christ. You can become a praising person of God. So look at how He's doing this with individual admiration.

All His fears are conquered. You've heard me and then look at what He says here in verse 7.

Yahweh is my strength and my shield. Not simply the source, but His character.

[27:06] God is strength. God is a shield. God is a shield. Enabling Him to endure. He had such admiration for Yahweh because of who He is.

And so that's why He says, verse 7, my heart trusts in Him and I am helped. I have confidence in Him, not my circumstances.

I feel safe in Him, not in my circumstances. He resolved to have His heart not be in despair, but to put His confidence and hope in Yahweh.

It reminded me in Psalm 13 when Josh Ariano preached the beginning of last month. 13 verse 5 of the Psalms where David says, but I have trusted in your covenant love.

My heart will rejoice in your salvation. David resolves, I'm going to trust you. I'm going to trust you.

My confidence will be in you, not in my circumstances, not in the things that I see.

[28:35] For what does Paul say? The things that we see, they're temporal, but the things that are unseen, those things are eternal. And then look at how he says this in the next part of verse 7.

He says, I am helped, therefore my heart exalts. I'm rejoicing, it's triumphing, and triumph rests first in who God is.

And second, what he's done, or what he will do, his heart exalts, his triumphant, yeah, in the Lord. And then he says this, I love this part, and with my song, I will thank him. From suffering, spring song, and from song, springs his praise to God.

He thanked him with music, and song. You know, songs can be so good for your soul to direct you back to giving praise and thanks to God, admiring him with your whole being.

[29:48] I would encourage you to do that. Find songs to minister to you. Recently, Shane and Shane, and I don't know how long, how old this song is, but Shane and Shane have a song called

You've Already Won.

It's been a song that's been encouraging to my heart. Songs can be so good for you that are full of rich theology and directing you back to Christ, back to truth, to get you out of wallowing in your circumstances and in things that are happening and push you back to Christ and the gospel and the Lord.

Spurgeon says this, a song is the soul's fittest method of giving vent to its happiness.

It were well if we were more like the singing lark and less like the croaking raven. It'd be better if you're like the singing larks and the birds rather than the ah, ah, ah, right?

What do you have out there? Well, that's pretty loud, sorry. That woke you up sorry for something. So there's individual admiration but then notice what he does here.

[31 : 17] He does corporate admiration. Verse 8. Yahweh is their strength and he's the saving defense to his anointed.

He declared Yahweh to be his strength but now considers God's people. He's our strength. He preserved me and he also preserves us in our weakness.

And here when I think David says his anointed it correlates with what he says in the first part of verse 8 their strength. So I think his anointed he's talking about not David himself but God's people his chosen ones.

Israel was his anointed. So for us all he is an inaccessible place of refuge. For all of us not just for David.

And if this truly was during the time of Absalom's rebellion then the sin of Absalom was not only destructive to David but to the nation as a whole right?

[32 : 33] In spite of David's shortcomings this was no way to deal with God's anointed king or his anointed people. What Absalom was doing was totally wrong.

There was no way to deal with that. It was bringing harm not just to David individually but he was bringing harm to the nation as a whole. That's why he says Yahweh is our strength.

He's a saving defense. A refuge. And he is a refuge to us as a body as a church. And we find our solace in him which drives us to give him admiration and praise.

And here's David. He cries out to God and supplication. The majority of the psalm first five verses out of the nine verses first five is supplication.

And then he gives three verses these three parts are admiration. And then what he does here he stops and then he gives last intercession. This is verse nine.

[33 : 43] And notice the verbs. save, bless, shepherd, carry. Save your people.

Bless your inheritance. Shepherd them also. Carry them forever. That's why we sang that song shepherd from City of Light.

Again the intercession of four verbs. Save, bless, shepherd, carry. Four commands or requests. Not really for him but for the whole nation.

For God's people. Be like a shepherd over your sheep. Save us. Bless us. May we find favor from you.

Lift us up. Bear us up. Support us. Sustain us, O God. And this is what Jesus does for us.

[34 : 45] He intercedes for us. He is the good shepherd over us. Us as his sheep. As Yahweh said in Ezekiel 34 verse 23 Then I will set over them one shepherd my servant David and he will feed them.

He will feed them himself and be their shepherd and I, Yahweh, will be their God and my servant David will be prince among them. I, Yahweh, have spoken. And of course John 10, 11 Jesus says I am the good shepherd.

I lay down my life for the sheep. Interceding. So here's three parts of what a prayer should look like.

There's supplication, admiration, intercession. Stephen Lawson, he says this, when believers feel they are so weak that they can advance no further in God's will, the Lord is an ever-present shepherd who carries them forward even the weakest of his sheep saving them from harm.

Them, us, his people. It's right for us to pray for the overthrow of the wicked just as it is right for us to pray for the blessing of God upon his people.

[35 : 59] We, the church, are God's people, his inheritance. Pray for us. Pray for each other. May God work out salvation for us in every future need and bless us to.

May he play the part of a shepherd over his people shepherding us. May he continue to exalt us time and time again as he's done this in the past. May he carry us as his church in his arms.

We need you, O God. So when life looks bleak, when enemies strike, when trouble seems to be running after you, stop.

Bring your supplications to the Lord. Give him the admiration he deserves and intercede for his people. As we come to this time of the Lord's Supper, this will be good because we're bringing our supplication to the Lord.

Lord, we know we're sinners. And yet we're admiring him because that's why Jesus had to die, right? We're not worthy. Jesus is worthy. So the bread reminds us of that.

[37 : 12] The juice reminds us of that. And then praising his name that Jesus is interceding for us as his church and praying for you even now. And I also want to make known if you're here visiting and from a church of like faith and practice, we encourage you to take the Lord's Supper with us.

You're invited to do that. If you do not know the Lord, I encourage you do not partake of the Lord's Supper. This is to remind us of our continuing relationship with Jesus.

That's why we do the Lord's Supper. And I would encourage you if you have something against someone, you've tried to make things right but have not gone well, that's one thing.

But you have something against someone and you can't seem to get through that, get by that, have not gone to them, don't come to the Lord's Supper. Come the next time we partake of the Lord's Supper.

First try and reconcile with that person as best as you can. Because Jesus reconciled with us, right? So let's stop and let's pray and we'll focus our minds upon the truth of the gospel.

[38 : 27] So we stop and we pray our supplication. God, hear our cry. The church has been dealt a hand.

It's been hard. It seems like circumstances, you're gone. So God, we pray Yahweh God, the God of Israel, come to our aid.

And we will admire you. We resolve to trust you. May our heart exult in you, rejoicing in you, triumphing in you.

And we pray for each other. We intercede, save, bless, shepherd, carry us, we ask.

As we come to this time of the Lord's Supper, as we examine our hearts, we know we are sinners.

[39 : 41] We know that. Thank you, Jesus. As we confess our sin, you're faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So we come with humility and with praise and thanks. so grateful. May it renew our dedication to you, our love for you.

And may it remind us that you will return to take us home. And all this trouble and hardships will come to an end.

You will vindicate us. So I encourage you at this time to prepare your heart, direct your heart to the gospel, preach, speak, don't listen to yourself, talk to yourself, talk to yourself the gospel, give yourself gospel truth, remind yourself of the sufficiency of Jesus for all your sins, confess your sins, yet remind yourself of the sufficiency of Christ for those sins.

And then we'll sing and we'll do all that stuff but what's most important is between you and the Lord. Take this time. Would you do that now, please?

[41 : 15] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.