

RUN THE RACE | HOPE CHAPEL

PRAYERFUL DISCIPLES

The Benefits of Prayer and Why It Matters
Pastor Yohanna | Sunday 17 May 2026 | 9AM Gawler

Big Idea: *Prayer is a platform of communication designed by God for fellowship between God and his people. When we understand the benefits of prayer, we are encouraged to pray, to persist, and to go deeper.*

Introduction — What Is Prayer?

Prayer is a platform of communication designed by God — a conversation between God the Creator and his people.

“Prayer is simply a two-way communication between you and God.”

— Billy Graham

“The men who have most powerfully illustrated Christ in their character and most powerfully affected the world for him have been men who spent so much time with God as to make it a notable feature in their lives.”

— E.M. Bounds

The Disciples Observe Jesus Praying

Luke 11:1–2 *One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’ He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come...’*

The disciples didn’t only hear Jesus teach about prayer — they saw him pray. The results his prayer life produced were so significant that they wanted to learn how to pray the same way. Jesus then gave them a practical guide, covering five areas:

- Worship — hallowed be your name
- The will of God — your kingdom come
- God’s provision — give us each day our daily bread
- Repentance — forgive us our sins
- Deliverance — lead us not into temptation

Jesus also taught them about persistence in prayer (Luke 11:5–8) and about the assurance that God hears and answers prayer (Luke 11:9–13) — seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened.

Why Don't People Pray?

Pastor Yohanna identified five common reasons people struggle with prayer:

- Prayer seems void of results — when answers don't come, it becomes discouraging and people give up
- A belief that prayer is not important — not seeing its value or necessity
- Laziness and apathy — the flesh resists the discipline of prayer
- Distraction — including good things like ministry, which can crowd out personal time with God
- Not understanding how to pray, or what the benefits of prayer actually are

The goal of this message is to show the benefits of prayer — because when we understand what prayer produces in our lives, it encourages us to pray, to push through, and to be persistent.

Five Benefits of Prayer

BENEFIT 1 | Prayer Develops Intimacy with the Father

God had fellowship with Adam in the Garden of Eden — that oneness and intimacy is what we can now have through prayer. Wherever you are, whatever your circumstances, you can build a place of prayer where you meet with your Father.

James 4:8 *Come near to God and he will come near to you.*

When we feel like we've let God down, our guilty conscience can tell us he doesn't want us. But the opposite is true — that is exactly when he wants us to come closer, because only he can restore and wash us.

The more we talk to God, the more of God rubs off on us. His joy rubs on us. His peace rubs on us. Intimacy with God also sharpens our ability to hear his voice. The clutter of life can choke our discernment, but in the place of prayer, his voice becomes clear.

Reflect: *When you feel weighed down — by work, by worry, by the noise of everyday life — the first step is prayer. Go to God with it. What's on him begins to rub on you.*

BENEFIT 2 | Prayer Transforms You and Builds You Up in Faith

Transformation is gradual — every day spent in God's presence, reading his Word and praying, changes us. The Bible tells us that when Jesus prayed, the appearance of his face changed. Something similar happens in us as we pray. People begin to notice we are not the same person anymore.

Philippians 4:6 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

Prayer produces faith over fear. The disciples in Acts 4 were shaken and afraid when threatened by the religious leaders. They prayed together, and the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Prayer transformed their fear into boldness.

Acts 4:29–31 *Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness... After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

Reflect: *Is there anxiety, worry, or fear you are carrying right now? Philippians 4:6 is an invitation to bring it to God by prayer and petition with thanksgiving.*

BENEFIT 3 | Prayer Establishes the Victory of Christ in Your Life

There are spiritual forces at work in the unseen world, and prayer is the means by which we stand against them. We do not fight to win — Jesus said 'It is finished' on the cross. Sickness, poverty, depression, and everything that does not reflect God's original design was finished at the cross. Prayer is the place where we declare and establish what already belongs to us in Christ.

Pastor Yohanna shared that God corrected him in prayer — he had been praying 'I take authority,' and God said: you already have the authority. Jesus said all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me — and then said, go. We stand in that authority in prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

Our city will not be changed by programs alone. It takes prayer. Even one or two gathered in prayer can shift things in a community and a land.

BENEFIT 4 | Prayer Gives Strength to Overcome Temptation and Prepares You for Important Seasons

Matthew 26:41 *Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Jesus said these words to his disciples at one of the most critical moments of his earthly life — the night before the crucifixion. Prayer prepares us for critical seasons: important decisions, major life changes, transitions. When we face moments that require God's hand and direction, prayer is what equips us to walk through them.

BENEFIT 5 | Prayer Produces Power for the Miraculous

God still heals and restores. The boldness that Peter and John carried when they encountered the man at the temple gate was a boldness born out of a life of prayer. They said, silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you — in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk. Men who pray carry something that produces results.

Practical Tips for Building a Prayer Life

Pastor Yohanna closed with practical steps for anyone wanting to grow in prayer:

- Have set times dedicated to God. Even 2–5 minutes is a good start. The power of prayer is in consistency, not quantity.
- Have people around you who encourage your prayer life. Connect with others who will pray with you and build you up.
- Attend prayer meetings. Whenever there is an opportunity to pray together, take it. Church is built on prayer.

Pastor Yohanna's own suggested starting point: begin with thanksgiving. Thank God for his goodness and faithfulness. From there, use the guide Jesus gave his disciples in Luke 11 — worship, God's will, provision, repentance, deliverance — and you will find you have more to pray than you expected.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

1. Which of the five reasons people don't pray resonates most honestly with you right now — discouragement from unanswered prayer, distraction, laziness, not knowing how, or not seeing the value? What would it take to address that one thing?
2. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray after watching him pray. Who in your life models a prayer life you would want to learn from? What could you do to learn from them?

3. Pastor Yohanna said the power of prayer is in consistency, not quantity. What would a consistent, daily prayer habit look like for you in this season — even just 2–5 minutes?

4. He described prayer as a place where ‘what’s on God rubs on you.’ When did you last experience that — coming out of prayer feeling different to how you went in?

5. Is there a situation in your life right now that needs prayer — a decision, a fear, a relationship, a health matter? What would it look like to bring that persistently to God this week?

6. Pastor Yohanna said our city will not be changed by programs alone — it takes prayer. How do you see your personal prayer life connecting to what God wants to do in your community?

Key Scriptures This Week

- Luke 11:1–2 — Disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray
- Luke 11:5–8 — Persistence in prayer
- Luke 11:9–13 — Assurance: ask, seek, knock
- James 4:8 — Come near to God and he will come near to you
- Philippians 4:6 — Do not be anxious; present your requests to God
- Acts 4:29–31 — After they prayed, they were filled and spoke boldly
- Ephesians 6:18 — Pray in the Spirit on all occasions
- Matthew 26:41 — Watch and pray; the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak