



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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When God Is Silent

Every child of God will go through times when God is silent. You will have times when you feel like God is far away. You will wonder if God is listening to you. You will begin to think God will never speak to you again.

This is an agonizing time for the child of God. It leads to questions like, "Where is God?" and "What is God doing?" You begin to think, "Does God still love me?" You struggle with the question, "Has God abandoned me?" This struggle is even greater when it comes during times of need or adversity.

How do you handle these times of the silence of God? What can you do during these times?

When God is silent, don't panic.

When you experience times like this, don't let your imagination run wild. Don't expect the worst. It is not time to panic. When God is silent, it is not time to:

- Feel that God no longer cares about you.
- To doubt your salvation.
- Question the validity of the Christian faith.

These knee-jerk reactions often flow out of our own frustration. It's more about our fear than our faith.

When God is silent, it is a common reaction to get frustrated, to begin to wonder about what He is doing. In times like this, we need to pour our hearts out to Him. He invites you to come and bring all your frustrations and fears to Him.

Nevertheless, you cannot continue in a state panic, a condition of fear mixed with frustration. You cannot allow frustration and fear to dominate. When we allow these things to dominate, it will hinder our faithfulness to God. It will give the devil an opportunity to sow more doubt into your minds. It will also be an obstacle to you growing in faith. We must keep in mind the teaching of God's Word, "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (**James 1:4**). The divine prescription for times like these is patience not panic! God is accomplishing His purpose; we must learn to be patient with His wise timing.

When God is silent, we don't have to panic. We can be patient. This has been the experience of other believers:

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“Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? (**Psalm 10:1**)

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? (**Psalm 22:1**)

You are not alone. You're not walking on this path by yourself. Many, many believers have gone ahead of you. They have walked through times of God's silence. Yet, they have continued to walk with Him and God has blessed, touched, and answered them. God doesn't want you to panic – to be filled with fear and anxiety. He desires that you be patient and pray.

When God is silent, seek Him with all your strength.

When a believer experiences a time like this, there is a tendency to slack off in pursuing God. We can develop an attitude, “God is not listening; He's not going to answer. Why should I pray?”

Yet, when God is silent, it should stir you to seek Him with all your strength. It should lead you to pray with intensity. Praise Him with all your might. Confess your sins with broken and heartfelt passion. Thank Him continually. Bring your requests to Him with faith and persistence.

You may be wondering, “Why?” God's silence is often an invitation to a deeper, more intimate relationship with Him. When God seems far away, He is inviting you to pursue Him, “Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God” (**Isaiah 50:10**). Even though you have no answers and you do not sense His presence, cry out to Him and depend on Him.

Sometimes God is silent in order to create a greater longing in you for Him, “I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early”

(**Hosea 5:15**). God never forsakes His people; He is always with us. Yet, sometimes, He removes our sense of His presence. He causes us to feel as if He is far away and silent. By doing this, He wants to teach you how much you need Him. He wants to reveal to you how dependent you are on Him.

Times of silence are God's way of drawing you to Himself. His silence is an invitation to pursue Him with all your being. When God is silent, seek Him with all your might.

When God is silent, examine yourself to see if there are any hindrances.

Sometimes God's silence is to invite you to a deeper, more intimate relationship with Him. Yet, sometimes, it is to discipline you for sin. This is not always the case, but He does choose to do this at times.

The worst thing that can happen to a child of God is feeling as if God is far away. To sense that He is not listening or speaking brings inexplicable pain to the child of God's heart. It is a terrible burden and a fierce chastisement for sin. For this reason, God will use this to show His displeasure over our sin.

The Word of God says, “Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face, that he will not hear you” (**Isaiah 59:1-2**). The “face” of God refers to His presence. God says that the peoples' sins have put a barrier between the people and Him. God declares that He “hid his face” from them. In other words, He took away their sense of His presence from them. God did this because of their sin. Sin moves God to show us His hatred of our sin. He often does this by hiding His face – removing our sense of His presence.

The Bible also says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me” (**Isaiah 66:18**). God declares that He chooses not to listen when we harbor sin in our life. If we toy and play with sin, we face the consequence of God choosing not to hear us.

If He will not hear us, then you can be sure that He will not speak to us.

When God is silent, it may be God's chastisement. It might be His discipline for your sin. He wants to show you that sin grieves and angers Him. That is why He is silent and feels far away. He wants you to see how evil and costly sin is. He longs for you to choose Him and not your sin. When you experience God's silence, examine to see if there is any unconfessed sin – any sin that, you have not honestly confronted and dealt with. Plead with the Holy Spirit to reveal anything to you that is causing you to experience His silence.

When God is silent, pray yourself through fear and frustration to praise and faith.

This was the common practice of the psalmists. Their prayers would begin with brokenhearted agony. Yet, they would finish with glorious faith and praise. What happened? They prayed through the fear and frustration. They sought God and meditated on Him until their hearts gave way to faith and to praise.

An example of this is **Psalms 10**. Notice the flow from fear to faith, from frustration to praise:

10:1-2 – His Agony

10:3-13 – His Adversity

10:14-16 – His Asking For Deliverance

10:16-18 – His Adoration

He prayed through the fear and frustration. He pled with God until He could praise God. He poured out His agony before God until it became adoration to God.

When God is silent, pour your heart out to Him. Don't quit pleading your complaint until your frustration gives way to faith and your agony turns to adoration. Meditate on Him and His ways. Praise Him. Don't stop until your anxiety melts and faith and praise take its place.

When God is silent, ask Him to teach you to walk by faith and not by sight.

This is God's desire for your life, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (**2 Corinthians 5:7**). God wants you to trust Him when you can't hear, see, or feel anything. When God is silent, it's a great time to learn how to walk by faith. It's an opportunity to stretch and strengthen your faith. It's the training ground for growing the ability to trust God regardless of what you see, hear, or feel.

Faith is built in times of adversity. You have to go through times like this for your faith to grow and mature, "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (**James 1:3**). Seasons of the silence of God give you the opportunity to develop trust in Him – trust that is not dependent on your senses but on your faith. When you have these times, ask God to help you make the most of them. Pray that He will teach you how to walk not by your senses but by what His Word says.

When God is silent, dig into the Word of God.

God speaks primarily through His Word. It is through the pages of Scripture that God speaks clearly and powerfully. When God seems to be silent, we must fill our lives with His Word. These times should drive us to pour over the pages of Scripture, waiting and listening for the still, small voice of God. The psalmist found hope as he searched God's Word. This hope anchors us and helps in the midst of the seeming distance of our Father and God:

"My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy Word (**Psalms 119:81**)."

Thou art my hiding place and my shield; I hope in thy Word (**Psalms 119:114**)."

"I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame (**Psalms 119:31**)."

When God seems far away and silent, dig into His Word, waiting on Him!

Maturing In Faith

When you come to Christ, your faith is simple, childlike dependence on God and His promise. You don't have to be a theologian or scholar to be a Christian. You must receive and yield yourself to God's promise of salvation through Jesus Christ. Saving faith is the childlike trust in God's promise in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Yet, after you come to Christ, God wants to stretch and strengthen that faith. He longs to take you further in your ability to trust Him. He desires to move you to a place of deeper trust in Him. It is not His will for you to stay where you are. He wants you to grow in your ability to trust Him.

The following prayer guide is designed to help you pray for a maturing faith. These Scriptures are based on God's Word. You can plead them for yourself or for others. Pray God's Word, believing God to widen and deepen your faith.

Father, Your Word says that those who trust You will be upheld. I believe this and ask You to increase my faith so that I will know and experience Your sustaining power (**2 Chronicles 20:20**).

Father, Your Word says that those who know Your name will trust You. Father, teach me about Yourself. Reveal to me the truth about Your character. I want to know You and to trust You (**Psalms 9:10**).

Father, Your Word says that I am to trust You and rely on You when I walk in the dark and have no light. Father, help me; grant me grace to trust You regardless of what I face or how I feel (**Isaiah 50:10**).

Father, Your Son Jesus tells me that I am to have faith in You. O God, strengthen my faith. Establish my faith by Your power through Your Word (**Mark 11:22**).

Father, Your Word says that faith is the fruit of the Spirit's work in my life. I plead in Jesus'

name that my life would yield the fruit of faith by the working of Your Spirit (**Galatians 5:22**).

Father, I plead that I will be built up in my faith (**Jude 20**).

Father, I ask that I would not become lazy but that by faith and patience I would be faithful to You and inherit what you have promised (**Hebrews 6:12**).

Father, Your Word says that You keep me by Your power through faith in Jesus. Deepen my faith; grow it and make it stronger (**1 Peter 1:5**).

Father, I trust in You. I pray that through Your unfailing love I will not be shaken or moved from trusting in You (**Psalms 21:7**).

Father, Your Word says that it is better to take refuge in You than in man. Empower me to fix my eyes on You. Teach me to trust You more than anyone else in my life (**Psalms 118:8**).

Father, Your Word says that the fear of man will prove to be a snare but that the one who trusts in You will be kept safe. I ask in Jesus' name that my faith in You will be greater than my fear of any man (**Proverbs 29:25**).

Father, Your Word says that the woes of the wicked are many. Yet, You also say that Your unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts You. I trust You; sustain my faith. Surround me with Your unfailing love (**Psalms 32:10**).

Praying When The Pressure Is On

In **Psalm 3**, we have the recorded prayer of David when he was on the run from Absalom. Absalom, David's oldest son, conspired against his father. He wanted to be the king of Israel. He decided to seize it through deceit and treachery.

Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel. He won them over and turned them against David. His conspiracy was large and

deep – large and deep enough for David to flee from Jerusalem.

This prayer came from David when he was on the run from Absalom. The nation, not to mention his son, had turned against him. This was a time when David could have been overwhelmed with despair and depression.

Yet, in this prayer, we see that he is filled with faith and hope. The reason for this is that He sought the Lord and found his hope in Him.

David provides us with an example of how to pray when the pressure is on. He shows us the kind of praying that can deliver us from faithlessness and despair. In the psalm, we need to notice four truths of how to pray when the pressure is on:

(1) Lay your situation out to the Lord (3:1-2).

In these opening verses, David pours his heart out to the Lord. He sets out before the Father his situation. He tells the Lord that the opposition is actually increasing against him. It was a tidal wave of opposition! As much as this hurt him, the lie of **3:2** stung him. Many people were saying that God had abandoned David. They were saying that God would not help him.

This lie crushed David. It is the worst of all afflictions to believe that God has abandoned you. Nothing can pierce the heart of God's child like this. People declared that God had abandoned David. They believed that he had wronged Saul and no God was paying him back.

Do you see how David prayed under pressure? He surrenders his situation to the Lord. He lays out the details of his situation to the Lord. He withheld nothing from the Lord. This is what God desires from you (**1 Peter 5:7**). When your life is turned upside down, surrender it to the Lord. Share the details. Give it all to Him. Why is this important?

- *It eases the burden.* Your Father loves you and He will release His peace into your life.
- *It increases intimacy.* The more you share your life with your Father, the deeper your intimacy with Him.

- *It moves God's heart.* God loves His children; He cares when His children hurt.
- *It builds faith.* When you cast your cares on the Lord, it prepares you to trust Him.

(2) Focus on God's character (3:3-6).

Beginning in verse 3, David turns his attention from his enemies to God. What a powerful example! God wants you to lay your situation out to Him. Yet, He doesn't want you to focus on your enemies, your pressure, or your adversity. He longs for you to turn to Him, to focus on who He is.

David turned from the lies that people told about Him to the truth he knew about God. He turned his focus from his situation to His God. Notice the truths that he mentions about God in this prayer:

- A God who protects (**3:3**).
- A God who blesses (**3:3**).
- A God who encourages (**3:3**).
- A God who hears and answers prayer (**3:4**).
- A God who sustains (**3:5**).
- A God who grants courage (**3:6**).

David focused on God's character. He looked to who God is for the strength and hope he needed in this situation.

Praying under pressure means fixing our gaze on the character of God. We must turn away from the lies around us and from the situations we find ourselves in. We must look to God. The believer finds strength and hope in the character of our God. Lies come and go. Situations change. Nevertheless, God remains forever the same. As He was yesterday, so He is today, and so He will be forever. He can be trusted and counted on regardless of what we feel and what we face.

(3) Remember when God delivered you in the past (3:7).

In **Psalm 3:7**, David looks back. He remembers the times when God had delivered him in the past. He then reminds God of His past deliverances. He asks God to remember how He had intervened for him in the past. Based on this, he asks God to act now. He

prays for God's help because of God's past help. God had acted in his behalf in the past, he now asks Him to act again.

When you find yourself in trying times, look back. Remember how God has helped you in the past. Reflect on all the times when God delivered you. Meditate on all the interventions of God in your life. Then, based on this, call on God to act. The faith to pray for God's work today is based on His work in the past.

Spiritual amnesia cripples the child of God. One of the main reasons we lack faith is our short memory. We can't seem to look back from the present situation. We allow present adversity to blind us from what God has done and how good He is. David's faith to ask for and believe God's help was based on His past works. Let the past goodness of God stir you to pray and believe for God's help. Remember how God has worked in the past. Reflect on how God good has been. Let this move you to pray and believe God today.

(4) Realize where your deliverance comes from (3:7).

David began with his situation. Yet, he ends with his confidence in God. He acknowledges that salvation belongs to the Lord. Only the Lord can deliver us. He alone has the wisdom and power to help us and save us from the battles and burdens that we face in this life. He also confesses that God alone can bless His people. Ultimately, all the blessings God's people experience come from Him. He is a good and faithful Father who places His blessing on His people.

You may have many pressures and problems. Yet, there is only one true Source of deliverance and blessing. It is the Lord alone. David confesses this in **3:8**. This must also be our confession. We must confess and believe that He alone can deliver us and bless us. Why is this crucial? When you confess and believe this, it will cause you to seek the Lord rather than depend on yourself. **Psalm 3:8** teaches us that our resources are insufficient for the battles and burdens of our lives. This verse is calling, even pleading, for the believer

to trust in the Lord. It is a call to forsake all hope in oneself and to call on and trust in the Lord alone who delivers and blesses. Psalm 3:8 cries out for the believer to quit trusting in his own resources and strength and to call on and depend on the Lord. Seek God's blessing even now!

At the same time, it is also a call to anyone who does not know Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. God's Word says to you that you cannot save yourself. You don't have enough willpower to say no to sin and temptation. You can't free yourself from the chains of sin that enslave you. Only the Lord, the crucified and resurrected Jesus, can deliver you and bless you. Won't you right now turn to Him? Right now, won't you confess your lostness and inability to run and control your life? Right now, call on Jesus, the Son of God, asking Him to save you and to bless you.

Drawing Near To God

The Word of God teaches that the believer is to draw near to God, "Draw nigh to God" (**James 4:8**). Our merciful God wants to have an intimate relationship with Him. He longs for us to pursue Him with all our being. He grants a gracious promise with this merciful command, "and he will draw nigh to you" (**James 4:8**). God's promises to reveal Himself to those who draw near to Him. He guarantees that if we pursue Him, we will know and experience Him.

The following prayer guide is designed to help you draw near to God. The Word of God reveals a variety of ways to draw near to Him. Plead these Scripture prayers with a view to drawing near to Him – to knowing and experiencing Him as never before in your walk with Him:

Father, I plead with You to teach me how to worship You. Help me to cultivate a spirit of worship that brings glory to You and delights Your heart (**Psalm 95:6-7**).

Father, I ask You to help me to meditate on You. Empower me to fix my mind on You through the day and the night. I want to think

of You throughout my day and night (**Psalm 63:5**).

Father, I highly esteem You. There is no limit to Your glory or Your greatness. Deliver me from ever having unworthy thoughts of You. Reveal more and more of Your greatness to me (**Psalm 71:19**).

Father, You have saved me and adopted me as Your Son. I ask that I will honor You as a son does a father. I pray that my whole life will bring honor to You and Your gospel (**Malachi 1:16**).

Father, I choose You. I want to worship and live my life for You. I forsake all other gods. I long to know You and live for You (**Joshua 24:15, 22**).

Father, You alone are the true and living God. I plead that I will love You with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind. Teach me to love You with all my being (**Deuteronomy 6:5**).

Father, I pray that I would desire You above everything on earth and everything in heaven. Deliver me from desiring any sin or worldly pleasure more than I do You (**Psalm 73:25**).

Father, I bow in reverence to You. Teach me about Your holiness. Enable me to honor Your holiness in every aspect of my life. I long to fear You for You are the great and awesome God of time and eternity (**Isaiah 8:13**).

Father, I have seen Your mighty power and experienced Your abundant grace. I believe You and Your Word. I believe in Your ability to do all things. Reveal more and more of Your power to me. Show me Your ability to do exceedingly abundantly above all that I can ask or think. I believe You, Father, manifest Your power in and through my life (**Exodus 14:31**).

Father, You are my Hope. In You I want to find all my hope. All the help of the world is vain; there is no hope in this world apart from You. Help me to rest in the hope that I have in You (**Psalm 130:7**).

Father, I pray that I will find my delight in You. My heart is so easily drawn away to sin and to the things of this world. I ask that You will be the great delight of my life (**Psalm 37:4**).

Father, there is much sorrow and misery in this life. I ask that I will rejoice and be glad in You. Teach me to find my joy in You and Your Word. Lead me to enjoy Your people. Set me free from the trap of finding joy in the fleeting pleasures of this world (**Psalm 32:11**).

Father, I plead that I will be zealous for Your glory and honor. Empower me to stand firm for You and Your Word in this world. I ask that I will not be ashamed of You but will be bold in my witness and life for Your honor (**Numbers 25:11**).

Father, teach me how to pray. Show me how to communicate with You. I ask that I will be anxious for nothing but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, I will make my requests known to You (**Philippians 4:6**).

Father, I long to obey You. Empower me to walk in all the ways that You command. I pray that obedience to You would characterize my life (**Jeremiah 23:7**).

Father, I ask in Jesus' name that I would do those things that are pleasing in Your sight (**1 John 3:22**).

Father, I plead in Jesus' name that I would be offended by what offends You. Teach me to hate what You hate and to love what You love (**Psalm 119:136**).

Father, You have shown me what is good and what You require of me. I ask that I will act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before You (**Micah 6:8**).

Father, You are the holy and righteous God. I plead that You will deliver me from tempting You. Set me free from doing anything that provokes You (**Matthew 4:7**).

Praying For Your Pastor

In **2 Timothy 1:3**, Paul prays for the young pastor Timothy. He assures Timothy that he is praying for him as he ministers at Ephesus. His praying for Timothy provides us with another way to intercede for pastors. Consider the following:

(1) The praise in his praying – “I thank God”

Thanking God is a form of praise. Paul declares that he thanked God for Timothy and his labors in the Lord. He thanked God for the way He had worked in him and was working in Him at the present time. Do you honor God by thanking Him for your pastor? Do you see the work God is doing in and through your pastor? Thank God for your pastor and his service. Ask God to continue the work that He began in him.

(2) The prompting of his praying – “I have remembrance of thee in my prayers”

What drove Paul to pray for Timothy? He remembered his labors in the Lord. He remembered his faithfulness. What should drive you to pray for your pastor? His labors, his faithfulness, his striving to serve. Each time your pastor preaches, teaches, ministers, and blesses you, let that drive you to pray for him.

(3) The persistency of his praying – “in my prayers night and day”

Paul prayed continually for Timothy. Why did he do this? It was because of Timothy's need. He needs continual prayer support. Your pastor needs the same. Believers must cover their pastors in prayer. The seriousness of the calling and the strain of the work demands intercession from God's people on a continual basis.



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