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How the Bible Says to Pray

By Paul Griffitts

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I am asked quite often how one can pray effectively. This article will show you the way the Word of God tells us to pray.

We are going to look at the Greek word pray (prayers, praying and prayed) proseuche and proseuchomai but only in the Mystery Epistles of Paul, Ephesians, Colossians and Philipians.

The Greek word proseuche appears in the New Testament 37 times in 37 verses and proseuchomai appears 90 times in 82 verses, this is quite an abundance of uses so I want to limit the study to just the three books of the Apostle Paul also know as the Prison Epistles.

We must first start our study with some Greek grammar lessons, very basic for now. When the words proseuche or proseuchomai are used as verbs, or as nouns the verbs that are used with them, are always in the present tense. The present tense represents a simple statement of fact or reality viewed as occurring in actual time and in most cases this correspond directly with the English present tense.

Another characteristic of these verbs are that they are in the middle voice. The middle voice indicates the subject performing an action upon himself (reflexive action) or for his own benefit. E.g., "The boy groomed himself." Many verbs which occur only in middle voice forms are translated in English as having an active sense; these are called "deponent" verbs, and do not comply with the normal requirements for the middle voice.

A different way to look at "deponent verbs" is that they occur with passive or middle voice forms but with active voice meaning The Greek middle voice meaning is still applicable, action is done for ones own benefit, this is very apropos to prayer.

The third characteristic of these verbs is the mood. These verbs for the most part are in the participle mood. The Greek participle corresponds for the most part to the English participle, reflecting "-ing" or "-ed" being suffixed to the basic verb form. The participle can be used either like a verb or a noun, as in English, and thus is often termed a "verbal noun."

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We must therefore conclude that even when the word prayer is used as a noun it is a verbal noun and indicates some action by the subject. This being said let us now take a look at the verses where these words are used and it will become clear as to how prayer is to be done.

Eph. 1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making (present tense, middle voice) mention of you in my prayers; proseuche (verbal noun).

Eph. 6:18 Praying proseuchomai (present tense, middle voice, participle mood) always with all prayer proseuche (verbal noun) and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Phil. 1:9 And this I pray proseuchomai (present tense, middle voice, participle mood), that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and [in] all judgment;

Phil. 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer proseuche (verbal noun) and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Col. 1:3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying proseuchomai (present tense, middle voice, participle mood), always for you,

Col. 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard [it], do not cease to pray proseuchomai (present tense, middle voice, participle mood) for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Col. 4:2 Continue proskartereo (present tense, middle voice, imperative mood) in prayer proseuche, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

Here the mood of the verb "continue" changed from participle to imperative. The imperative mood corresponds to the English imperative, and expresses a command to the hearer to perform a certain action by the order and authority of the one commanding.

The Apostle by virtue of the God breathed Word is commanding the Colossians to actively pray with thanksgiving.

Col. 4:3 Withal praying proseuchomai (present tense, middle voice, participle mood), also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

Col. 4:12 Epaphras, who is [one] of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers proseuche, (verbal noun) that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Lastly I would like to share with you a verse that uses another Greek word, dessis for the English word prayer.

Phil. 1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer deesis, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Dessis has its roots in the word deomai which is a verb and guess what the characteristics of this verb are; you got it, present tense, middle voice, participle mood. Is the Word of God incredible or what?

So when it comes to prayer and praying we see a theme; that is that pray is something we should do consistently and constantly.

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Prayer Takes Many Forms

By Lisa M. Hendey

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Book Review -How Did Bible Heroes Pray by Mona Hodgson
Reviewed by Lisa M. Hendey

In her charming new book *How Did Bible Heroes Pray* (Kregel Kidzone, February 2005, hardcover, 24 pages) author Mona Hodgson helps children explore the concept of prayer and how to integrate it into their own daily lives. Hodgson points to the heroes children may be familiar with in the Bible and shares how each of these special people turned to God in prayer. For each example given, the author cites the relevant scripture passage for further research and edification. As Daniel turned to God on his knees, children are encouraged to pray to God using this posture. As Samuel lay in bed listening to and conversing with God, children are reminded that they too can take quiet time in bed to pray.

Next Hodgson turns to detailing situations when children might feel led to pray. Jonah's fear, Job's sadness and Jesus' need for "alone time" with his father are all situations to which today's child can relate. Reminding ourselves and our children that facing moments of uncertainty or disappointment with prayer is a valuable lesson we can offer our families and students.

This book is geared at children ages five and up, as each page features only a few lines of text. A noteworthy contribution to *How Did Bible Heroes Pray* is the artwork of illustrator Hollie Gillett, whose delightful illustrations feature a broad cross section of ages and races on a pallet of beautiful backgrounds.

For additional information on *How Did Bible Heroes Pray* visit <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0825427789/digitalcropper-20>

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