

NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION OF AMERICA, INTERNATIONAL, INC.

DR. SAMUEL TOLBERT, PRESIDENT

PRAYER DISCIPLINES PRESENTATION

Roy Elton Brackins, Sr. Pastor,

Grace Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church

Luke 11:1-4

PRAYER, A PRECIOUS PRIVILEGE FROM GOD

In my estimation, Prayer is one of the most powerful but yet seldom used gifts and privileges that God has made available to those of us who are a part of the Body of Christ. I want to make it clear from the outset of this presentation that I am by no means suggesting that Prayer is some magic wand that can make all of our troubles instantly go away. I am not suggesting that Prayer is some panic button we should push to bail us out when we have tried everything else and exhausted all of our other humanistic resources. I am not suggesting that Prayer is a tool that can sway the heart of God and get Him to give us all the whimsical and in some instances ungodly things we desire for our lives.

In my humble opinion, I believe Prayer allows us reach the heart of God in passionate communication. Prayer affords us the opportunity to share our fears, faults and failures with the One who has been faithful to us throughout our entire earthly existence. When we use the gift of Prayer in the manner in which God intended when He gave us the blessed privilege to come boldly to His throne of grace, it will allow us to experience at least three basic things.

**1:** It helps us to understand the might, majesty, and marvelous nature of our God and creator. Prayer teaches us how holy God is, and how wretched and undeserving we are. Jesus taught us to acknowledge God's holiness and sovereignty before we ask Him for anything. Luke 11: 2, "Our Father who are in Heaven, {hollowed, holy, awesome} is Your name..."

**2:** Prayer teaches us how to accept God's plan and purpose for our lives, and never question His intentions. To ask Him to give us the strength to overcome difficulties and grow in the midst of whatever He allows in our lives. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven..." As believers, we must be confident in the fact that since God, (not if God) is able to control Heaven, Earth, the Galaxies, and all of His creation, then surely, He is able to control the major and minute details of our individual lives. When we Acknowledge His Divinity, it then becomes easier to Accept His Design for our lives.

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**3:** Prayer teaches us how to trust the Lord for everything we need and never become fearful or frantic about what we may seem to be lacking at any given time in our lives. Luke 11:3, "...Give us this day our daily bread..." Has it not dawned on you that when Jesus taught us to add this element to our Prayer lives, He was establishing 3 basic principles? "Give us this day..." He wants us to have "FRESH BREAD." This day's bread allows us to realize what the Lord has for us is not something old and molded. He did not give it to us on yesterday, last week or last month, because He wanted us to have a FRESH Blessing from Him.

He also wants us to have "FAITH BREAD." This is the bread the Lord provides that comes as a result of our trusting Him and being obedient to the commands from His Word. Ex. We Tithe when we think we cannot afford to. We give a sacrificial offering when we would rather use the money to fulfill a personal financial responsibility. We help someone who is hurting worse than we are, even though our needs are staring us in the face. Then, as a result of our obedience and act of Faith, God sends a blessing to us from an unexpected source. FAITH BREAD!

He wants us to have the FATHER'S BREAD. In other words, I am convinced the reason the Lord tells us to pray in this manner is so we will not be tempted to eat out of the devil's hand. When we know who we are relying on to meet our needs, then we can wait on Him without accepting crumbs from the devil's table.

I am keenly aware of the fact that Prayer has so many more components, but I simply want to focus on these 3 Elements to provide a foundation for us to either build, or to establish our Prayer lives upon.

I have been asked to share some of the personal disciplines that I utilize in my life and hopefully they will be helpful to you in some way.

### Family Prayers

Every day, I pray for my wife as she begins her day. We embrace each other standing and hugging, as we thank the Lord for His Protection. Then we ask the Lord for His guidance and His Provisions. No matter where I am preaching across this country, my wife calls and prays for me prior to the preaching assignment. We pray at the beginning of each year; we ask the Lord to bless us to be able to give back to Him a

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special amount above the Tithe that we owe Him. We started that discipline in 2002, and we were at 10 to 11 % in our giving. By the grace of God and as a result of us asking and Him giving us the discipline, we have given no less than 33 % of everything the Lord has blessed us with for the past 15 years. We had a phenomenal Giving Goal that we Prayed about for 3 years, and the Lord allowed us to reach it in 2020 during a Pandemic! We pray about every major purchase, then trust God to put all of the pieces in place.

Every Friday I call and pray for and with all of my 4 living siblings. Every thing about their lives is soaked and bathed in believing Prayer. If they are unable to answer the phone, I leave the prayer on their voicemail.

Every Saturday I call and pray for my 4 children. Every aspect of their lives, ministries, challenges, families, and places of employment are covered as I place those petitions at God's throne of grace.

### Personal Prayer Needs

I spend very little time praying about my own personal needs. I simply ask the Lord to provide for me and my family and to allow me to make the kinds of decisions that would please Him. My experience has taught and shown me that when I pray for others, for my ability to serve the Lord and His people, and for Him to prepare me for the Ministry assignments He has placed before me, He then provides everything I need. Of course, I spend time praying for the Lord's direction as it pertains to what He would have me to say to His people for every preaching and teaching responsibility. I have discovered that when I spend time in Prayer the tide from Heaven for fresh insight from the Word of God flows like a mighty river. There seems to be little to no challenges in my ability to prepare to speak FOR Him, when I make quality time to speak TO Him. I never want my Prayer life to become humdrum and mediocre. I look for opportunities to talk to the Lord about His plan and purpose for my life and Ministry. I believe it was Vance Havner who said "all of our Prayers should follow the A.C.T.S. format."

**A: Adoration.** Praise Him, open your mouth and bless Him before you ask Him for anything. "Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name..." No one wants

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another person to make requests from them, before they at least acknowledge their presence.

**C: Confession.** Call out your sins and name them. Don't simply say "Lord please forgive me of my sins." But name them, this will help us not to repeat those things. We should not want to have to face the pain of acknowledging those sins before the Lord over and over again.

**T: Thanksgiving.** When was the last time you thanked the Lord for your lungs, liver, kidneys, heart, legs, elbows, fingers, toes, eyes, teeth, ears and knees, etc.? Is it possible that the Lord just may allow these body parts to malfunction just so He can hear us talk to Him about them? This matter of Thanksgiving is extremely exhaustive. Eyes, eye glasses, contacts. 206 bones in our bodies. Thank Him for 7 quarts of blood in your veins. Thank Him for house shoes, dress shoes, tennis shoes, flat shoes, healed shoes, casual shoes and feet to put the shoes on. Running water, lights in our homes, sound minds, daily needs provided. Take a few moments to look around you right now and see the things that God has provided, but yet you have failed to tell the Lord "Thank You" for. You get the picture.

**S: Supplication.** This is the area where we pray and ask God to meet our daily needs and notice where it is on the last; LAST! We make the mistake of placing it first. The Lord wants the other things to become our Prayer Priorities. Matthew 6:33 "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you."

I want to add one additional element to that list.

**I: Intercession.** We must take the time to pray for others. Ask the Lord to bless other churches, other pastors and other Ministry leaders. Ask God to meet the needs of others, then watch Him enlarge and expand your individual territory.

Church Connected Prayers

Whenever I walk in our Church or any Church anywhere, I always immediately stop and Pray as soon as I enter. Allow me to explain the details of this discipline. All of us would be extremely offended if someone walked into our home and did not speak to us. I believe that the Church building is the House of the Lord. Many times, we

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become so easily distracted in worship because we walk into the Lord's house and speak to everyone else except to Him. This discipline helps me to realize why I am there, and that He should be the main focus of my attention.

In the book of I Samuel, chapter 12, verse 23 we read these words, "God forbid that I should sin in ceasing or failing to pray for you..." **This next remark may not be accepted by everyone, but I stand on my convictions.** If a Pastor or a Ministry leader has more people in their Church or in their Ministry than they can pray for, they have too many people. In Luke chapter 15, the shepherd knew that one of the sheep was lost because He had a personal relationship with each one of them. I hope you will agree with me when I say that 84, 92 or 94 in a crowd can look like 100. But when we have personal relationships with the people the Lord has trusted to our care, then we know when 1, 5, 7, 27, or 45 of them have strayed and wandered from the fold. I have a copy of my Church roll on my desk at church, at home in my office, and I keep a copy in my briefcase whenever I am traveling. I have divided our roll into 30 sections. Each morning after my daily Bible reading devotion, I Pray over a section of those precious people. There is not one day that goes by in my life when I am not Praying for some of the people of the Grace Tabernacle Family. During this pandemic, I have added another element to it. I send out daily group texts to the section of people that I have just prayed for each morning. This makes them aware of the fact that I have just lifted every element of their lives to the Lord in Prayer. Then, each January and July, I call and pray for EVERY ADULT MEMBER of the Grace Tabernacle Family. This is the format I use to purge our Church roll. If people do not answer the phone, I leave the Prayer on their Voice mail. I ask them to respond with a text or a call to make sure they have received it. If I have not seen those people in six months and if they do not return or respond to my call, then I remove them from the Church roll. Jesus said, **"My sheep hear My voice and another they will not obey."** This allows us to have an accurate number of the members who are Connected, and Committed to the Grace Tabernacle Family. If there are some health issues that prevent people from attending, this principle does not apply.

Each Sunday, 45 minutes prior to Worship, I gather in a circle in my office with all of my sons and daughters in Ministry. I assign them at least three areas of Prayer to

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focus on. We hold hands, seated in that circle, I pray first, then the 3 assigned people pray one at a time. The prayer continues with all of us opening our mouths and praying collectively. Then, 10 minutes prior to my preaching time, a group of my Prayer Partners assemble in my office, form a prayer circle and Pray for my preaching and teaching power, passion and precision. We all Pray collectively and audibly.

These elements and disciplines have added a level of strength and harmony in our Church that in my opinion is beyond explanation.

Whenever a new person joins our church, I reach out to them by phone and welcome them to the Grace Tabernacle Family. After a brief phone visit, I conclude the conversation by praying for them. I pray for the specific information which is listed on their New Member information sheets. If their spouse and children's names are listed, I call those names in prayer. If their place of employment is listed, I also ask God's blessings over it.

This creates a level of trust, compassion and love in our relationship as pastor and members.

It is my hope that you will be able to use some, if not all, of these disciplines that I utilize to effectively, not only talk to the people about God, but to also talk to God about His people.

### Ministry Related Prayers

I now have a group of about 31 Pastors that I call and Pray for each and every week. I spread those call out during the week; calling 8 - 10 Pastors a day. I pray for their families, churches, ministries, travels and every element of the lives that the Holy Spirit places on my heart. If I do not always reach them in person, then I leave the Prayers on their voicemails. Many of them have shared with me how they listen to some of those prayers over and over again. I have had as many as 57 in that group, but I expand or reduce the number each year as I feel led by the Lord to do so. I have discovered that when I spend the bulk of my time praying for others, the Lord supernaturally meets my needs. He grants me the desires of my heart as I delight myself in Him. **I do not always feel like Praying, but I know the Ministry of Intercession is a calling that God has placed on my life.** Don't worry about the people

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you pray for expressing their appreciation, because as sad and as painful as it is to report, there are many pastors and people that I pray for who very seldom, if ever, say “Thank you.” But I can see the results of what God is doing in my life, as I obey the call He has given to me.

Finally, whenever someone asks me to pray for them, I never respond by simply saying, “I will pray for you.” NO! I stop whatever I’m doing right then and there and begin to PRAY! Many times we make the mistake of telling people that we are going to pray for them but we forget, we fail to do so, or we were just saying that to be spiritually courteous.

These are some of the things that have allowed me to have the level of inner peace that I enjoy as I intercede to the Lord on behalf of so many others. I hope this syllabus along with the video will help to enhance, improve and strengthen your Prayer life.

Luke 18:1 “Men ought to always pray and not faint.” That is what Jesus said!

Pray your way through it, and God will bring you to it!

The Cardinal,

*Roy Elton Brackins*