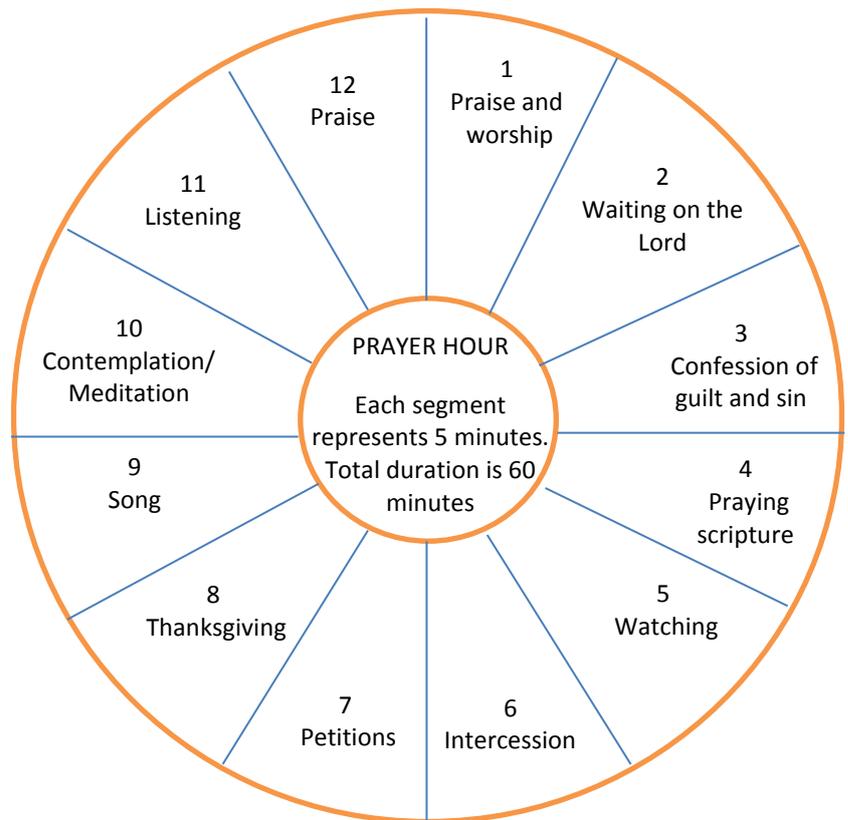


The Hour That Changes the World - Prayer

In his book, *The Hour That Changes the World*, Dick Eastman suggests that one divide an hour into 12 periods of 5 minutes each. After 5 minutes you move on to the next form of prayer. The aim of the pattern is to break the hour up into manageable parts, giving both variety and comprehensive coverage to the different aspects of prayer. The original plan was to spend five minutes on each section, but, especially in praying for the world, you will find yourself wanting to spend more time on some sections than others.

The forms of prayer are:

1. Praise and worship
2. Waiting on the Lord
3. Confession
4. Praying scripture
5. Watching
6. Intercession
7. Petitions
8. Thanksgiving
9. Song
10. Meditation
11. Listening
12. Praise



There does seem to be something special about spending an hour in prayer before the Lord. The inspiration of this pattern of prayer is based around the time when Jesus was agonizing in prayer in Gethsemane and found the disciples unable to support him in prayer (Matthew 26:40). When he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping he asked them: 'Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?'

The first section of this prayer hour is praise. This is a great time to remind ourselves how big our God is, how great His power and how amazing His love and grace. Read selections from Psalm 145 onwards to gain inspiration and content for your declaration. Praise God for His heart and redemptive purpose for the church.

The second section is waiting. Read 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 as encouragement of the promises when we turn our hearts to the Lord. This is a great time to fill our mind with Him, reflecting on His nature, His presence, and His love for us and for the world.

Next is confession. Read Psalm 139:23-24 and Psalm 51, especially verses 10 and 11 dealing with our actions, attitudes, affections and words. Seek personal forgiveness, cleansing and anointing. Read 2 Chronicles 7:14 - identifying with the sins of humanity as did Nehemiah (Read Nehemiah 1 for further insight).

The fourth aspect is praying scripture and declaring the promises of the Lord. Read Jeremiah 1:5-12 and 23:29; "Is not my word like fire," declares the Lord "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?" Also look at Isaiah 40:8-10; 44:24-26 and 55:10-11. Be open to the Holy Spirit to bring others to mind. You may wish to stand or walk around as you make these declarations. Promises of God's blessing and God's justice are equally important to declare.

The fifth aspect is watching - this brings us back to our introductory scripture. Remain alert to spiritual opposition and strengthen yourself with great verses. Read Romans 8:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 14 and 15. Be open to pray through those things that come to mind concerning the world. Make a note of things you think may be significant to re-visit in prayer, or to share with others such as our prayer co-ordinator. This introduces a dimension of the prophetic which allows us to pre-empt the enemy's plans rather than fighting a rear-guard battle.

The sixth aspect is intercession - read Genesis 18:16-33 and 1 Kings 18:41-46. These are great examples of others who have stood in the gap in powerful prayer. James 5:16-18 also gives us much cause for encouragement. Pray for the lost in our city, our nation and the world. Some other areas you can cover include workers for the harvest (Matthew 9:38 and Psalm 110:1-3), open doors and opportunities to share the gospel (Colossians 4:3 and Revelation 3:7-8); fruit that will remain (John 15:16), and finances for the ministry of the church (Malachi 3:8-12).

Petition is the seventh aspect of prayer. This is for your own life with the Lord, your ministry, your personal needs, your loved ones and your church, ensuring that your requests are in tune with the Lord's will. Read 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 and ask the Lord to increase your capacity for prayer and to enlarge your heart for the nation. Bring areas of personal concern before Him and be encouraged by Philippians 4:6.

The next aspect is thanksgiving - for what God has done, and for what He will do for us in response to our prayers. Read Luke 17:11-19. Thanksgiving helps us to focus on God's faithfulness. Confess all His spiritual, material, physical and external (that is, blessings in other people's lives) blessings. Be very specific and note that this is an area that should not only be part of a prayer time, but a way of life. If you spend your days in thankfulness you

will find the gateway to His presence to much easier to enter. Thank the Lord for our communities and for the many ways in which we are blessed. Psalm 103 will help with this.

The ninth aspect is singing - this is a wonderful gift from God and a key to being filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-20). Read 2 Chronicles 20, especially verse 22, and Acts 16:16-34. We can sing songs of: praise (Psalm 135:3), power and mercy (Psalm 59:16), thanksgiving (Psalm 147:7), God's name (Psalm 96:30), God's word (Psalm 119:54), a new song (Psalm 144:9), and among the nations (Psalm 57:9). Don't worry about your singing ability, God has an auto-tuner!

The tenth aspect is meditation. Read Joshua 1:8, noting that the word 'meditate' in Hebrew means 'to mutter upon'. Focus on God himself, on His word, His works, past victories and blessings, and on things positive and good. Read Philippians 4:8.

The second last aspect is listening - wait for instructions and have a pen ready to write things down. Read John 5:19-20, 30 and Isaiah 50:4-5. Be open to revelation about yourself or the world.

Finish as you started the session by praising the Lord and magnifying Him with confidence that He has heard for prayers for our nation and the world, that the answer is already on the way and that His power and wisdom are more than equal to every situation. Read Isaiah 65:24.

May your hour bring you much joy in His presence, increased effectiveness in your daily walk, a sense of fulfilment in the part you are playing God's mission, and some amazing answers to your prayers.

Adapted from "The Hour that Changes the World", Dick Eastman, Baker 1978