

FOURTH PRAYER MODE

PRAYER OF PRAISE

First Part : Teachings, Reflections and Hints

Intent of These Notes on The Prayer of Praise

- ✓ *To better understand what we mean by “Praise” To realize that praise is not so much a method of prayer as an attitude of the praying person.*
- ✓ *To create an attitude of praise both, towards God and towards our fellow humans.*
- ✓ *To learn to pray as Jesus prayed. His very life was life of praise.*

What is Praise

- Praise is recognition, an acknowledgement of the good that is in another person.
- Strictly speaking, praise can only be given and accepted by free persons.
- Animals or inanimate things cannot praise anyone, or be the objects of true praise.
- We can praise the makers of such things or their masters, but not the things themselves. If I praise a statue or a work of art, what I am actually doing is praising its author; If I praise an animal, in truth, it is its’ master I am praising.
- Being free beings, we may praise people both for what they do and for what they are. Such praise should be given and received in freedom and love.
- Actually speaking, **praise is a loving recognition of what others are**. Even if we praise them for what they do, doing is nothing else that a manifestation of what they are.
- Praise is an unselfish gift. By praising others, we just admire them without ulterior motives.
- True praise does not aim at getting any favor from those we praise. That would be adulation or flattery. .
- We can even praise an enemy! We may not like him personally, yet we can acknowledge the good that is in him!
- Praise in a way, implies a purer love for others and a greater detachment from our side than ‘thanksgiving’. When we thank a person, we thank him for what he has done for us. In a way, we make ourselves the reference point. Had he not done a good turn for us, we would not thank him.
- Even if the person we praise has done nothing for us, or worse, even if he has harmed us, still, we honestly can praise him all the same! Praise has an element of self-detachment that thanksgiving lacks.
- Praise necessarily calls for sincerity, honesty, objectivity and love!

- In order to be able to praise someone we have to see things as they are, without being swerved by prejudices, biases, likes or dislikes!
- Praise demands a high quality love; it means acceptance and admiration of others even when we, at the gut level, may dislike them. Praise has nothing to do with flattery. The latter is based on untruth and often enough on selfishness. Flattery is manipulation of others while hiding some ulterior motives. Praise is 'distilled' love. **Only those who can truly love, (not infatuated people) can praise.**

Implications and Consequences of Praise

- We cannot praise if we cannot love! **Liking is not necessary Loving.**
- **Actually speaking God does not "like" us. He just 'loves' us. Liking is human, Loving is divine!**
- We can, and as Christians, we should love even those we do not like.
- If we do not love others, we cannot praise them because we feel jealous of them.
- When we feel jealous of others, we betray that we neither love others nor ourselves. When our 'self image' is poor, we feel threatened by the good we see in others. We cannot accept them, nor love them, nor praise them.
- For a jealous person, acceptance of the good in others implies rejection of one's self.
- The root cause of jealousy is lack of self-love and absence of 'self-praise'. Healthy 'self-love' and 'self-praise' would banish the fear of "rejection" by others and open our hearts to praise others
- **The only cure for the malady of jealousy is an honest and sincere acceptance, appreciation and love of ourselves as we are and a free and joyous recognition of the good that is in us.**
- If we do not recognize and accept the good that is in us, we shall not be able to recognize and accept either the good that is in others. Consequently, we shall not be able to love others nor ourselves. Jesus said: "Love others as you love yourself".
- We shall not be willing to joyfully accept praise from others, nor sincerely praise them.
- **The day we are able to love ourselves sincerely, we shall be able to love others.**
- If we cannot see the good in others and joyfully and honestly praise them for it, we shall not be able to praise God either!
- As long as we remain in that frame of mind, though we may go through the motions of the 'prayer of praise', and sing hymns and psalms of praise, to God, in reality, we shall not be capable of praising God in spirit and in truth.
- If we do not acknowledge and love the good that is in others, our praises, compliments and fine words spoken to them will be tantamount of 'adulation' or 'manipulation'.
- **Basically, praise is an attitude' of mind and heart that enables us to discover any good, wherever it is found; be in God, in others and in ourselves.**
- We have to foster that attitude of praise. . **'Praise' should become our way of life.**

- Praise comes from ‘humble’ hearts, and at the same time makes those hearts humbler.
- Some people object praising others. They say, “Do not praise others. They may become proud!” In truth it is just the other way about.
- If you want to make people humble, praise them, of course, with true and sincere praise, not flattery. It will prick the bubble of their false pride and make them know themselves at their true worth.
- Humility is truth! St. Theresa wrote: The honest and humble acknowledgement of the good that is in us, in others and in God, will perforce make us humble.
- If praise could make people proud one could stretch the analogy and say: “Do not praise God either. He may become proud!”
- God wants to be praised, and surely He is not proud. **God wants truth and so He wants a true acknowledgement of the good that is in Him, of the good that is in us and of the good that is in others.**
- **True acknowledgement of goodness wherever is found is ‘praise’.**
- **God wants truth. God wants praise.**

Prayer of Praise : Praising God

- The prayer of praise is just a plain recognition of what God is: viz. love, power, knowledge, mercy, kindness, forgiveness, truth, life, eternity, providence, wisdom, beauty, goodness, life, tenderness, wisdom, beauty, goodness, justice.
- It is also recognition of what he does: viz. creation of the universe: the skies, the seasons, the mountains, the flowers, the seas, and the stars, the animal and vegetable kingdoms.
- It is also recognition of his works of mercy: viz. Redemption, Christ, Our Lady, the saints, the Church, the Sacraments, the Gospel.
- We have to ‘praise’ God always and everywhere; in happiness and in sorrow, in health and sickness, in success and failure, in joys and sufferings, in our young days and in our old age, in life and death.
- We believe that God always does what is best and wisest. We believe in his unfailing goodness and we praise Him for it.
- Praising God forever and in all circumstances presupposes an absolute trust and confidence in Him, an implicit and unbreakable faith in Him, an unlimited acceptance of his goodness, and an unconditional acknowledgement of His justice, wisdom and love.
- We have to praise God not only for what He is and what He does, but also for what He accomplishes through people, our brothers and sisters made into his images.

Is Praising Others a Prayer of Praise to God?

- People are God’s living images: By praising them we praise God.
- Can we really praise God whom we cannot see, if we do not praise men,

- His images, which we can see?
- God manifests his most precious qualities to us through men and women.
- In our mortal condition, now, we are not able to experience directly God and his goodness ,(namely, his love, affection, kindness, forgiveness, acceptance support, tenderness, intimacy, sympathy, generosity etc...), except through human beings.
- Actually, people are God’s ‘channels’ through which we, in this world, experience his presence and his goodness.
- It is by praising our fellow humans, that we shall be able to praise God.
- God cannot not accept our praising Him, if we run down, neglect and ignore our brothers and sisters made to his own images.
- In order to praise God, we first have to praise people, all people without distinctions: good and evil, friends, and enemies, known and the unknown, pleasant and unpleasant, those close to us and those far away.
- Praising others, all our brothers and sisters, is the shortcut to enter into their hearts and to come close to the heart of God!

Some Hints on How To Praise People

1st Hint: Be Honest and Truthful:

Find out in the person you praise something truly praiseworthy.

You will always find something ‘praise-worthy’. For instance: Someone played the piano for you and he did it badly, how can you praise him? Do not say: ‘You played very well’. (*It’s a lie*) Nor say for instance “I like it so much.” (*It is not true*). Say rather: “I’m so happy you played it for me!’ You are so obliging! You made me very happy, or some other such thing. This praise is honest and true.

2nd Hint: Use Statements Starting with “I” not “You”

(I statements)

Express your positive reaction to the other’s being or way of acting.

For instance, do not say: “You are very obliging to play the piano for me” but say rather: “I am so obliged to you for playing the piano for me”.

3rd Hint: Do not Pass Judgments (even if they are favorable)

Express True feelings not judgments.

For instance: do not say: “You are a very good pianist,” but rather “I enjoyed the way you played the piano”

4th Hint: Do not Compare or Absolutize.

Take the person as he/she is. Each person is unique.

For instance, do not say: “You are the finest pianist I have come across” or “You play the piano like Rubenstein”. Instead, say: “It was fantastic the way you played the piano for me. I liked it immensely”

