



Course Syllabus
Winter 2012

**PRAYER AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD:
THE THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF PRAYER
THROUGH THE AGES**
SPIR 0609/THEO 0609

Fridays, 8:30 – 4:30 pm
Jan. 13, 27, Feb. 10, 24, Mar. 09, 30, 2012

Room: TBA

Instructors:

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Resource Page: <http://class.tyndale.ca>

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An interdisciplinary, team-taught course about biblical, theological and historical models of individual and corporate prayer.

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to the theology and practice of prayer in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. This course will help us to discover the richness of our heritage in the understanding and practice of prayer. This will happen through the exploration of the experience of prayer in both the Old and New Testaments, as well as history of the Church. It will also examine the place of prayer in both the life of the individual and the community. The class will meet for six Fridays on alternating weeks during the course of the Winter.

Prerequisite: SPIR 0700

Enrollment limit: 24

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of the course the student will

- be able to articulate the place of Scripture in shaping our understanding of prayer
- have used scripture as a primary source of prayer;
- have begun to develop a theology of prayer;
- be aware of and experienced the rich diversity in the practice of prayer within the Christian community over the centuries;
- have gained an exposure to a range of prayer “classics” in the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions;
- have undertaken a range of guided prayer experiences;
- have undergone a deeper exploration of the discipline of praying with Scripture (*lectio divina*).
- understand and have practiced prayer as dialogue, or the relational nature of prayer.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Balentine, Samuel. *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible. The Drama of the Divine-Human Dialogue*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1993. ISBN080062615X, 9780800626150

Payne, Leanne. *Listening Prayer. Learning to Hear God's Voice and Keep a Prayer Journal*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994. ISBN0801071399, 9780801071393

Bloesch, Donald, *The Struggle of Prayer*. New York: Harper & Row, 1980. ISBN0060607971, 9780060607975

Primary Source Collection of New Testament and Historical Source Readings (see Course Resource Page: <http://class.tyndale.ca>)

B. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Interaction Papers (3% x 5 = 15% of Final Grade)

For each class there are assigned readings. In preparation for the class, the student will read these materials and prepare a 350-400 word interaction with the assigned reading material around a set (assigned) question. The purpose of this question is to help to focus the reading. These papers will be due the day of the class.

2. Essays (15% x 4 = 60% of Final Grade)

Four 1200-1500 word papers. After each class the student will focus on an **assigned question** raised in the material covered during the class and write a paper exploring the issue in more detail. **These will be due two weeks later**, at the beginning of the next class.

3. Prayer Journal (15% of Final Grade)

Each class will provide practical and relevant prayer exercises. The student will be expected to keep a prayer journal in which they will record the things experienced and learned in the practice of prayer. The final assignment will be a 1200-1500 word paper exploring some new area of growth in the student's personal prayer life. **Due: April 6.**

4. Participation and Attendance (10% of Final Grade)

Attendance is mandatory.

C. GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Students should consult the current *Academic Calendar* for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at www.tyndale.ca/registrar/calendar. An excerpt is attached with this syllabus for easy reference.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments

Interaction Papers: 3% x 5	15 %
Essays: 15% x 4	60 %
Prayer Journal (due April 6)	15 %
Participation and attendance	10 %
Total Grade	100 %

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND READINGS

1. **January 13: Teaching on the theology and practice of basic categories of prayer**

- Guided prayer exercises.
- Introduction of prayer journaling.

2. **January 27: The theology and practice of prayer in the Old Testament**

- Text reading: Samuel Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible*.
- Submit 350-400 word interaction with Balentine dealing with the following question:

*The readings for the Old Testament and Prayer portion in the course mention seven specific kinds of prayers: 1) prayer which portrays the character of God, 2) penitence and confession, 3) prayer for divine justice, 4) intercessory prayers, 5) prayers of lament, 6) praise prayers and 7) imprecatory prayers. In the light of your own life and that of your biological family or church family, and in the light of world conditions, write **six prayers** of 4-5 lines which would be patterned after the above specific forms of Old Testament prayer.*

3. **February 10: The theology and practice of prayer in the New Testament**

- Writing assignment due: 1200-1500 word paper exploring an issue emerging from the class of January 27.
- Text reading from electronic collect: Philip Clement-Jewery, *Intercessory Prayer*, chpt. 2 (p. 13-38) and Richard Longenecker, (ed.), *Into God's Presence*, chpt. 6 (p. 113-131).
- Submit a 350-400 word interaction with the writes' dealing with the following question:

If God knows everything and is deeply concerned about what is happening in our lives, why do we need to be involved in intercessory prayer? What type of answers do the authors provide? Where do you agree or disagree with them? How would you incorporate this wisdom into your personal prayer life today?

4. **February 24: A theological and experiential examination of various prayer forms from the history of the Church.**

- Writing assignment due: 1200-1500 word paper exploring an issue emerging from the class of February 10.

- Text reading: *Primary Source Collection*, prayer classics articles.
- Submit a 350-400 word interaction with the documents in the *Primary Source Collection* dealing with the following question:

What effect does the prayer prayed have on the character of the one praying? Cite examples from three texts to support your assertions.

5. **March 03: A theology of prayer**

- Writing assignment due: 1200-1500 word paper exploring an issue raised in the class of February 24.
- Text reading: Donald Bloesch, *The Struggle of Prayer*.
- Submit a 350-400 word interaction with Bloesch dealing with the following question:

How does Bloesch's exposition of prayer identify inappropriate attempts to pray, locate the proper starting point, and direct the reader to concentrating on and encountering God?

6. **March 30: Examining prayer from a pastoral perspective with a particular focus on issues raised in the congregational setting**

- Writing assignment due: 1200-1500 word paper exploring an issue raised in class of March 09.
- Text reading: Leanne Payne, *Listening Prayer*.
- Submit a 350-400 word interaction with Payne dealing with the following question:

At times when we pray it seems as if we are pleading with God to grant our request. Possibly if we pray hard enough or long enough God will hear and grant our prayer. Should we persist in our prayers or is it enough to simply pray once? How do you know?

(April 6, Writing assignment **due**: Prayer Journal)