

# CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## EFFECTIVENESS OF PRAYER

**Meaning of prayer:** It is an act of communion and communication between God and man. It is the raising of our mind and heart to God. It is also a medium of communication between man and God. Prayer is the means through which we relate to God.

### **JAMES TEACHING ON EFFECTIVENESS OF PRAYER (JAMES 1:2-8, 5:13-18).**

i. James encouraged Christians to be joyful when they face various trials for it is a test of faith, while faith produces steadfastness.

He said that steadfastness should have its full effect so that they might be perfect and lack nothing.

If anyone lacks wisdom, he should pray to God who gives generously and without reproach.

James said that Christians must repent of their sins and confess them to one another, for God is holy, and does not tolerate sin.

Prayers must be made in faith without doubting, for the doubter will receive nothing.

He compared anyone who doubts with a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

My petition made to God must be backed by belief that God would grant the requests.

God is glorified when people pray for the right things. Thus, prayers should be made according to the will of God.

Christians should exercise patience by waiting upon the will and the grace of God.

They must pray in humility for their prayers to be effective.

They should also be persistent in prayer by praying unceasingly till their requests are met.

He gave an example of Elijah who prayed fervently for no rain and there was no rain. He prayed again, and there was rain.

James advised that the elders of the church should be called upon to pray for the sick.

He gave taught that the prayer of faith would save the sick.

### **REASONS FOR UNANSWERED PRAYER.**

Lack of faith/unbelief/mindedness in prayer.

Unforgiving spirit on the part of the person praying.

Lack of concentration.

Unconfessed sins/keeping in the heart.

Asking for things not according to the will of God.

Will of God

Arrogance.

Lack of wisdom.

Selfishness

Lack of consistency.

## **TYPES OF PRAYER.**

Adoration

Petition

Dedication

Thanksgiving

Confession

Intercession

**Adoration:** Acknowledgement of greatness.

**Petition:** Praying for personal needs. Here we ask God for our needs.

**Dedication:** Promising to remain truly God's son. In this prayer, we put something into the total care of God. E.g child, house, cars etc.

**Thanksgiving prayer:** Thanking God for the grace received/past grace.

**Confession:** with repentant and broken heart, we ask God to forgive our sins promising to sin no more.

**Intercession:** This is a prayer said on behalf of those who cannot pray for themselves.

## **CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER**

Asking God in faith without doubt (faith).

Righteousness: Abstinence from sin.

Humility: Praying without self-exaggeration and showing total surrender and submission to God.

Perseverance: Praying steady and trusting God, and allowing him to have his way.

## **COMMUNITY**

Community means people who are living in the same area or town. Christians who live in the community should distinguish themselves as Christians. They should do this by showing good examples to others. They must obey all constituted authority. Christians should carry out their religious and civic responsibilities faithfully.

## **PETER'S MESSAGE TO THE CHRISTIANS LIVING AMONG NON-CHRISTIANS (1PT 2:9-25)**

Peter referred to Christians as a chosen race, a royal priesthood and holy nation who should declare the wonderful deeds of him who called them from darkness into a marvelous light. He enjoined Christians to abstract from the passion of sin of the flesh that wage war against their soul. They should maintain good conduct among the gentiles so that they may glorify God when they see their good deeds.

Peter also advised Christians to be subject to every human institution, the civic authorities. They should live as free men but not to use their freedom as a pretext for evil but live as servant of God. He told them to honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God and honour the emperor.

He advised servants to be submissive to their masters with all respect not only to the kind and gentle but also to the overbearing. God loves one who puts one's faith while suffering unjustly. Peter asserts that the slave's obedience to his earthly master is obedience to God. He concludes by saying that God endure pain while suffering patiently.

Peter gave example of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. When He suffered, Jesus did not threaten, but trusted in God. Jesus carried the burden of our sins to the tree and bore it there. As a result, Christians who were formerly straying like sheep have returned to the shepherd who guides their soul.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PETER'S MESSAGE ON CHRISTIANS LIVING AMONG NON-CHRISTIANS.**

Peter taught that Christians are God's chosen race. As God's chosen race, we must reflect it in our daily living. We should endeavor to avoid the social vices in our society.

### **CHALLENGES CHRISTIANS CAN FACE**

Satanic practices e.g occultism.

Tribalism/Nepotism/Discrimination e.g regional conflicts.

Bad leadership, corruption, mismanagement of contracts.

Sexual immorality eg. Prostitution, Homosexual, Sexual favour / harassment.

Intolerance from non-Christians or disturbance as regards worship and evangelism/unhealthy rivalry.

Intermarriage with non-Christians or believers e.g Christians/Moslem/Traditionalists.

Indiscipline among the youth e.g area boys, land guards, etc.

### **WAYS CHRISTIANS CAN PROMOTE GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH NON-CHRISTIANS**

Participation in community development projects with non-Christians

Contribution towards the needs of non-Christians.

Participation in social activities with non-Christians.

Accommodation of programmes and activities of non-Christians

Acceptance of non-Christians in Christian institution e.g schools.

Attendance at programmes of non-Christians.

Religious tolerance.

Showing good examples/being role models.

### **MEANING OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCES.**

Peaceful co-existence means living in peace and avoiding conducts that will bring misunderstanding between two or more people.

### **PETER'S MESSAGE ON INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG CHRISTIANS (1PETER 5, 2:11).**

Peter enjoined the elders to tend the flock of God not by constraint but willingly. They should not do it for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those under them but as example to the flock of God so as to be crowned with glory when Jesus is revealed.

The younger ones should be subject to the elders. They should clothe themselves with humility towards one another for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Peter advised Christians generally to humble themselves before God so as to be exalted by him. He told them to cast all their anxieties on him for he cares about you. Be sober, be watchful, your adversary, the devil, prowls around like roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him firm in your faith, trust God and remember that other Christians all around the world are going through these suffering too. After suffering a little while, God called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, establish and strengthen you. To him be dominion for ever and ever.

## **CAUSES OF CONFLICT AMONG CHRISTIAN**

Idolatrous practices  
Love of money  
Covetousness/greed  
Power/position  
Apostasy  
Envy/jealousy  
Fornication/adultery  
Lack of love  
Bribery and corruption in the church  
Criminal acts.  
Doctrinal differences etc.

## **SOCIAL VICES**

**Definition:** Social vices are those behaviours that are not accepted in the society.

Social vices include:

Bribery and corruption.  
Embezzlement of public fund.  
Armed robbery  
Abortion, divorce, examination malpractice, etc.

## **HOW CHRISTIANS CAN ABSTAIN FROM SOCIAL VICICES.**

By being prayerful because prayer strengthens our spirits and kills temptations.  
BY reading Bible to know what God says of every situation in our lives.  
We should have self-control and avoid bad friends.  
We should also be contented with what we have/ourselves.

## **FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN OUR SOCIETY**

Living modesty.  
Respecting the constituted authorities.  
Forgiving one another.  
Living an exemplary life by shunning greed, jealousy and envy.  
Doing one's duties without negligence and having concern about the spiritual and physical wellbeing of our neighbours.

## **CITIZENSHIP**

A *citizen* is one who has full rights in a state either by birth or by gaining such rights while a good citizen is one who obeys the laws and the civil authorities.

## **PETER'S MESSAGE ON THE DUTIES OF A GOOD CITIZEN (1 PETER 2:13-17)**

i. Peter makes it clear that, a good citizen is he who for the sake of Christ, respect every human authority.

These authorities could be self-imposed/supreme/tyrants or elected/delegated institutions.

However, they have been appointed by God to punish offenders and reward those who do right.

By doing the right thing, a good citizen puts to shame the ignorance of foolish men.

v. Christians should live as freemen without using their freedom as a pretext for doing evil.

But rather, they should live as servant of God.

Peter encouraged Christians to honour all men.

Love the brotherhood/neighbor/those in need.

They should fear God and keep His commandments.

In all, they should honour/respect those who are in authority.

They should also honour the king.

#### **WAYS CHRISTIANS CAN BE A GOOD CITIZEN.**

i. Reporting criminal cases and activities to the police/security agencies.

Self-discipline/reorientation to doing what is right/having the right attitude to constitute authorizes/being law abiding.

Teaching others good ethnics/being role models/voting.

Speaking/standing for the truth/what is the right always/maintaining integrity.

Obeying the laws of the land/respecting court orders.

Obeying road sign/traffic regulations.

Not vandalizing government properties/avoiding riots/taking good care of public properties.

Paying taxes regularly.

Embarking on evangelism/spreading the word of God etc.

#### **PETER'S MESSAGE TO THE CHRISTIAN UNDER PERSECUTION (1Petr 1:5-17, 4:12-19)**

According to Peter, Christians should not be surprised at every fiery ordeal, which comes to them.

They should not see it as a strange happening to them.

They should rejoice in it; they share Christ sufferings.

They should rejoice and be glad when Christ's glory is released.

If they are reproached for Christ's name, they are blessed.

The spirit of glory and God rests upon you.

They should never suffer as murdered or thieves.

Never suffer as a wrong doer or mischief maker.

He advised that if they suffer as Christians, they should not be ashamed.

Under the name of Jesus, they should glorify God.

It is time for judgement to begin from God's household.

The fate for those who do not obey God will be course.

Those who suffer according to God's will should be right.

They should entrust their soul to a faithful creator.

#### **TYPES OF PERSECUTION CHRISTIAN ENCOURAGE TODAY.**

The state restricting their use of the media such as radio/television.

Discrimination in job and scholarship allocation.

Prohibition of open air rallies/crusade.

Taking over or undue interference in Christian institutions.

Disturbance of worship services.

Withholding of privileges eg. Acquiring of state lands.

Injustice in the courts, etc.