

Pathwork on  
**Prayer and/vs. Meditation**

The Pathwork Lectures often speak of prayer and meditation as being the same thing. In this Pathwork Lecture #9 – *Prayer and Meditation – The Lord's Prayer* – a distinction between prayer (concentrated thinking) and meditation (engaging feelings and felt sense within the Soul) is made that I find useful. The lecture also deepens one's understanding of prayer and meditation.

04	<p>My dear friends, today I would like to speak about <u>prayer</u> and <u>meditation</u>. What is the difference between the two? Many people are not quite clear about it. It is always a matter of agreeing upon the meaning of terms. I should like to make the following distinction: Prayer is a preliminary step to meditation. Prayer is a matter of thinking, meditation is prayer with feeling, it engages the soul forces as compared to the thinking forces. To get to the second and further step you need a certain discipline and concentration which you learn through prayer. Most people are not used to being spiritually and mentally active, yet one cannot enter into meditation unless one has first learned the preliminary state of concentration.</p>
05	<p>The person who has walked through this first gateway needs above all the insight that nothing can be gained without discipline, regular work, and the best will to give each day some time to get closer to God, to liberate the often dormant and hidden forces of the soul, and find the connection to the rays of divine energy. This can happen only through self-discipline and regular practice, preferably always at the same time of day. Yet it is not possible to establish a rule valid for everyone without exception. For a few a more spontaneous way may be better, but only when in spite of this spontaneity no day is omitted and solely time and place vary. As a rule, regularity is advantageous.</p>
06	<p>Human beings have difficulty concentrating. Time and again my friends have experienced that, at first, their thoughts wander, that something mundane gets in the way. Then they become so dismayed that they cannot pick up the thread. As I have often said, it is important not to let these interruptions bother you and not to get confused and bewildered. Do not ask too much of yourselves right away, but resume your practice in a quiet and relaxed manner. After some time you will succeed in achieving a certain continuity and concentration. This is prayer. Do not forget, as humans often do, to ask God again and again for help. You do not know how much this will serve you. Why don't you say: "Help me to learn real prayer, or real meditation." At any moment, when you are confused, ask for help. Here, too, the word holds true: "Knock and it shall be opened."</p>
07	<p>Concentration in prayer is beneficial not only as a training but also because each thought builds a form. With the thoughts of prayer you build harmonious</p>

	forms, so that the "thought-prayer" activates favorable energies even before you have learned the "feeling-prayer" or meditation. Yet thought forms, though they may not have the power of feeling forms, can nevertheless manifest their own greatness when coming from a full heart, without self-deception, rooted in sincere willpower.
08	This is the first step on this particular segment of the path: the pure power of thought through concentration in prayer, and the liberation of the feeling currents, which brings about some loosening of the spirit. This then is meditation.
09	Once you have learned concentration in prayer to some degree, practicing regular self-discipline for this purpose, you may encounter the problem of becoming too mechanical. Now that you have progressed so far, you find yourself struggling not to fall into the opposite extreme of overdiscipline where prayer becomes a fetter. Then the time has come for you to learn to bring prayer into the deeper layers of the soul.
10	At this point, too, helpful tools are available. Prayer, as I said, is in the domain of thinking. It comes from here [pointing to the head], while meditation comes from here [pointing to the chest], what I call the spiritual field of the human being. In the solar plexus, a person's entire spiritual picture is imprinted. Those who free the feelings here and so determine when and how to connect with God become, to a certain degree, master over themselves by overcoming their inner obstacles.
11	Now you may ask, how could you enter into this vibration. I say: All inner currents diverted into wrong channels create obstacles. All that lies unrecognized and ferments in the subconscious is an obstacle. Wherever you have difficulties to attune to the vibration, wherever you sense a resistance, you can be sure of unrecognized violations of the laws in your soul. Self-recognition, self-analysis, and the digging out of these currents are the only means, and to do this is not possible without outer guidance, help, and instruction.
12	Apart from this, one cannot establish any general rules. It varies from one person to the next. You must find the place in yourself where you sense the vibrations. It is not right to expect this to happen immediately and every time. Once in a while spiritual influences may lift a human being into a higher vibration even when the inner obstacles are still present in the soul, but these influences are rare. A person should not evade the issue by saying, "I am not always capable to be attuned; I have to be in the mood for that." But the "attunements" should no longer be governed by moods. You need to control them yourself, and this is not possible unless you cultivate systematically your spirit and your development. You need to become master of yourself, not be mastered by moods and depend on them for the kind of contact to God which penetrates the entire being. This is the purpose of this path, this is the goal,

	<p>which, however, you cannot expect to attain right away. On this path you will advance to a point where you determine yourself when the pure forces will be ready to move freely from within you. This goal can be achieved only by following a slow, laborious path. Pray for help in this respect as well. Very specifically, Christ will help you. Whoever turns to him will receive help, for he has promised it to you.</p>
13	<p>There are several tools to liberate the soul forces: For some it may be helpful to remember the last time they felt a strong vibration that connected them to God. Perhaps by conjuring it up in their imagination they can relive it emotionally. Others may find the connection easier with the help of a specific passage from the Bible, a certain prayer or spiritual law. The tools may vary, and each of you needs to explore your individual point of connection personally. Best of all is a victory over yourself, an insight into the self that is real, complete and wholehearted. When you overcome a resistance you open yourself to God's will and truth. Such victory frees many powers and causes a wonderful vibration that leads to meditation, even though in the beginning it cannot be attained every day. Some other time I will talk more about the soul-prayer, or meditation.</p>