

What is Soaking Prayer?

Maybe you are puzzled by this concept and are asking, "What do you mean by 'soaking'? Why do I need it? How do I do it?"

Soaking is positioning yourself before the Lord to experience His love for you and to give your love to Him. While it involves listening for the still small voice, it is more than that. It means allowing yourself enough time to be immersed in the tangible presence of God. It is really the fulfillment of the first commandment, which Jesus said is, "To love the Lord with ALL your heart, with ALL your soul and with ALL your mind." Matthew 22:37

There must be time in your life just to love Him and let Him love you with no agendas, no shopping lists of ours or other's needs. God is love and wants us to be lovers of Him first before we even try to love others.

Psalms 46:10 says, "Be still and know that I am God." But from early childhood, most of us have been taught to accomplish more, to finish the task, to be constantly 'on duty'. I have sadly noticed this in different kinds of prayer meetings. When God's presence comes strongly, people cannot seem to remain and rest in His presence. They receive prayer and within five minutes, they get up and are on their way. They have missed the point, which is learning to personally experience His love.

Jesus addressed this tendency in a visit to the home of Mary and Martha. Mary, who opted out of kitchen duty with her sister Martha, chose what Jesus called 'the better part', and Jesus said that it would not be taken away. Mary valued His presence by sitting at His feet, loving Him and just being with Him. Martha, on the other hand, was preoccupied with preparing dinner.

God wants more than a five minute fling. It takes time and a conscious effort to prioritize what God sees as our deepest human need, the need to experience His intimate, unconditional love. In previous years of revival, forerunners in the church referred to this time of 'soaking' as 'tarrying'. They learned to spend entire meetings just waiting in His presence.

What works for me is to get quiet before the Lord. Sometimes I listen to a worship CD, one that helps me focus on my love for Him. I don't think that posture matters... I believe you can soak in your favorite chair or on the floor with a pillow under your head.

Turn the phone off and let the answering machine get the messages. During this time, 'The Distracter' likes to remind you of the many things that you still need to do. The simplest thing to do is take a note pad and pen with you to jot down reminders of things to do. Then return your focus to Jesus and continue soaking. The enemy and your old nature will soon give up when you refuse to remain distracted!

How often do I need to soak? We need to develop a habit of spending time with Him EVERYDAY. It will usually take a least a week of daily soaking to begin learning to bring your soul to a place of stillness and rest. We get so busy 'doing' that we find it hard just to 'be'. This is because our minds are always analyzing rather than receiving. In the beginning, you may experience deep frustration as you try to quiet yourself before God. However, when you are faithful and obedient to pursue Him, you will quickly learn how anxious He is to be with you!

Maybe you are thinking, "But I read my Bible everyday and pray. Why do you think that it is so important to soak?"

The Bible is a book of law, history, prophecy, poetry and teaching. Everything in God's written word comes out of the experiences its leading characters had with God. Soaking or experiencing His presence opens up the heart and soul to divine romance. It allows the Lord to love you and you to love Him, much like a couple in love find their love and intimacy deepen as they spend more and more time together. As with any relationship, spending time together is one of the most valuable things you can do. This is one missing piece of the Christian experience that God has come to restore in this move of the Holy Spirit.

Each time you spend with Him will be different. At times, He will flood you with His unconditional love and affection. Other times He will cover you with His healing. He may go back and heal a deep wound from the past. Sometimes He will flood you with abundant joy. Then at other times, He will empower you for the ministry He has for you. Your whole life will change when you take time to realize that the Lord loves you. Once you realize how much He desires to woo you and is enamored with you and that He really likes you, loving Him will just flow naturally. Is He not wonderful?

Soaking opens your heart to receive visions and dreams. Before I started soaking, I never had a vision or heard the voice of God on a regular basis. However, since I have learned to soak, the Lord has shown me things visually. Just recently, I was telling the Lord in prayer about how I missed my dad and that I really needed a dad. A couple of days after telling Him, I was soaking and received this healing vision.

In the vision, I was dancing with Jesus. As we were twirling very fast, I was wondering where we were. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught a glimpse of a very shiny floor. Thinking that we really needed to be careful not to slip and fall, I suddenly realized that we were dancing on the sea of glass in heaven. The vision widened, and I saw a massive throne in the distance with smoke and fire coming from under it. A figure stood up from the throne and began walking toward us.

About a week before this vision, I had been reading in Daniel 7:9-14 about the Ancient of Days. It says that His garment was white as snow and His hair was like pure wool. Because

Jesus said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father (John 14:9)," I pictured the Father just like Jesus on earth. When I saw the passage in Daniel, I was astonished to realize the Father looks like the glorified Jesus of Revelation 1:14.

In my vision as the figure came close to us, I saw that He had white hair. He approached us and said to Jesus, "Excuse Me, but may I cut in, I would like to dance with My daughter?" At that point, I cried and cried as I realized in the deepest part of my heart that I have a heavenly Dad that really, really loves me. He not only loves me, but He knows and cares about the smallest need in my heart.

Soaking brings boldness, childlikeness and fruitfulness. Soaking has also given me a holy boldness in ministry. The anointing of God has made room for me and it will for you, if you spend time with Him. I know that if the Holy Spirit ever lifted His presence, I would go back to being that shy, frightened, intimidated girl that I used to be. While I do not want to be like that anymore, I do want to be childlike.

The Holy Spirit likes it when He is in control, and we become like children. Jesus said, "...Unless you become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." The price of entering His kingdom is becoming humbly vulnerable and completely trusting. This is the beginning of a fruitful Christian life.

Soaking does not mean that you do nothing for God. We need to be constantly filled with Him, because it is impossible to give away what you have not received. When we are full of His love and presence, then we can pour out our love to Him. As our own tanks become full, our focus turns to the broken, the hurting and the lost. You will then accomplish more in one hour than you used to in a whole day.

Soaking is connecting with the intimate and powerful presence of our Father God. Sarah Edwards, wife of the Great Awakening leader, Jonathan Edwards, wrote in the 1740's that, "During revival I was conscious of His nearness to me and my dearness to Him." This is my prayer for you.

-adapted from Carol Arnotts' article Why I Soak in Spread the Fire Magazine 2005

Growing in Grace Ministries is a Certified Soaking Prayer Center by the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship.