

How do we pray in these difficult economic times?

People are often able to handle many things, but when there is a shortage of money they quickly become panicky. Currently the economy is under great pressure worldwide and we also experience that in South Africa. The situation is grim and hundreds of thousands of people's lives are being influenced very negatively because of this.

How do we pray in these times? The following are a few guidelines:

1. Don't allow yourself to give in to fear. Fear is not fitting in a Christian who knows that God made heaven and earth and has everything in His hand. God takes care of the birds in the sky and the wild flowers. He will take care of you also (**Matt.6:25-33**). Go and stand before the Lord and look at God until you can see Him better than the economy and until you see that God's omnipotence is bigger than your fear.
2. Jesus said, "*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*" (**Matt.6:33**). Make a decision to believe His promise more than the circumstances you see around you. Ask God the Father what it means in your case to first seek of God.
3. Greed is one of the main causes of the current economic situation of the world. Be content with what you have. Open up your heart before God. Ask Him to show you every form of greed and discontentedness in your heart. Ask Him to show you anything you covet that you don't need. Ask Him to show you why you want it and also why you are discontented. Thank God for what He gives you. Paul writes: True religion with contentment is great wealth ... so if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content (**1 Tim.6:6-8**).
4. The deepest roots of greed are fear and selfishness. Go and stand before God and ask Him to take care of you and confess every form of selfishness. Selfishness is rooted in our inability to understand God's unconditional and sufficient love for us. We then try to be self-sufficient. Ask the Father to reveal His love to you: This will drive out fear and it will help you to stop focusing on yourself only (**1 Tim.6:9-10**).
5. One way in which to break the hold greed has over us, is to start giving cheerfully. Ask the Lord Jesus to show you people in need and be the answer to their prayers. People are inclined to become tight-fisted toward the needs of others. As Christians we should not be like this.
6. You must give your tithe. That money belongs to the Lord. Don't bargain with God about this. Don't question the principle. God says we must test Him: If we give our tithe, He will give to us, in abundance. Even if you think it doesn't make sense to give your tithe in difficult times, God's Kingdom works differently. God is no one's debtor: Let us do what we must do and God will do what He promised to do.
7. Pay your debt, all of it. You are the one who got into debt and you are responsible to get out of it. Even if it means you must do without other things in order to be able to pay your debt, you must do it none the less.
8. Do not steal. Don't make private calls or photo copies at work without paying for these. Don't steal time by leaving early or arriving late for work. Pay your taxes: Everything you owe. Ask the Lord to show you if there are things you do that do not please Him and confess them, and repent.
9. Do not take or give bribes. Do not compromise in this respect.
10. Pray for your daily bread. This is what the Lord Jesus teaches us in **Matthew 6:11**. We often think we can provide for our families by hard work and clever schemes. Jesus says: Pray. When we pray and ask, He will give and provide: Work, health, protection, strength and everything we need.

Very important: Don't spend more than your income; see what you can do without, live more simply; start a lift club; plan your car trips; save electricity and water. Don't borrow money. Contribute to develop a culture where we help each other by, for example sharing tools and know-how with one another.