

PRAYER

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How Do I Pray?

How do I talk to God? Praying is talking to God. The Bible is God speaking to us. Learn what the Bible teaches us about prayer. *"While He [Jesus] was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray,'"* Luke 11:1. Pray that same prayer. The Bible's teaching on prayer includes praise, thanksgiving, confession, and offering requests. Praise exalts, honors, and glorifies God, Psalm 34:1-3. *"Continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,"* Hebrews 13:15. Thanksgiving is because of what He has done. *"It is good to give thanks to the Lord,"* Psalm 92:1. Confession is because of our sin. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,"* 1 John 1:9. Offer your requests to God because He invites you to ask Him. *"By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God,"* Philippians 4:6. Requests for God to meet your spiritual and physical needs are in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. Prayer is your special privilege and opportunity to talk to the living God. *"The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry,"* Psalm 34:15. *"Let everyone who is godly pray,"* Psalm 32:6.

Where should I pray? It is good to pray in religious buildings and meetings. However, Jesus said, *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth,"* John 4:24. Effective prayer is not dependent on your physical location. Jesus said, *"When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you,"* Matthew 6:5-6. Effective prayer does not depend on where you pray. It depends on the condition of your heart. Pray in public. Pray in private.

Should I pray on my knees? Jesus, Paul, and Daniel did, Luke 22:41, Acts 20:36, and Daniel 6:10. Pray on your knees. However, others in the Bible stood, gazed into the sky, stretched out or stretched up hands, bowed to the ground, and faced a wall. The position of the body is meaningful in prayer only as it expresses the condition of your heart.

How should I pray? The *how* of prayer is as important, or more important, than the *what* of prayer. Biblical prayer is the open and honest pouring out of your heart to God. There are no special combinations of words, phrases, or sentences to pray, or to say, that force God to give you what you ask of Him. The Bible's instructions and examples include praying:

With a thankful heart, 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

With sincerity, not by rote, Isaiah 29:13.

Without meaningless repetition, Matthew 6:7.

Openly, directly, and honestly, Isaiah 37:14-17.

With devotion and persistence, Colossians 4:2, Luke 11:5-10, 18:1-8.

Continually, unceasingly, 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

With great striving, Romans 15:30.

In unity with other Believers, Matthew 18:19-20, 1 Timothy 2:8.

With great faith, James 1:6-7, Hebrews 11:6.

According to God's will, John 15:7, 1 John 5:14-15.

In the name of Jesus, in His will as His representative, John 14:13, 15:16.

What should I pray for? In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught His disciples to pray for their daily physical and spiritual needs. In His prayer in John 17, Jesus prayed for Himself, His disciples, and for the world. Jesus promised that the faithful prayer, fitting into His will, offered to the Father, in His name would be answered, John 15:7,16, 16:23, 1 John 5:14-15. Other Biblical instructions and examples for what you should pray for include:

Wisdom, James 1:5, 2 Chronicles 1:7-12.
Spiritual prosperity, Colossians 1:9-12.
Those who mistreat you, Luke 6:28.
Healing, is possible, James 5:14-15, but not for everyone, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.
Each other, Ephesians 6:18, James 5:16.
Your government, 1 Timothy 2:1-2.
Your food, Matthew 6:11, Mark 6:41, 8:6-7.
Those who need Christ, Romans 10:1.
Laborers to proclaim the Gospel, Matthew 9:37-38.
Open doors for the Gospel, Colossians 4:3-4.

God hears and answers your prayers. Meet God's conditions for prayer and He will answer you. God's answer may be a *yes*, a *delayed yes*, or a *no*. He may give you more than you ask or think, Ephesians 3:20. God's delayed yes may be to equip you or to equip others for His answer. Or His answer may be a final *no*. Pray having faith in Him and fully trusting His answers.

Your motives matter. *"You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures,"* James 4:3.

Husband, treat your wife well. The Bible teaches that a husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church, cherishing her, being understanding of her, and honoring her as an equal heir of the grace of life, *"So that your prayers will not be hindered,"* 1 Peter 3:7.

Forgive others. Being unforgiving hinders your prayers. Your forgiveness of others demonstrates the forgiveness you should expect from God, Mark 11:25, Matthew 5:23-24, 6:12-15.

Be righteous. Be spiritually clean before God and then your prayers can accomplish much. *"The prayer of the upright is His delight,"* Proverbs 15:8. However, if one turns away from His law, *"Even his prayer is an abomination,"* Proverbs 28:9.

God protects, prepares, and perfects you. Denials and delays can be for your good. God protects you when you do not know that what you are asking would hurt you. God knows you better than you know yourself. Sometimes, God says no because He knows your future and knows what is best for you. Sometimes a delay is there to give you time to get prepared for His answer. Sometimes His denials and delays come to strengthen your faith. Accept God's answers with faith and thanksgiving. God knows what He is doing. Talk to God. He is listening. Pray!

"In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:18