

HOW TO PRAY



More important than any rule or law is our love relationship with Jesus, which is developed through spending time in Bible study, prayer and witnessing. When we study the Bible, God speaks to us. When we

pray, we speak to Him and when we witness, we speak to others about Him. In this lesson we will discover the secrets of prayer and how we can enjoy this privilege. Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God who we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to present their daily needs before God the Father, and to cast all their care upon Him. The assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us.

Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer. Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weakness, in that He became a suppliant, a petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, "in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15) but, as the sinless one, His nature recoiled from evil; He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. If the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble sinful mortals like us feel the necessity of fervent constant prayer? The darkness of the evil one, the devil, encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where there are treasured the boundless resources of omnipotence? Without much prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and deviating from the right path.

WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT PRAYER

“But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” Matthew 6:6

As you study, be thinking about the Life Quest questions.

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?



HIS WORD SAYS

1. Prayer is talking to God from the heart as to a friend. How do we know that God will always answer our prayers in the best way? Romans 8:31-32.

God has already proven to us that He is willing to do all things that are for our good by giving up the most precious thing He had to offer. We have full assurance that God will withhold no good thing from us.

2. How should we pray in these solemn times in which we live? I Peter 4:7.

Great and terrible things are before us. If we would stand through the last days we must be of a sound mind and watchful in prayer.

3a. What did the disciples ask Jesus to teach them? Luke 11:1.

3b. In response, what did Jesus say should be included in our prayers? Luke 11:2-4. _____

Jesus is not here giving us a formal prayer that we should recite, instead He is laying out some of the key themes that we should include in our prayers.



3c. And thirdly, what principle did Jesus give for obtaining answers to prayer?
Luke 11:9,10.

Jesus is bidding us to be persistent in prayer. Be earnest; be resolute. Present the promise of God, and then believe without a doubt. Do not wait to feel special emotions before you think the Lord answers. Trust His word, and leave the whole matter in the hands of the Lord. (See also 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

4. In Luke 11:2 above, Jesus taught us to pray to the Father. In whose name, or by whose authority, should we address the Father? John 15:16.

We pray in Jesus' name because He is our mediator and Savior. Through His perfect life and great sacrifice for us He has reunited us with the throne of infinite power and wisdom. John 14:12-14; 16:23, 24.



5. When especially should we pray? Psalms 5:2,3. _____

Jesus also rose very early in the morning to meet with His Father Mark 1:35.

6. What other examples do we have of how often we should pray? Daniel 6:10 & Psalms 55:17. _____

Spending time in prayer and reading His word is food for the soul. If we would normally eat three times a day to maintain our physical strength, then we should pray three times a day to maintain our spiritual strength.

7. What kind of prayers should these morning prayers be? Matthew 6:5-8 & 23:14.

Personal, private prayers rather than long formal, "prayer-book" prayers are what God asks for. Remember, it is a relationship God wants from us, not a meaningless recital.

8. Besides our private prayers, is there also a place for public prayer? Matthew 18:19, 20.

Corporate and small group prayer are also important elements of our relationship with God. As a church we are the body of Christ. Praying together creates unity of purpose and Jesus has promised to be present even when only two are gathered together.

9. What attitude toward God should we exhibit in our prayers? Psalms 95:6-7.

Reverence, such as is shown by kneeling in awe and humility when possible. 2 Chronicles 6:13: Daniel 6:10: Philippians 2:9, 10. It is also possible for us to pray without kneeling as this is not something we can do in all situations and at all times. One example is Nehemiah who was standing before the King of Persia when he sent a quick emergency prayer to heaven (Nehemiah 2:4).



10. On what specific occasions did Jesus and the apostles pray? Acts 27:35.

Prayers of thanksgiving, such as when we say grace over food, have a wonderful impact on our frame of mind. It helps us to focus on the positive blessing of life and brings us closer to God as we recognise Him as the one who sustains us.

Thus far we have noted four things that will make our prayers effective. We might call these principles, of prayer. The four principles we have noted are: (1) being persistent, (2) praying with Jesus' authority, (3) being personal and (4) having reverence. Now let us look at five more principles of prayer. See if you can remember all nine when we have completed the lesson.

11. What is a fifth principle? Psalms 37:5.

Commitment is as important to our relationship with God as it is to any relationship that we want to see thrive. It is also true that we must believe that God hears us and can answer our prayers if we would receive our answer (Mark 11:24).

12. What is a sixth principle? I John 5:14, 15.

It is a mistake to think that God will give us every little thing we ask for. Often we ask amiss and request things that are not really for our good. God is too wise to err and will not do anything that would not be for our benefit. If ever you feel that God is not answering a prayer, you can be sure that He is doing something much better for you.



13. What is a seventh principle? Proverbs 28:9, John 9:31 & Psalms 66:18.

We cannot expect God to hear our prayers if we refuse to listen to Him and choose to live in disobedience to what He asks. Jesus will forgive your sins, don't hold onto them! (1 John 1:9).

14. What is an eighth principle? Philippians. 4:6, 7.

15. What is a ninth condition? Mark 11:25, 26.

We cannot expect God to forgive us and bless us if we are not willing to forgive and love others. See also Matthew 5:23-24

Matthew 26:41

Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Romans 8:26

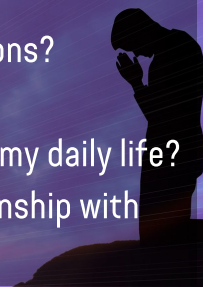
Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.



LIFE QUEST:

Have you thoughtfully reviewed these Questions?

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?



YOUR TURN

Check the statements that most closely reflect your response to this study.

___ I am so thankful that God listens to my prayers.

___ I am going to pray to God as if He were with me in person.

___ I understand that God prefers personal prayers rather than long formal prayers.

___ I am thankful that I know how I should pray.

___ Other _____