

Why Should I Pray?

If you've been a Christian or been around Christians for long, you've probably seen someone pray. People pray before meals, pray a blessing over someone, pray for healing, pray at different parts of a church service... But many people find praying to be intimidating at first.



When I was a child, I wasn't sure how to pray. I mean sure, at church I saw the pastors and leaders pray. Sometimes at church they would have everyone get into small groups of 3-5 people and everyone would pray, but as a little kid, I tried to get out of it. I felt like everyone was somehow better at prayer than I was. I wanted to pray, but I struggled to have the right words. I heard someone say that if you wanted to pray you should start with praying what is in Psalms, but I found I had a hard time connecting with what the writer of Psalms said. I wanted to really know God though, I knew that prayer was a way to get to know God. I had heard that if you wanted to pray you should go into your closet and close the door. Since in America, the closet is a little room within a room, I made room on my closet floor for me to pray. I remember going into the closet and praying and waiting for God to talk to me. There were a lot of days when I would fall asleep in my closet praying because I was bored.

So why should we pray? Should we pray because...

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| a) It is talking with God. | f) Prayer is a way to receive blessing |
| b) It is the most important activity of our lives | g) Peace comes through prayer |
| c) Prayer builds our relationship with God. | h) Prayer changes our perspective |
| d) Prayer is a place of encounter | i) Prayer will be answered |
| e) Prayer has rewards | j) Prayer is partnership with God |

If we understand prayer, it is the least boring thing we could do. Prayer is not just talking to the air. **Prayer is talking to God**, our Father, who loves us and wants to answer our prayers.

The Bible promises that through Jesus we have access to the Father.

Ephesians 2:18 "For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."

Prayer is the most important activity of our lives because we were created for relationship with God. **As we talk with our Father through prayer, we build our relationship with Him.**

Jeremiah 29:12-13 "Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

These verses promise that when we pray, God will listen. We can trust that our words are not just going up into the air. We can trust that our words reach our Father and our Father is listening. These verses also promise that when we seek God, we will find Him. The way we seek

God is in prayer. Even if we feel weak in our prayer, like we cannot seek God with all of our heart, we can turn to God and ask Him to give us the ability to seek Him with all of our heart. Then when we let Him give us strength to seek Him with our whole heart, He will be found by us. This is the first and greatest reward of prayer.

God promises that **prayer has rewards**.

Matthew 6:6 - But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then **your Father**, who sees what is done in secret, **will reward you**.

To say it another way, **prayer is a way to receive blessings from God**.

What are some of the blessings of prayer?

1) God will Give Us Peace

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the **peace of God**, which transcends all understanding, **will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**"

1 Peter 5:7 "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

In these verses we are told to not worry, but instead to pray and God's peace will fill our minds and hearts. We also learn that anything that is important to us is also important to God and we should give Him all of these concerns in prayer.

2) God will Change our Perspective

The way we see things will change as we pray. What we focus on is what we will begin to think. As we spend time talking with our Father, we will begin to think of things of the kingdom of God.

Colossians 3:1-2 "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

Isaiah 55:8 NIV "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD."

In prayer, we put our thoughts on God and as we do that He can change our thoughts to be more like His thoughts.

3) God will answer our prayer.

When we pray we can ask God for things. We can ask God to heal our bodies, to provide for our needs, to help with our family or relationships, to help us with our work, to give us wisdom... the list of things we can ask for goes on and on. And God promises that He will answer our prayers when we ask according to His will.

1 John 5:14-15 "And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him."

If you have much experience with prayer, then you know that sometimes things change right away after we pray, other times, it takes time. Other times, it seems like we don't get the answer we were looking for. But God promises that He will answer our prayer.

4) Prayer is partnership with God.

Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

One of the most exciting parts of prayer is that even though we can and should present our own requests to God, we can also pray in a way where we are helping God to bring about His purposes on earth. In a famous prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He said we should pray that the will of God would be done on earth as it is in heaven. In prayer, we get to discover the will of God and pray that it would happen on earth.

We learned today prayer is such an amazing opportunity for us to know God, talk with Him, share our concerns with Him and partner with Him and there are so many benefits to prayer. The next question we will talk about is, "How do we pray?" The great news is it's easier than you think and we will talk about that in our next lesson.