

**TEXT** Luke 18:1-8; 1 Kings 18:41-46

**SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE** James 5:16

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to explain the various requirements for effective prayer.

**KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER** Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. — Luke 18:1

**KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH** And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. — Jeremiah 29:13

**RESOURCE MATERIAL** Tract No. 36 — Prayer: Communication With God

**ANSWER  
TITLE:**

**Prayer Really Works!**

**SEARCH  
TITLE:**

**How Do I Pray?**

**REFERENCE INFORMATION**

Prayer recognizes one’s dependence upon some higher power. People everywhere, regardless of their understanding of that power, pray. Living in a precarious world, surrounded by the mighty forces of nature, with eventual inescapable death, men find that prayer is instinctive and spontaneous in times of trouble and stress.

Although praying of one form or another is practiced in religions worldwide, it is rare that it becomes the focus of

personal piety, as it is in the Christian faith. For a born-again Christian, prayer is as necessary for spiritual life as breathing is for the physical. Luther once commented, “As a shoemaker makes a shoe, and a tailor makes a coat, so ought a Christian to pray. Prayer is the daily business of a Christian.” It is through personal, free, and intimate conversation with God that we are able to find when we seek, receive when we ask, and walk through the doors that are opened for us.

**YOUR OPENER**

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# How Do I Pray?

**TEXT:** Luke 18:1-8; 1 Kings 18:41-46

**SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE:** James 5:16

**KEY VERSE:** And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.  
— Jeremiah 29:13

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## RESPONSES

1. The result of Manasseh’s prayer, was that God answered. Through discussion, trace the steps and extent of Manasseh’s actions. In his affliction he besought his God, he humbled himself greatly before God, and prayed unto Him. God was intreated of him, heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Ask the class to offer any Scriptures that reinforce the thought that God will always answer sincere prayer. Some possible references would be: Psalm 91:15; Jeremiah 29:12,13; Luke 11:9; John 15:7.

2. As you discuss the marvelous change that conversion brings, ask your class to specifically enumerate some of the “old things” that pass away. Then make a list of some of the things that “become new.” Surely, this transformation of a heart is the most dramatic result of prayer that is possible!

3. Your class will probably be able to compose quite a list. Some suggestions could be: divine guidance, protection, healing, help with school-work, provision of a job. Bring out that all facets of a Christian’s life should be covered by prayer. Allow time for your class to relate their stories. Be ready to tell the class of a personal experience you had in receiving an answer to prayer.

4. Give the class time to respond with specific examples. It might be interesting to bring out that in some instances prayer changed the very order of nature, as with Moses at the Red Sea; Joshua’s commanding the sun to stand still; and Elijah’s and Elisha’s crossing Jordan. Even Manasseh’s father, Hezekiah, requested that the sun would return ten degrees on the sundial and, when Isaiah prayed, it happened. There were also many other types of prayers that the Lord answered, such as for healing, deliverance, sustenance, etc. Conclude your discussion of this question by bringing out that there is nothing God cannot do.

Prayer is much more than a ritual to be performed at a certain hour of the day, for Jesus said that men ought always to pray and not to faint. Prayer is a vital part of the Christian’s defense. The Bible bears ample evidence that the power of Satan and evil in general are arrayed against those who pray to God in faith. We are living in the time just before Jesus’ coming back to earth. Only our holding on in prayer will help us to be ready for His return.

1. Manasseh is considered one of the most wicked kings in biblical history. He built altars to Baal, worshiped the host of heaven, built altars for them in the house of the Lord, caused his son to pass through the fire, and dealt in witchcraft (2 Kings 21:1-9). Yet when affliction came his way, he humbled himself and prayed to God. What was the result of Manasseh’s action? See 2 Chronicles 33:10-16.

2. Of all the prayers that can be prayed, surely the prayer for salvation from sin is the most important. Describe the miraculous results that follow a sinner’s sincere prayer of repentance. See 2 Corinthians 5:17.

3. While it is extremely important to repent and pray for forgiveness, list some other things that might be obtained through prayer. Then write about someone you know personally who had an answer to a prayer for one of the items on your list.

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## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

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4. Name some Bible characters who had definite answers to their prayers and tell what the answers were.

5. In our text, Jesus gave us two important conditions to successful prayer. What are those conditions?

6. During Elijah's ministry, why did the rain stop falling? See 1 Kings 17:1 and James 5:17.

7. Having already received God's promise of rain, and even after telling Ahab, "there is a sound of abundance of rain," why did Elijah go to the top of Mount Carmel? Relate what happened there, and describe Elijah's reaction.

8. Perseverance in prayer is important, but what other matter must be kept in mind and heart in order to be successful? See James 4:15.

9. If God didn't answer prayer in this age in which we live, what would be our hope of eternal life?

5. The two conditions are that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Discuss what these expressions mean. Ask your class how God differs from the unjust judge in our text. They should bring out that God does not feel that their coming is a bother. He is always willing to welcome them and hear their plea. However, God does not always answer their prayers immediately. He knows how to work out what is best for them, and will answer according to His knowledge and wisdom. This parable is given to encourage people to persevere in prayer, for therein lies success.

6. Elijah's actions were governed by God's directive, therefore he prayed earnestly that it might not rain. Bring out in discussion that Elijah lived during very sinful times. It often takes drastic measures on the part of God to help men see their need of Him. If we are part of God's family, what should our attitude be toward sinners? Jesus said that we should pray for them; and do all we can to bring them into the Gospel. See Matthew 5:44 and Jude 23. Just as Elijah's earnest prayers availed in his day, so the prevailing prayers of God's people today will help turn the hearts of men from sin to God.

7. Elijah went to the top of Mt. Carmel to pray and await God's promise of rain. Surely he talked with God about the promise of rain that had been given to him (1 Kings 18:1). He sent his servant seven times to look toward the sea for any indication of rain. On the seventh trip, the servant saw in the distance a little cloud "like a man's hand." Elijah was so excited he even outran Ahab's chariot, reaching the city before Ahab! This is a prime example of effectual fervent prayer.

8. This verse brings out that we must keep in our minds and hearts God's will for us as we pray and make our plans. Does God always answer the fervent prayers of His people? It has been said that God always answers prayer with a yes, no, or wait. You could bring into the discussion Jesus' prayer for deliverance from His "cup." What was included in His prayer that should be included in every prayer we pray? Jesus prayed the third time more earnestly, sweating as it were great drops of blood, but He prayed just as earnestly, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42-44). How do we pray? Stress the thought that our prayers should always be submissive to the will of God. But, we do have every right to persist in prayer when we know our petition is in accordance with the will of God—for example, the prayer for a sinner's salvation, or for a deeper experience.

9. Your class should conclude that there would be no hope of eternal life if God didn't answer prayer. Assure the class that Jesus is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8), and we are admonished to pray always. Some suggested Scriptures: Luke 21:36; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

## YOUR WRAP-UP

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What does the word *importunity* mean?

Verse 1 tells us the reason Jesus told the first parable. What is the reason? What did He mean, “not to faint”?

If we ask God often enough, will He always give us what we want?

Why did the judge eventually answer the prayer of the widow?

What in our text proves that Elijah, before he had prayed, knew God would answer? Why, then, did he pray?

How many times did Elijah pray before the small cloud appeared? Have you heard someone say, regarding a difficult situation, “Well, I’ve seen a cloud the size of a man’s hand”? What do you think they meant?

Can you tell of something in your life (in your family) that you prayed for many times before the answer came?

Has God answered prayer for you recently?

In the ANSWER story, which true-story miracle impressed you the most? Why?

## THINGS TO DO

Bring a typewriter to class. Explain to your students that you want to learn to type. Are you frustrated because you can’t type the first time you place your fingers on the keys? No, you expect to have to persevere in order to achieve your goal. Sometimes we must apply the same kind of perseverance in our prayers in order to obtain the results.

Use a copy of the Gettysburg Address, Psalm 91, a play, or any other lengthy article you have on hand. Ask your students how long it might take them to memorize it. Many people have memorized articles, but unless they had a photographic memory, they had to spend much time reading and repeating all the words. The results were worth all the time and effort spent. The same is true with prayer. The result is worth all the time spent with the Lord.

Take a seed to class. To illustrate importunity in prayer discuss how a flower isn’t immediately apparent when the seed is planted. Perhaps there is no visible sign of change when a prayer is first prayed, but the seed has been planted. If we are patient, and give the seed what it needs (water, sunlight, nourishment), eventually it will sprout and grow. In the same way, once we pray we

need to continue in prayer (likening this to providing the needs of the seed), until we see the desired results. But when results are not immediately apparent, we do not need to feel that nothing is happening.

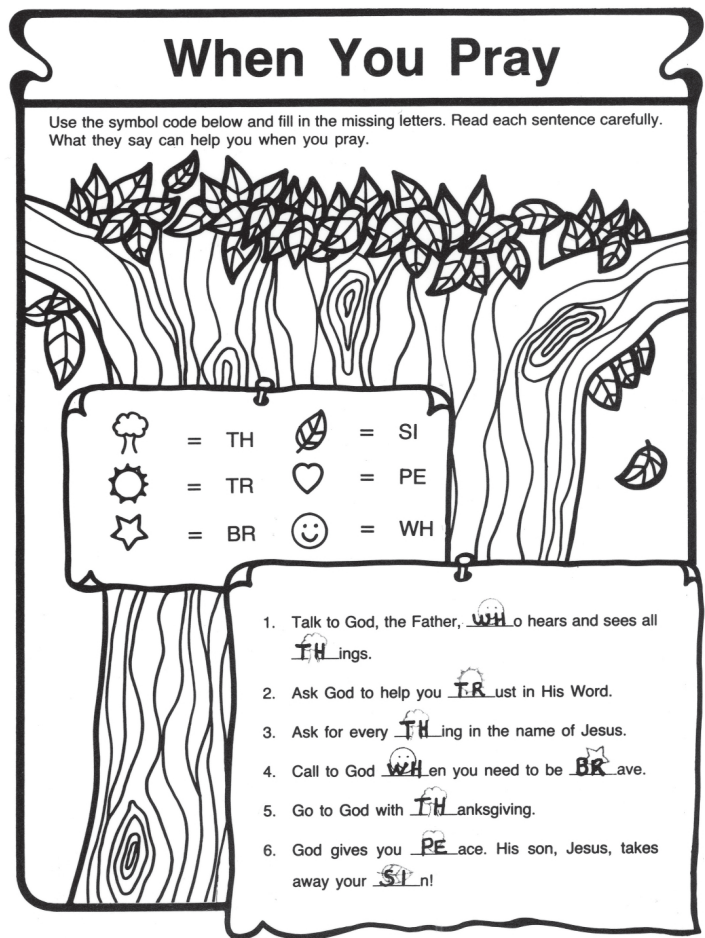
Bring an item to class that pertains to mountain climbing (rope, shoes, etc.). You could also have a chart to show the progress of the climber going up the mountain. Discuss with your class how important the first step is and how each step after that is equally important if the goal is to be reached. If the climber gets discouraged and quits partway up the mountain he will never reach the goal. The same persistence is needed in prayer. Your first prayer shows your desire for a certain need. Each prayer that follows shows your faith and desire for the Lord to answer.







Bring to class a package that has been tied up with knot after knot. Discuss importunity in prayer, likening each prayer to the untying of one more knot. Eventually the gift will be reached if we keep working at it! Sometimes things we pray about may have more “knots” than others. It may take longer to get an answer. Why?

## Answers for ANSWER

### When You Pray

Use the symbol code below and fill in the missing letters. Read each sentence carefully. What they say can help you when you pray.



	= TH		= SI
	= TR		= PE
	= BR		= WH

1. Talk to God, the Father, WHo hears and sees all THings.
2. Ask God to help you TRust in His Word.
3. Ask for every THing in the name of Jesus.
4. Call to God WHen you need to be BRave.
5. Go to God with THanksgiving.
6. God gives you PEace. His son, Jesus, takes away your SIn!