

# Prayer: Communication With God



An extraordinary source of strength and power is available to you. There is no charge, and the supply is unlimited. Are you interested? Through prayer, mankind can have direct access to the great God of Heaven and earth.

Many people wonder what prayer is. Others do not pray because they feel they don't know how. However, prayer is not a complicated process that takes years of training or experience in order to master. Prayer is simply communication with God. It is talking with God as we would a friend. It is important to approach God with respect, but it is also important to remember that He is interested in every facet of our lives. Scripture says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). It sounds simple enough, but does it always work? It does if people pray correctly, but there are essential criteria.

## God's answers vary

First, it is important to remember that God does answer prayer, though His answers may not always be yes. Sometimes He may reply with no or wait. Also, our requests must be according to God's will. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). Some requests are made out of selfish desires, others could be hurtful or be spiritual hindrances if granted. At such times, God is watching out for a person's good by answering no.

God also wants us to pray in faith. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). As we ask God, we must believe He is able and willing to answer in our best interest.

## The requirements of effective prayer

We must pray with all our hearts, totally submitting ourselves to Him and His will. We will find it difficult to come to God in faith if we have sin in our hearts. If we have an unforgiving spirit or are living an unholy life, we must first seek forgiveness and be certain we are in conformity with God's commandments. Then we can approach God and expect Him to answer. We also need to ask with thanksgiving. God wants to know that we appreciate what He has already done for us.

Sometimes we must be persistent. Jesus told the story of a woman who petitioned an unjust judge. The judge granted her request because of her importunity. Often it is much easier to give up and think that God doesn't want to answer than to keep praying until we prevail. Sometimes we may find it necessary to have others pray with us so that we may receive the answer. Jesus said that if two agreed in prayer, it would be done. At other times, we will find it necessary to pour our hearts out to God in secret. God's Word promises that such prayer will be rewarded openly.

## The Spirit helps us pray

In some instances, the burdens of our hearts may be so heavy that we don't know how to pray. A groaning from the soul may be all that's possible. Yet the Spirit of God can take those unutterable cries and make intercession with them. It is certain that such fervent prayer will be rewarded.

The important issue is to pray. Prayers must be prayed before they can be answered. The Bible exhorts us to "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We should start the day with prayer, asking God's guidance and protection in the hours ahead. We need to ask Him to deliver us from temptation. If possible, it is good to spend some time in prayer during the middle of our day. We can communicate with God about everything we do and have His presence in every situation and trial. When the day is over, we need to thank Him for His provisions and help.

Rest assured, however, that as soon as we endeavour to seek God, Satan will do his best to defeat our efforts. He will send interruptions, distractions, and any other possible hindrance. We must determine to resist him and purpose to continue in prayer no matter what happens.

## **No prayer is wasted**

If we take the time and make the effort to pray, what happens to our prayers? Sometimes we can see the answer come to pass almost immediately, but at other times the enemy might try to tell us our prayers have disappeared or been ineffective and lost. The Bible reveals something of what happens to prayers. An angel told Cornelius that his prayers and offerings had come up for a memorial before God. In the Book of Revelation we read that the prayers of all the saints are stored in golden vials and offered with incense before God. What a privilege to be able to send something to Heaven that is worth being stored in a golden vial and poured out before God!

Yet even with this knowledge, how many people take the time and make the effort to pray? No one who has endeavoured to pray would claim that serious praying is easy. So is it worth the effort? Those who have proved it effective would answer with a hearty yes. Any mother who has prayed for the protection of her child and later heard how he was miraculously spared would vouch for the effectiveness of prayer. Anyone who has prayed for the conviction of a sinner and has seen circumstances in that person's life bring him to repentance would say prayer works. A person who has interceded and seen the Lord intervene in impossible situations knows that prayer avails.

Let us purpose in our hearts to pray. If we wait until we have the time to do it, something else will always seem more important. However, if we set ourselves to pray and make it a priority in our lives, God will answer.