

Most Frequently Asked Questions

"What is the purpose for prayer?"

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But 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. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.— **Matthew 6:5-13**

Questions about prayer:

- ⇒ How can I have a more effective prayer life?
- ⇒ Is God's plan done whether or not I pray? If so, what's the point?
- ⇒ How can someone "hear" God's voice?
- ⇒ What is the purpose for prayer?

What it is not...

- ❖ Prayer is not to be used to get your own way.
- ❖ Prayer is not a formula we use to manipulate God for our pleasure.
- ❖ Prayer is not what we get out of God, but what can God get out of us.

What it is...

- ❖ Prayer is self-sacrificing.

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? — **Mark 8:34-36**

- ❖ Prayer is not about "you" it's about seeking God's will.

What does Jesus teach about prayer in Matthew?

1) To have the right attitude towards prayer.

- Jesus is not concerned with your words as much as He is concerned with the humility of your heart.

"In prayer, it's better to have a heart without words than words without heart."

John Bunyan

- Prayer is not a vehicle by which to be seen, but a vehicle by which to increase our personal relationship with God.

After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, — **Matthew 14:23**

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. — **Mark 1:35**

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. — **Luke 6:12**

2) The right things we should ask for in prayer.

- a) Ask for God's full authority in your life.

"hallowed be your name"

This is a declaration of His authority.

- b) Ask for God's will to be done.

Question: What is God's will for you?

Answer: Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. — **Romans 12:1-2**

God's will for you is to be holy.

- c) Ask God for your daily provisions.

Matthew 6:25-34 (screen only)

- d) Ask God for forgiveness.

"Unforgiveness is the poison we drink, waiting for the other person to die."

- e) Ask God for protection against temptation.

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. — **James 1:13-14**

"Do not allow us to be led into temptation that it overwhelms us, but rescue us from the evil on."

John Stott

This type of praying expresses our total dependence on God.

Material (daily bread)

Spiritual (forgiveness)

Moral (deliverance from evil)

Bottom line:

- ⇒ Prayer doesn't change God, it changes us.