

What Does the Bible Say About Prayer?

Prayer is the great privilege of the child of God, that the Maker of heaven and earth invites us to speak with Him. Yet for something so freely offered, it is often neglected, misunderstood, or reduced to a habit we hardly think about. The Bible has a great deal to say about prayer, to whom we pray, how we pray, what hinders it, and what it can do. Let us learn to pray as God would have us pray.

We Are Commanded to Pray

Prayer is not only a comfort offered to us. It is a duty laid on us. Paul wrote, *"Pray without ceasing"* ([1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)), and Jesus taught that *"men ought always to pray, and not to faint"* ([Luke 18:1](#)). Far from being a last resort when all else has failed, prayer is to be the steady habit of a Christian's life. *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"* ([Philippians 4:6](#)). In everything, not only in emergencies. The God who made us wants to hear from us.

To Whom We Pray, and Through Whom

Prayer is offered to God the Father, and it comes to Him through His Son. Jesus taught us to begin, *"Our Father which art in heaven"* ([Matthew 6:9](#)), and He said, *"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you"* ([John 16:23](#)). We do not come on our own merit, and we do not need any other go-between, for there is *"one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)). Through Him the humblest believer may come boldly to the very throne of God. *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace"* ([Hebrews 4:16](#)).

How to Pray

God cares how we come to Him. We are to pray in faith, for *"let him ask in faith, nothing wavering"* ([James 1:6](#)). We are to pray according to His will, trusting His wisdom above our own, since *"if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us"* ([1 John 5:14](#)). We are to pray earnestly, for *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"* ([James 5:16](#)). And we are to pray humbly, as a son comes to a father, not demanding but asking, not boasting but bowing. The Lord drew the line clearly between the proud prayer that God refused and the humble one He heard.

What Hinders Prayer

Not every prayer is heard, and the Bible tells us honestly why. Sin held onto in the heart shuts the ear of God. *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"* ([Psalm 66:18](#)). Peter said the same, that *"the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"* ([1 Peter 3:12](#)). Some have not because they ask not ([James 4:2](#)), and some ask and receive not because they *"ask amiss"*, wanting only to spend it on their own pleasures ([James 4:3](#)). A man who will not turn from his sin, or who prays only to serve himself, should not wonder that heaven seems shut.

God Hears and Answers

But to the one who comes rightly, God's promise is rich and plain. *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"* ([Matthew 7:7](#)). He is a Father who delights to give good things to those who ask Him. This does not mean He grants every request exactly as we frame it, for a good father does not give his son everything he asks for, and God is wiser than we are. But He always hears the righteous, and He always answers in the way that is truly best. No honest prayer is ever wasted.

A Life of Prayer

So prayer is not a form to be rushed through, nor a button to be pushed in a crisis. It is the open line between a Father and His own, meant to be used constantly and not just when we are desperate. Bring Him everything, the large troubles and the small ones, with thanksgiving. Keep short accounts with Him so that nothing stands in the way. Come in the name of His Son, in faith, in humility, and according to His will. The throne of grace is open, and the God who sits on it is listening. The only prayer that goes unheard is the one we never pray.

Every Scripture reference in this study links to the King James Version. Open it and read for yourself.