



Prayer (Communication with God)

When we become a Christian we in every sense enter into a living relationship with God. Part of this new relationship is that we learn how to communicate effectively with God. **Prayer** is the way that we both talk to God and listen to what He has to say to us. Like any relationship, the more time we spend communicating with God the more effective we become on a daily basis.

Discuss - (In group / or small groups)

- Q1) Have you ever prayed? If so what did you do and what was the result?
- Q2) How much do you believe prayer changes things? Give reasons for your answer!
- Q3) Why do you think many people struggle to pray?

Prayer is directed to the Father, through the Spirit in the name of Jesus. Prayer shapes and changes us as individuals and as churches. Hebrews 10 v 19 - 22 makes us clear we have access to all the provision and care of God through Jesus. When we pray we enter into the most intimate place before God and are opened up to both do His work and receive His provision. At the end of prayer you will hear the word **Amen**. This word means "so be it" It means that we are agreeing with the prayer prayed and we are adding the power of our faith to this prayer of agreement.

So what does the Bible tell us about prayer?

God gives us Promises regarding Prayer

In Matthew 7 v 7 - 8 Jesus Himself teaches us / declares to us, three times that God will answer our prayers. He doesn't say maybe or perhaps, in some ways and not in others - He says it will- you will - it will happen. If we believe in the Word of God as truth and if we believe the promises of Jesus are secure, then we have to believe that the reality of answered prayer is God's ordained way for all of us.

Look up Matthew 7 v 7 - 8, John 14 v 12 - 14 Mark 11 v 20 - 25 _____

How to pray

Just like any true spiritual discipline that we as Christians are involved in, Prayer is governed by certain spiritual laws. These laws are given to us so that we might know how to claim His promises and live under His grace. Jesus in various parts of the Gospel teaches us what these spiritual laws are:-

Matthew 6 v 5 - 15 _____

1) Perseverance in Prayer

Jesus calls His people to persevere in the area of prayer. To truly grow in the area of answered prayer we must be prepared to let go of the failings of the past and relearn principles God has given us in His Word. This means putting the disappointments of the past behind us, learning what Scripture says and trying again with a renewed sense of hope and confidence.

2) A humble heart.

When we come to God we should do so as one who is empty handed and in need. Words in Scripture tell us that we should approach God as a servant would a King, A child would a Father, a beggar would a person of substance. If we are going to receive in prayer then we need to leave our pride at the door. We need to approach God with a humble heart and a willingness to receive.

3) A life of Faith

Jesus many times linked the importance of real faith with the power of answered prayer. Jesus said, " if you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can say to this mountain throw yourself into the sea and it will happen!" Faith is the key that unlocks God's Blessing. Scripture makes it clear without faith we cannot please God.

4) Confidence in God NOW!

The bible calls a man who seeks the things of God / or asks of God, but doubts in his Heart, double-minded. Scripture says this results in instability in faith and the experience of unanswered prayer. God will not answer the prayers of those who do not believe or trust Him for what they ask for.

5) A nature that abides in Christ.

In all things God is looking for a people who allow His word and Spirit to abide in the centre of their lives and Behaviour. He is looking for people who desire to know His heart and who will be obedient to His will. Jesus said "If you abide in me and I in you, ask for whatever you want and **IT WILL** be given to you."

6) Forgiveness for others.

God loves us so much that he freely pours out His grace upon our lives. His expectation of us is that out of that position of being forgiven, accepted and loved, we will go and do the same to others. Unforgiveness towards others Blocks up the channels of God's grace in our lives and leaves us in a position of unanswered prayer.

7) Use of God given Authority

God has already given us the name of His Son and the promises of His Word. So already we should be able to apply this Authority to sort out many of the issues that we face daily.

