

Questions asked by Christians

Why does God not responded or answer my prayers?

What is prayer?

Prayer is the name we give to the way we can communicate with God, as God knows all things and controls all things then prayer is for our benefit, God does not need to be told of what is happening in our personal life or the world, neither can we change the actions of God by our prayers but He can change our attitude, mind or attitude to events through our prayer life because when we talk to Him we must always be prepared to listen to His response, a response which may come through reading His Word, or by some event or action which shows what He wants you to understand or act upon. However, we must always make sure the response has come from God and not Satanic in origin, Satan is very capable of listening to our prayers and making his own response.

Prayer is an opportunity to bring our will into line with the plans of God, let us examine some prayers as recorded in God's Word, the Bible.

[Genesis 18:16-33.](#)

"So the other two went on toward Sodom, but the Lord remained with Abraham a while. Then Abraham approached him and said, 'Will you kill good and bad alike? Suppose you find 50 godly people there within the city—will you destroy it, and not spare it for their sakes?' " [Genesis 18:22-24.](#)

God was about to judge the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for their evil way of life, so Abraham asked God if He would kill the good people as well as the bad. So we have to ask, did Abraham change the mind of God with this question? Of course not. The more likely result was that God changed Abraham's mind. Abraham knew that God is just and pure and that he must punish sin, but Abraham was questioning God's mercy. Abraham wanted to probe the mind of God to see how merciful he really was. Abraham left his talk with God knowing that God was both full of mercy and fair. Our prayers will not change the mind of God, but there is a good chance that our own personal prayers will open our mind to the will of God, just as Abraham's prayer changed his. Our prayers help us to better understand the mind of God.

Why do we Pray?

- By prayer we obtained our salvation through the blood of Christ, the gift was offered but we had to take it.
- By prayer we learn and gain wisdom from God, through His leadership in His Word and response to our prayers.
- By prayer we can grow in faith.
- By prayer we can grow in righteousness.
- By prayer we can confess.
- By prayer we can give thanks.
- By prayer we can learn humility, [2 Chronicles 7:14](#), *"14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."*
- By prayer we learn the truth.
- By prayer we can adore Him.
- By prayer we worship the Lord, as we have surrendered our lives to Christ and want to have a closer relationship with God, then prayer is the way for getting to God, not using it to ask for things from God, but to ask for help in preparing us so that we are able to help in the fulfilling of His plan for Mankind. Consider the words of Jesus in [John 14:12-14](#), the power is available.
- By prayer we can win against our enemies. [Matt 6:13](#), *"13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."* [1 Peter 5:8](#), *"8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"* The angels of God are ready to respond to His commands against Satan.
[1 Cor 10:13](#), *"13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is*

faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

- By prayer we can receive strength to fight Satan, [Mark 14:38](#), *"38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."*
[Acts 1:14](#), the early church were known to devote themselves in prayer,
[Proverbs 15:8](#), *"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight."*

Prayer is work.

[Eph 6:18](#) tells us to *"18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"* These instructions by Paul do not leave that much room for a half_hearted time of prayer, pray at all times and in all ways. This does not mean that we should never get off our knees, but we can speak to God in worship, for help, for guidance at any time, see the later prayers of Nehemiah. The early church knew the importance of this relationship with God, [Acts 2:42](#): *"42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."*

The act of prayer can be a powerful tool, Jesus highlights this fact in the following event, but please note that there could be conditions which could account for our prayers not being answered by God.

[Matt 21:21,22](#) and [Mark 11:20-26](#).

"Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.

And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' "

[Mark 11:20-26](#) *"21 And Peter, calling to remembrance, said unto Him, "Master, behold, the fig tree which Thou cursed is withered away."*

22 And Jesus answering, said unto them, "Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, 'Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, what things so ever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any, that your Father also who is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in Heaven forgive your trespasses."

In addition we must note the words of [1 John 5:14,15](#), we can trust God because we are told that *"This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."* We must come to the place of saying, "God, You said You were going to do it I accept Your answer now, but I leave the time to You."

Prayer is a privilege.

[Hebrews 4:14-16](#).

"16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." [Heb 4:16](#).

The act of prayer is an overwhelming special right, in prayer we are able to approach God boldly.

Unfortunately Christians approach God in various ways, not realizing the significance of their action.

Some Christians will approach God quietly and meekly, afraid to ask God to meet their needs. Others unfortunately pray without showing the proper respect, giving little thought to what they say. Remember we can come boldly but must always come with reverence because he is our Lord and King, but we can also come knowing the promise He has given as our Friend and Counsellor

Why do we fail or neglect to pray?

We get discouraged.

There are many reason why we can get discouraged, perhaps some event at your church has hurt you, personally or loss of faith, perhaps their prayers have never apparently been answered, perhaps they are not satisfied with what Christianity offers and prefer the things of the world.

A common reason is that we are too busy, when ever we turn to prayer all you can hear is, "Must get on with my work."

What ever is the reason, you need to ask God to show you the delights of serving Him

Consider using the following framework for prayer:-

- Adoration: Give God the praise for His love and faithfulness in your life.
- Confession: Take your failures to Him, He is happy to forgive if we confess our sins.
- Thanks giving: Give thanks for all He has done for you, His provisions, health, safety and so on.
- Supplication: Ask God for your needs, personally or for others, he longs to meet all your needs.

Phil 4:4-9: " 4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

Examples of Prayer to teach us.

Old Testament Prayers

Jacob's prayer

Jacob was the choice of God for His plan for the future Israel, Jacob had, many years earlier, stolen the birthright from his brother Esau. Many years later Jacob and Esau are about to meet again, Jacob has prayed to God over the situation but Jacob still had some personal doubt and problems, though his prayers were intense, earnest and good, but they did not have the mature faith which would have accepted what ever was the answer, he still had his own plans just in case.

Jacob's prayer also had humility, he said, *"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands."* [Genesis 32:10.](#)

Jacob has admitted that he is unworthy of God's mercy and faithfulness. This act has indicated that he has changed his spiritual relationship with God, it shows the work of God in his heart.

Jacob's prayer to God, *"Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children"* [Genesis 32:11.](#) Why was Jacob praying like this? It seems selfish, a personal problem, but verse 12 shows that actually Jacob was desiring that God will be glorified by reminding God of His promise, *"And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."* [Genesis 32:12.](#)

What and why are you praying, what is your reason, what is your motive? Are you praying for some gain for you personally or are you truly praying that ultimately God will be glorified by the result of the prayer? Whatever we do, we should *"do all to the glory of God"* [1 Cor 10:31.](#)

There is also another important point to prayers being answered, we should not be expecting God to work immediately. We must allow God to answer our prayers in and at His own time. It is not that God needs time to carry out the answer, it is that the situation or the person(s) that you are praying about may not be ready for God to respond.

Israel Ignores God.

[Exodus 17:1-7.](#)

It is very easy to blame others when things do not work out as expected. The Jews had been released from their slavery in Egypt, they had seen the power of God when He destroyed the Egyptian army, now God had apparently lead them into a desert region and they had no water.

"3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou plan, hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? " [Exodus 17:3.](#) The people of Israel complained about their problem to Moses instead of turning to God in prayer, seeking why. They had followed God's leading into the desert, but now they had doubts about his ability to take care of them. It is possible that a problem can be solved by careful thought or by

changing our plans, but in this case the problem can only be solved by prayer and letting God work out His plan.

Restoration of Fellowship.

[Judges 16:23-31.](#)

"The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." Samson was chosen by God to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Unfortunately Samson found the opposite sex very attractive and his desires took him away from God, so he failed to obey God. Eventually he lost the special super strength that he had been given by God and was captured and imprisoned by the Philistines. As part of the punishment the Philistines burnt out the eyes of Samson. But God was still in control of the situation.

"23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

"28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. "

[Judges 16:23 and 28.](#)

In spite of Samson's past, God was still prepared to answered the prayers of Samson and give him the ability to destroyed the pagan temple and worshipers. God still cared for Samson and loved him. God was willing to listen to Samson's prayers of confession and repentance and use him to fulfil His plan this final time. Do not let our guilt feelings over our sin keep us from restoration with God. No matter how long you have been away from God, he is ready to listen and restore you to a wonderful relationship with Him. Nothing is impossible with God, if God can still use Samson for his work then he can easily make something worthwhile with yours.

How should we pray?

With the right attitude.

[Ezra 8:21.](#)

"Then I declared a fast while we were at the Ahava River so that we would humble ourselves before our God; and we prayed that he would give us a good journey and protect us, our children, and our goods as we travelled"

Ezra knew that God had promised to protect his people, but Ezra does not take these promises for granted. He also knew that people have to be of the right mind and attitude to obtain God's blessing when they use prayer. We should pray with an attitude of deep respect for God. So Ezra and the people humbled themselves by fasting and then prayed. Fasting also gave them more time to pray and meditate on God. Their prayers were answered.

People often pray without appreciating what we are saying or asking. Real prayer, needs us to concentrate on our thoughts and words. Our prayers are opening our life to the will of God for us personally and it can really change us. Without this responsibility and attitude to prayer, we are reducing God to just a "doctor" who can provide painkillers and desires for our every problem.

We must pray with confidence.

[Nehemiah 2:1-10.](#)

Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer and he was very sad because he had just heard about the condition of Jerusalem and the temple. As he served the wine the king noticed his sadness and asked why.

"4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

[Nehemiah 2:4.](#)"

With little time to think, Nehemiah needed to immediately pray. Eight times we read that Nehemiah prayed as a result of an unplanned event in the record of events, [Nehemiah 2:4](#); [Nehemiah 4:4-5,9](#); [Nehemiah 5:19](#); [Nehemiah 6:14](#); [Nehemiah 13:14,22,29.](#)

Nehemiah was prepared to pray at any time, even while holding a conversation with another person. He knew that God is always available and hears every prayer offered and will answer according to His will. Nehemiah has a close relationship with God and full trust so he could confidently approach Him in prayer at any time. See [Nehemiah 1:4-7.](#) He was able to pray with confidence in God's grace.

We must pray with sincerity and meaning.

[Matthew 6:5-15.](#)

Jesus is teaching about communication with God and said *"5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." [Matt 6:7,8.](#)

In the passage Jesus highlights the real attitude to prayer of some people, for example in this teaching, the religious leaders were praying in the synagogues and on street corners, they prayed so that others heard their words, they wanted to appear special, "holy" and self-righteous. There are occasions for public prayer, but prayer is basically a private communication between each person and God.

Prayer for others.

[Colossians 1:1-11.](#)

"3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints." [Colossians 1:3-4.](#)

Paul had never met the Colossians, but we read here that he regularly and faithfully prayed for them. Paul shows us that we should always pray for others. We should pray that they seek and know the will of God for them, that they bring glory to God by their lives and bearing fruit, and grow in and through the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we wonder how to pray for missionaries and other leaders we have never met, Paul shows us how in this letter.

Pray with thanks, humility and listen for any answer.

[Colossians 1:12-24.](#)

God may not appear to respond or answer our prayers but He knows all things and controls all things so we should always pray with thanks and praise.

[Joshua 7:1-26.](#)

Joshua's prayer shows confusion and fear of what has happened at Ai. God is always open to your problems and true feelings. Any believer can come to God in desperation, remember that God is all-knowing and all powerful and has everlasting love for His people.

Biblical passages referring to prayers to study.

[2 Chronicles 6:1-42](#)

[Matt 6:5-15](#)

[John 17:1-26](#)

[Matt 7:7,8](#)

[Matt 21:22](#)

[Mark 11:24](#)

[John 14:13,14](#)

[John 16:23,24](#)

[John 15:16](#)

[Eph 2:18](#)

[Eph 5:20](#)

[Col 3:17](#)

[1 Peter 2:5](#)

[1 Kings 8:54](#)

[2 Chronicles 6:13](#)

[Psalm 95:6](#)

[Isaiah 45:23](#)

[Luke 22:41](#)

[Acts 7:60](#)

[Eph 3:14](#)

The position for prayer.

[Genesis 24:26,52](#)

[Exodus 4:31](#)

[Exodus 12:27](#)

[Matt 26:39](#)

[Mark 14:35](#)

[1 Kings 8:22,38,54](#)

[Psalms 28:2](#)

[Psalms 63:4](#)

[Psalms 88:9](#)

[1 Tim 2:8](#)

[1 Samuel 1:26](#)

[1 Kings 8:14,55](#)

[2 Chronicles 20:9](#)

[Mark 11:25](#)

[Luke 18:11,13](#)

[2 Cor 12:7-10](#)