

A lot of people have a lot of ideas about what prayer is, so let's start with the actual definition.

I went to [Blue Letter Bible](#) and looked up the original Greek from several places in the New Testament.

There were 2 words in the definitions that kept coming up:

Intercession - to go to or meet a person, esp. for the purpose of conversation, consultation, or supplication
to pray, entreat

Supplication - need, indigence, want, privation, penury
a seeking, asking, entreating, entreaty to God or to man

From this we can see prayer is talking to God about a problem or situation you or someone else has.

It is NOT a one-way transaction or monologue.

It is a conversation.

We don't just insert a prayer or two and go on our merry way, expecting to receive what we need.

It is an ongoing thing.

We don't just pray once.

We continue in prayer and communication throughout our lives.

Prayer is an opportunity to speak one-on-one with the Creator of the Universe,

To go before the God who spoke this world into existence and share what's on our hearts, both good and bad.

It must be taken seriously and humbly.

Here's the great thing about prayer:

God wants us to pray to Him and He wants us to bring our problems to Him.

Listen to these 2 verses from [Hebrews 4:15-16](#):

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (NIV)

Or in the [KJV](#): 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.

Jesus walked on this earth and was tempted in every way, so whatever it is we are struggling with, He gets it. He understands.

He saw a lot of sad, bad things while He was here.

There is absolutely nothing we can say or pray about that will shock Him.

So, don't hold back afraid you'll offend Him or that He won't understand.

He's a really BIG God. He can handle it!

Come boldly to the throne

Boldly = freely, without fear, in confidence, knowing you belong there and have that right.

Not timidly, not meekly, not afraid

Do it politely, with lots of reverence and humility

Humble confidence that you belong there.

You have that right because you're His child!

You can be confident when we approach the throne, knowing we will receive His mercy and find

His grace to help you, no matter what it is.

If there is even one drop of doubt about whether you can or should pray to Him, or about whether you are good enough or deserve to talk to Him, the answer is YES! You are!

And, YES You do!

Being a Christian automatically makes you eligible to!

Prayer should be a matter-of-fact part of our day, like taking a shower and brushing your teeth.

[Colossians 4:2](#) tells us we should devote ourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. (NIV)

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; [\(KJV\)](#)

In this instance thankful means with thankfulness or the giving of thanks

Okay, then, specifically who or what do we pray for?

[Luke 6:27-28](#) tells us to pray for our enemies. (KJV)

The [NIV](#) words it "those who mistreat you."

Now, this does not mean pray they get hit by a bus!

It means to pray for good things for them.

We can pray and ask the Lord to bless them, to help them, and that they have a closer walk with Him.

Because, remember, we don't know what's really going on in their life or why they are like they are.

Also, there have been times when we were the ugly one, but Christ forgave us!

Here's the thing - when you honestly and earnestly pray for someone, your thoughts and feelings toward them change and you begin to feel compassion and empathy for them.

Do you know what that is?

That's beginning to see them the way Christ sees them - that is you increasing in spiritual maturity.

Pray for other believers

[1 John 5:16](#) tells us to pray for others when we see them sin and God will help them.

In virtually every book Paul wrote he starts and/or ends by encouraging them to pray for each other.

He also said He prayed for them regularly.

Rather than pray for their illness or job loss, he said he was praying for their spiritual walk, that they would stay closer to the Lord, and that they would focus on God the Father.

This does not mean we should not pray for their job, children, illness, etc.,

In fact, [Galatians 6:2](#) says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (KJV)

What's the law of Christ? To love others as yourself.

In other words, it means we should not lose sight of the bigger picture and fail to pray for that part of their life.

Pray for yourself:

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 4:6-7](#) (NIV)

We all have concerns, some of which we allow to become worries.

We shouldn't do that.

Instead, we should take all concerns to the Lord in prayer.

Some translations say supplication instead of petition, but the point is clear:

We are to go to God about Every. Single. Situation.

Every concern we have - every situation means every one of them.

Look what happens as a result of you doing that.

The peace of God guards your heart and mind.

When you go to God with a hurt or problem, when you hand Him the problem He replaces it with peace and comfort.

It's a peace so spectacular you can't even understand it.

Now, just because you pray does not mean you will get an immediate answer. Sometimes it takes a while.

Don't give up until you get an answer.

It may take years, but the answer will come!

Pray in God's will.

Just because we want something or see something, doesn't mean we have the right answer or idea.

The things we ask for must be according to God's will.

It's about asking for things that will glorify God and expand His kingdom, not what will please us or our flesh.

Sometimes we ask but don't get because we ask amiss, wanting it for our own selfish gain ([James 4:3](#))

This doesn't mean we can't ask for things we want, but instead, we need to make sure that what we are asking for is not just some selfish "gimme, gimme" thing.

It's okay to ask for a car, even a new one, but if you make a modest income and are asking for a new luxury sports car you might want to check your motives.

Motives matter!

It is always okay to tell Him you aren't sure about something and ask Him to direct, instruct, and correct you in what you ask for.

In fact, asking the Lord to make you more Christlike is a VERY good thing to do.

Remember, we are to seek the kingdom of God first ([Matthew 6:33](#))

Be careful what you ask for and why.

Having life and having it abundantly doesn't necessarily mean having a lot of stuff or fancy vacations

(though vacations are okay, owning stuff and dressing nicely are okay)

It's about a life with a close relationship with Him that matters,

Make sure when you are praying and asking for things, you are in line with His will and His ways.

Understand that sometimes the answer is no, and that's okay.

God is a very kind, loving, good God.

He knows what is best for us.

If He says no, trust that He has a better plan and is looking out for us, even when we don't agree, understand, or like it.

Lastly, ask in faith, believing, and don't doubt.

Doubt hinders both you and your prayers.

When you pray and ask you are supposed to ask in faith, trusting and believing He hears you and will answer you.

[1 John 5:14-15](#)

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. (NIV)

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. [James 5:13](#) (NIV)

These are just a few things we can do to improve our prayer life.

If we will continue to pray and trust God, with time we will see that our prayer life has improved and we have grown closer to the Father.

That's a very good thing, indeed!

This week's homework:

[Read Luke 18:1-8](#) -

What can you learn from the persistent widow?

Examine your prayer life.

Is it consistent? Are there areas where you can improve? Are you asking in faith or do you have doubts?

Pray and ask the Lord to help you with the specific areas of concern you might have..

This week's memory verse:

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. [Luke 18:1](#) (NIV)