

# HOW TO HEAR FROM GOD THROUGH PRAYER

## BIG IDEA:

We must understand that prayer is the primary way we communicate with God.

## INTRO

One of the greatest tools for strengthening our personal relationships is developing strong communication. It's through communication that we express what's on our hearts. **Without it, how can we truly grow and deepen those relationships?** *The same is true for our relationship with Jesus—except it's the most important relationship we'll ever have.*

# WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is simply communication between us and God. It's how we talk to Him and share what's on our hearts.

As someone once said, *“Prayer is the means of communication between the human soul and the Lord who created the soul.”*

It's a way to express our thoughts, desires, gratitude, and needs to God.

# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER?

Prayer deepens our relationship with Christ and draws us closer to God. It's how we share our innermost thoughts and feelings with Him.

Prayer is also an act of faith and trust, showing that we believe in God's power, wisdom, and love.

Ultimately, **prayer reflects our desire to know Christ more deeply and to be more like Him.**

# WHAT SHOULD OUR PRAYERS BE LIKE?

Our prayers should be honest and authentic reflections of what's on our hearts. God wants us to come to Him just as we are, without pretense.

At the same time, **our prayers should align our hearts with God's will.**

**Our prayers should not come from selfish motives or be disconnected from God's heart.**

## **Example:**

If you're mad, angry, or hurt, take it to God. Be honest and tell Him exactly how you feel. But don't stop there—the goal isn't just to vent your emotions. The goal is to allow God to transform your thoughts and align them with His will.

For instance, if you're upset about a situation, it's okay to express that to God. **But He also wants you to reflect His character in how you respond to those emotions and the situation itself.**

## **POINT:**

**Prayer isn't just about unloading our emotions;** it's about allowing God to:

**Shape** our hearts.

**Guide** our actions.

**Reflect** His ways.

## 1 John 5:14-15 ESV

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. [15] And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

*John emphasizes praying for what pleases God, not what pleases us. When we talk to God, we shouldn't demand what we want; rather, we should ask him what he wants for us. If we align our prayers with his will, he will listen; and because he hears us, he will give us a definite answer* **(Life application study Bible)**

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## Mark 11:22-26 NLT

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. [23] I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. [24] I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours. [25-26] But when you are

praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."

*The kind of prayer that moves mountains is prayer for the fruitfulness of God's Kingdom. It would seem impossible to move a mountain into the sea, so Jesus used that illustration to show that God can do what we consider impossible. God will answer your prayers, but not as a result of your positive mental attitude. Other conditions must be met: (1) You must be a believer; (2) you must not hold a grudge against another person; (3) you must not pray with selfish motives; and (4) your request must be for the good of God's Kingdom. To pray effectively, you need faith in God, not faith in the object of your request. **(Life application study Bible)***

## **Matthew 7:7-11 NLT**

"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. [8] For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. [9] "You parents-if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? [10] Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! [11] So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

## **Philippians 4:6-7**

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

## **James 5:16**

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

## **Romans 12:12**

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

## **Psalms 145:18**

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.”

**Of course one of the greatest examples and lay outs of how to pray is given to us by Jesus himself. Here’s how Jesus told his disciples to pray when he was asked:**

## **Matthew 6:7-15 NLT**

“When you pray, **don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again.**

[8] Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly



what you need even before you ask him! [9] Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, **may your name be kept holy.** [10] **May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.** [11] Give us **today** the food we need, [12] and **forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.** [13] And **don't let us yield to temptation,** but **rescue us from the evil one.** [14] "If you **forgive those who sin against you,** your heavenly Father will forgive you. [15] But **if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.**

# **PERSONAL DISCUSSION & REFLECTION**

## **UNDERSTANDING PRAYER**

What does prayer mean to you personally?

Why do you think prayer is important in our relationship with God?

## **PERSONAL**

What do you think is the ultimate purpose of prayer?

How does prayer help us align with God's will?

Do you believe prayer changes things, or does it primarily change us? Why?

What are some common struggles people face when it comes to prayer?

## **PRACTICAL**

What practical steps can you take to find time for prayer in your life?

What are some distractions or excuses that keep you from having a constant prayer life?

How can you overcome some of those distractions & excuses to make prayer a priority in your life?

What role does prayer play in the process of hearing from God?