

How to Pray

Ask 10 different people how to pray, and you will get 10 different answers. Some will say you must wash various parts of your body or assume a certain position. Others will insist that you pray at specified times, make certain gestures, or have beads or charms in your possession to begin prayer. We can be assured all of this is pure nonsense. How can we be so sure? Because 2000 years ago, a man asked God Himself how to pray, and this is what God had to say.

Luk 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. Luk 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Luk 11:3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

Luk 11:4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Jesus also gave a remarkable sermon often referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon gave instructions for how everyone should conduct themselves. In this sermon, Jesus specifically told us how to pray and also how not to pray.

Mat 6:5 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. Mat 6:6 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. Mat 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Mat 6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. Mat 6:9 After this

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Prayer



This informational pamphlet gives the reader basic information about prayer as described in the Bible.



manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Mat 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Mat 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread. Mat 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Mat 6:13 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.

What did Jesus tell us to do here? He told us to pray in private. We should not stand on the street corner and pray to gain attention or to show how "righteous" we are. One of the latest fads to come along is the posting of private prayers on Facebook or in emails. Do we need social media or email to communicate with God? Certainly not. For what purpose are these prayers posted then? That said, there are times when group prayer is desirable and acceptable to God. The following verse shows by example that praying together can be proper.

Act 12:12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

The next point Jesus makes is to tell us who to pray to. Jesus tells us that after we "shut thy door," or in other words, after we ensure that we are in a private place, we should pray to the Father. We must pray to God alone, and no one else. The next point Jesus makes is to tell us not use vain repetitions. God knows what we need. We do not need to explain it to Him in 10 different ways. Notice that none of these verses instruct us to pray at a certain time. They do not tell us to wash any part of our bodies before praying. They do not tell us we must have certain beads or charms to pray. They do not say we must assume a certain position to pray. They do not say we must make certain gestures. This is the Word of God specifically telling us how to pray. If any of these things were required, God would have given that instruction in these verses. There is no

question. If these things were required, He would have told us in these verses.

When should we pray? This verse says every morning and every evening.

1Ch 23:30 And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even;

There is also this verse which says evening, morning and at noon.

Psa 55:17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

However, this next verse says all the time.

1Th 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

Which is it? To say that we must pray at a certain time of day is missing the big picture. The next verse puts it all into perspective.

1Th 5:17 Pray without ceasing. 1Th 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Praying is not just asking God for something whenever we decide we want something. Praying is a way of life. Praying is a constant communication with God throughout each day. Praying is praising God. Praying is giving thanks to God for all of the little things that enrich our daily lives. Praying is also asking for the things we want or need. Prayer is our way of communicating with God. The creator of the universe is always listening for your prayers. He wants to communicate with you. Sometimes we get the idea that we must assume a certain position in order for our prayers to be heard. It would be hard to pray without ceasing if we were to assume a certain position each time we prayed. There are plenty of verses that speak of people bowing or falling on their faces before God. There are also verses which depict people lifting up their hands, standing, singing and even dancing.

Psa 134:2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.

Psa 28:2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

Psa 149:3 Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

We have seen that Jesus gives us the words to the Lord's Prayer in multiple places in the Bible. Does this mean we should only pray this prayer exactly as it is relayed here? Not at all. To begin with, the Lord's Prayer as listed in the book of Luke differs slightly from the Lord's Prayer as listed in the book of Matthew. The Bible goes further though and tells us to ask God for what we want.

Php 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

There are times when fasting combined with prayer may be more effective than prayer alone. We learn this in several verses such as Matthew 17:14 - 21. A man had a son who was possessed. He brought the child to the disciples, but they could not rid the child of the devil. Jesus then rebuked the devil which departed out of the child. When the disciples asked Jesus why they were not able to cast the devil out, he replied.

Mat 17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Finally, these verses give us information about the attitude we should have when praying.

Luk 18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

Luk 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Luk 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Luk 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Luk 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.