

# Prayer Facts

## Why does the Bible say we should pray?

**We are commanded to pray.** "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." – Philippians 4:6

**Christ himself prayed to the Father, seeking him before ministering to multitudes.** "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places to pray." – Luke 5:16.

**We develop an intimate relationship with our Lord through prayer.** "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you." – James 4:8

**We grow more like Christ as we consistently seek him through prayer.** "Remain in me and I will remain in you." – John 15:4a

**God works through our prayers.** "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." – Matthew 18:18

**We are to expect a positive answer if we pray according to God's will.** "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him." – 1 John 5:14-15

**Christ himself prayed for the Father's will to be done, not his own.** "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done." – Luke 22:24

## What has Jesus said about prayer power?

Jesus said:

"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I with them." – Matthew 18:19-20

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." – Mark 10:24

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." – John 14:13-14

## What do others say about prayer?

Some testimonies:

- "I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." – Martin Luther, father of the reformation in Germany
- "There is only one power available to change the course of history, and that is the power of prayer – the prayer of God-fearing, Christ-believing men and women." – Billy Graham, evangelist
- "People are drawn to prayer because they know that God's power flows primarily to people who pray." – Bill Hybels, pastor and author of Too Busy Not To Pray
- "I have discovered that prayer is the secret weapon of the kingdom of God. It is like a missile that can be fired toward any spot on earth at the speed of thought, and hit its target every time." – Ronald Dunn, author of Don't Just Stand There, Pray Something

## Want a simple approach to personal prayer?

To guide their prayer times with the Lord, many people have used the acrostic ACTS. Here is how it works:

- A**doration: Praise God for who he is and what he has done;
- C**onfession: Confess to God your sins and mistakes;
- T**hanksgiving: Offer thanks to God for his blessings in life; and
- S**upplication (or requests): Bring before God personal needs and pray for others.

**Like any activity, we gain confidence and skill in prayer the more we pray.** The apostle Paul encourages us to make prayer part of our lifestyle: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

You will find an engaging, six-lesson video course on prayer at 24-7 International Prayer at <https://www.prayercourse.org>. It features Pete Greig who started an international prayer movement a few years ago described in his book Red Moon Rising. The course uses the Lord's Prayer as a springboard to discussing six prayer topics: adoration, petition, intercession, perseverance, listening and warfare. The course is free.

## Want ideas for praying in groups?

There is power in praying together – a power to change us and to change the world around us. Jesus said in Matthew 18:18: "I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."

There are many ways of praying together in groups. Here are just two approaches:

- **Conversational prayer:** Rosalind Rinker popularized this approach in books such as Prayer: Conversing with God. Conversational Prayer involves group members each praying short prayers about different aspects of a single prayer

item until they are ready to move on to another prayer item. Doing so can lead to a dynamic prayer time guided by the Holy Spirit.

- **Praying from the scriptures:** In his book, *Praying the Bible*, Donald S. Whitney suggests using scripture passages such as the Psalms and the New Testament epistles as a launching pad to group prayer. Take Psalm 23. You could begin with the opening words "The Lord is my shepherd" and ask him for his guidance in a difficult personal situation. Someone else could ask God to become his child's shepherd, bringing him to Christ. Then, move on to the next phrase and so on.

Dennis Fuqua suggests many ideas for group prayer in his excellent book *United and Ignited: Encountering God Through Dynamic Corporate Prayer*. You can find other suggestions at Pete Greig's 24-7 Prayer International website at <https://www.24-7prayer.com/prayermeetings>.

## What about unanswered prayer?

It is easy to get discouraged about prayer if God does not answer our urgent requests the way we wish. Why does God not say "Yes" to seemingly good and important prayer requests?

Ultimately, we must remember God's words in Isaiah 55:9: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

We may not see a good reason why some prayers go unanswered, particularly life-and-death issues. But it is in the midst of suffering that our faith in God's goodness is tested and we grow more like Christ. The great men and women of the Bible longed for the Messiah but did not see him in their lifetimes, even giving their lives for God. (Hebrews 11:13)

You can find more on this important topic at Bibleinfo.com. Click on <http://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/why-does-god-not-answer-my-prayer>.