

SPEAKING WITH GOD

Study 2

Communicating with our Father is something that is fundamental; it helps us to know Him and strengthens our faith. The Lord has provided us with two principal means of communicating with Him: namely prayer and reading the Bible. In this study we are going to look at the first of these.

Prayer, in the biblical sense, is to talk with God. Our first example for prayer is our Lord Jesus. Actually, He is our first example for everything, as He lived in this world, so do we now. To Him it was very important to speak with his Father.

Matthew 14:23 *“And when He had sent the multitudes away. He went up on a mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there”*

Mark 1:35 *“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed”*

Mark 6:46 *“And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray”*

Luke 5:16 *“So He often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed”*

Luke 6:12 *“Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God”*

Luke 9:28 *“Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John and James and went up on the mountain to pray”*

Luke 22:44 *“And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground”.*

It is our privilege as children of God, to be able to pray and be heard. Thanks to Jesus we have unlimited access to the presence of God.

Hebrews 4:16 *“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we might obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need”*

We can open our hearts and be sincere. There is no need to repeat formulas and prayers that we don't feel. Jesus Himself urges us to be spontaneous.

Matthew 6:7 *“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words”*

But, what can we say to God when we speak to Him? So that we don't become bewildered, the Lord left us a model for us to learn some of the things that we can say. This prayer starts with “Our Father” and is known as the “Lord's Prayer”. Sadly, many people just stick to repeating these words over and over again without realising that this prayer is just an example, a guide and not a limitation of our expression.

We are going to read the Lord’s Prayer and then we will make a list of the things that we can include in our prayers.

Matthew 6:9-13 *“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed by Your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”.*

According to the Lord’s Prayer, in my prayers I can include:

Parts of the prayer

- Submission to His design, to God’s plan (*“Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”*)
- Recognition of God’s person (*“Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name”*). This includes exaltation, praise, worship; things that we are going to look at in a few studies time.
- Confessions of sins (*“And forgive us our debts”*)

Tick the correct answers:

- Children of God do not sin
- Children of God continue to sin even though they try to avoid doing so.
- Children of God sin as much as they want to.

There is nothing that can stop us from being children of God. Nonetheless, the sin which we commit gets in the way of our _____ with God.

In **1 John 1:9** we read: *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”*

In order to be forgiven and cleansed, we need to:
(explain below)

Gratitude

Ephesians 5:20 “...giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ”

There is nothing more beautiful than a thankful person. It pleases the Father when we give Him thanks and it helps us to remember the countless things that He has done for us.

Make a list of 5 things to give thanks to God for:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Petition (“Give us this day our daily bread”)

God did not only give us permission to ask Him for things, He actually strongly encourages us to do so.

John 14:13-14 “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it”

Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you”

Let’s do a little exercise. Make 2 lists: in one put things, which according to your criteria, we can ask God for; in the other put things which we shouldn’t ask God for.

Can Ask	Shouldn’t Ask

God wants to give us good things, like a father gives good things to his children.

Matthew 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

James 4:2-3 gives us an example of asking in the wrong way: “You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures”

How then, should we ask?

- In the name of Jesus. **John 14:14** “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it”

- Through faith. **Mark 11:24** *“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you will receive them, and you will have them”*
- For things that, according to the Bible, God wants. **1 John 5:14** *“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us”*
- With humility. **2 Chronicles 7:14** *“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

So, what can we actually ask for? Read the following verses and come to your own conclusions.

- **Matthew 26:41** *“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

I can ask for: _____

- **James 5:14-16** *“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”*

I can ask for: _____

- **Matthew 6:11** *“Give us this day our daily bread”*

I can ask for: _____

- **James 1:5** *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”*

I can ask for: _____

- **1 Timothy 2:1-2** *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence”*

I can ask for: _____

- **Matthew 5:44** *“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you”*

I can ask for: _____

- **Luke 10:2** *“Then He said to them. “The harvest is truly great, but the labourers into His harvest”*

I can ask for: _____

Answer to prayer:

God always answers prayer, although not always in the same way. He knows everything and He knows what it is that we need and what is best for us. That's why many times the answer to our prayers will be **yes**, other times it will be **no** and other times it will be **wait**. He will always answer us and we need to be certain that His answer is the best one.

Recognition of who God is and His will, confession, giving thanks and petition are the requirements which are always present in our prayers.

It doesn't matter where we pray (**1 Timothy 2:8**) *"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting"* **Ephesians 6:18** *"praying always with all prayer and supplication for all the saints"* but the Lord encourages us to meet with Him daily, by ourselves and in a personal way:

Matthew 6:6 *"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in the secret will reward you openly."*

Prayer in the church and with other Christians is a good thing, but He wants us to have a moment alone with Him, in a quiet place where we can express our innermost thoughts.

Let's think a moment. At what point during the day can I meet with God? And where can I go that's quiet enough? (Complete the sentence below to help you)

The place where I will meet with God will be _____ at _____ am/pm.

To serve as a guide, you will find a plan attached which has 2 columns. One is entitled "Things to be thankful for" and there we will write down those things that we have to thank God for. The other is entitled "Petitions", where we will list our petitions to God.

Each day at the time you have said, go to that quiet place, take the plan, give thanks and present your petitions (requests) to God. As our petitions are answered they can be moved into the column of thanks, so that you can give thanks for the answers. We will soon see that time of prayer is something beautiful and it will be transformed into a living conversation with our God. (See next page for table).

