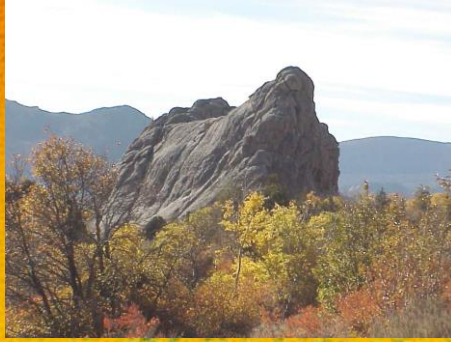




The Do's and Don'ts of Successful Praying, Part I & 2



- **We Must Be a Praying Church, a House of Prayer—**
Jesus: “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.” —Mark 11:17; Isaiah 56:7
- Definition of “to pray” in Hebrew/Greek – our “righteousness” in prayer must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees – 3 set times of prayer
- Luke 19:46--“It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer.’”



What Matt. 6 and other passages from the Bible tell us about prayer:

Jesus expects His disciples to pray—“When you pray...”. (Matt. 6:5)

A high bar: “Pray without ceasing.” 1 Thess. 5:17



- **There are wrong ways to pray** – Jesus gives two in Matt. 6 (later)
- **There are right ways to pray** – “Pray, then, like this...” Matt. 6:9 – introduces Lord’s prayer
- **There are many kinds of prayer** – petition, supplication, intercession, warfare, contemplative, authoritative (commanding), lament, inquiry, with the spirit (tongues), corporate agreement. A general term for prayer that produces results: “effectual prayer” our focus today

DEVOTED

Prayer can be expected to produce seeable results.

James 5: 16-18 --“The effectual prayer...accomplishes much. example: Elijah—prayed to stop and to start rain

Ineffectual praying produces a misrepresentation of God and Christianity. Praying to God without praying with the right elements in place produces unanswered prayer, frustration, distrust and/or hatred of God, and often theological justifications for why God does not answer prayer.

Our prayer effectiveness can be hindered/blocked by human and demonic issues

Human Hindrances—Spousal discord-- 1 Peter 3:7

'Husbands, treat your wives with consideration as you should so that your prayers will not be hindered.'

Persisting in (strongholds of) sin – Isaiah 59:1-2—“The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save...but your iniquities have built barriers between you and God; your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.”

NT references to “devotion to prayer”

Inadequate faith level—Matt. 17:14-20—“Why couldn’t we cast out that demon? Because of the “littleness” (insufficient amount) of your faith.”

Demonic Hindrance—”Daniel 10:13—Gabriel: “But the prince of Persia was blocking my way for 21 days until Michael came to help me.”

Acts 16:16-18 Paul and Silas and the demonized Philippian slave girl—followed them, presumably hindered their ministry.

Jesus' Two Don'ts in Prayer: Matt. 6: 5-8

1. Don't pray like "the hypocrites" (religious leaders of the day) in order to receive praise and be uplifted in the sight of other humans.
2. Don't pray like the pagans--using meaningless, repetitious words, ritualistic but not heartfelt-- trying to earn God's favor or convince Him to answer you by your prayer performance-- (different from praying in tongues)

To pray is an action verb – it is asking God for something or commanding something in His name.

Three Essential Ingredients in Effectual Praying

James 5:16 “The **effectual**, fervent prayer of a righteous man/person accomplishes much.”

Greek word: “working with strong energy,” “effectual” -- successful at producing a desired outcome or result

Ingredient 1: Clear knowledge that we are asking for is God's will

Effectual praying *must* be according to His will

And this is the confidence we have in approaching God (in prayer), that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us; and if we know He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.” 1 John 5:14-15

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” –Ps. 37.4

We know God’s will through:

The desires of our hearts--arising from our position of abiding and delighting ourselves in the Lord’s presence and will

These are “sanctified heart desires”

- They flow from the “new heart” in us as God’s “new creations” in Christ
- They arise within us as we encounter specific situations; They reflect God’s will revealed in us through us—our partnering with God

“Truly, truly, I say to you: if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.” John 16:23

- “in My name” equals the fullness of Jesus’ presence and purpose including His desires given to us as our desires

Ingredient Number 2: Faith to receive when we are making our requests to God

“The word proclaimed did not help them because it was not *mixed with faith* in those who heard it.” Heb. 4:2

- **Heb. 11:6**-- “Without faith (confident trust: restful assurance) it is impossible to please God, for we must believe that God exists and is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”
- **James 1:5-6**—“If you need wisdom, ask God for (pray for) it...But let him ask in/with faith, doubting nothing (with no doubt in the mind whatsoever), for the one doubting (happening in the present) is like a wave of the sea, being blown and tossed to and fro by the wind. That person should not expect to receive any answers from the Lord.”

Key scripture on faith in prayer

Mark 11:21-24 Various translations:

- **NAS**—“Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.”
- **Literal Emphasis Translation**: “Because of this I say to you, all things whatever praying and you ask, believe that you receive, and they will be to you.”
- **Aramaic Bible in Plain English**: “...believe (know) that you are receiving it and you shall have it.”
- **Godbey New Testament**: “...all things whatsoever that you pray for and ask, **believe that you just now received them**, and they shall be unto you.”

Key to faith in prayer:

1. receive the “yes” answer from God at the very same time you make your request. Asking and receiving by faith are co-temporaneous. This is a spiritual transaction that produces a manifested result—Heb. 11:3—“What is seen (physical) is made from what is not seen (spiritual).”

- Words spoken in prayer and empowered by faith from God produce tangible kingdom results.

Ingredient 3—Perseverance

“the capacity to endure waiting, delay, or provocation without becoming angry or upset.”

- **Heb. 6:12,15**—“We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who **through faith and perseverance** inherit what has been promised.” “And so, after waiting patiently (with perseverance), Abraham received what was promised.” (Took 25 years between God’s promise of a son and the birth of Isaac)
- **Jesus—Luke 11:1-13** – a parable of contrast—God vs. the sleeping friend—the power of bold perseverance in asking

Why pray for the same prayer target over time?

- **To “Heap Up” God’s Power--** persevering prayer releases the substance of God’s power to reach the “tipping point”—“heap up prayers”—Rev. 5:8—golden bowls of incense, “which are the prayers of the saints” – “prayer releases power”
- **God Creates the Answer Over Time Through Our Prayers**
the answer “ripens” over time as God must move through space and time to create the answer Mark 4:28—“first the plant, then the ear, then the full amount of grains in the ear” – Murray—“the law of gradual growth” that governs all created life
- **To Overcome Spiritual Opposition--** persevering prayer destroys spiritual opposition through warfare praying – Daniel prayed 21 days to overcome the spiritual opposition of the prince of Persia that was blocking the arrival of God’s answer to him—Dan. 10:10-12

How Do You Know?

if one prayer brings the answer or
if many prayers over time will bring the answer?

- **There is No Formula** The “Spirit” works differently in different situations—1 Co. 12:6 —“various ways God does things”
- **The Spirit will Let You Know** You will know by the Spirit’s witness to your own spirit --- “it’s done!” can come after you pray once, or a thousand times for the same object – Romans 8:16—“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirits...”

Basic Elements in Effectual Praying:

- **Ask According to God's will**
- **Believe (have faith) you receive when you ask; Key-Be thankful that the answer is yours in Christ**
- **Persevere in faith-filled prayer—"keep on asking"**

Effectual Prayer and Assigned Authority:

Your prayer effectiveness and faith level are *directly related to your God-assigned sphere(s) of authority* – home, work, church, where you live, special (temporary) assignments in prayer – Berlin Wall, Wilmington inner city, Father Nash, Evan Roberts (100,000 souls in Wales)

Standard spheres of spiritual authority:

- Parents over their family and home
- Bosses over their employees and workplace
- Government rulers over what they govern
- Church leaders over churches
- All relational realities – if you relate closely to someone or something, in general you have authority to pray God's will into that sphere