

# ONLINE 8

## CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD: MAKING THE MOST OF PRAYER

Why is communication important in any relationship? What happens if there is none?

What's been your experience of prayer? What answers to prayer have you seen?

Communication is foundational to any relationship, including our relationship with God. We can each communicate with God through prayer. Jesus was asked by his disciples for some basic instruction on how to pray. His response was not a formula but a guide on how to relate to God and what sort of things to talk to him about and ask of him.

MATTHEW 6v5-8 5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

MATTHEW 6v9-13 9 “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

What were the hypocrites and pagans doing?

What are the key words in v5-8?

What do we learn from v9 about how we're to relate to God?

What would change in the world and in my life if God had his way all the time?

Hallowed means holy.

What things are included in “our daily bread”?

Why do we pray this every day?

What would happen if forgiveness slipped out of our prayer life?

Why is receiving forgiveness and forgiving others linked?

How should we pray for our own life with God?

Prayer isn't just about asking for things. God's not only interested in what we do, he's interested in us and in enjoying a relationship with us. Through prayer we meet with God, enjoy him, worship him and share our life with him. This deepening relationship can be illustrated as follows:



The book of Psalms in the Old Testament is a book of prayers and songs of praise. They give us a window through which we can see into the author's relationship with God. The Psalms are not simply a shopping list of requests for God to do things. They show the authors opening up their hearts to God, often with an honesty that can seem quite shocking.

PSALM 13 v 1-6 | How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? 3 Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; 4 my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall. 5 But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. 6 I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me.

What do we learn about prayer from this Psalm?

How easy do we find it to share our thoughts and feelings with other people?

How easy do we find it to be this honest with God?

How does honestly sharing our heart with God affect our relationship with him?

What effect did praying have on the person who wrote the Psalm?

How does this Psalm reflect the diagram we looked at a moment ago?

We learn about Jesus' practice of prayer in LUKE 5v16: "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

What do we learn about Jesus' own practice of prayer? Why do you think Jesus went to "lonely" places?

How can we make prayer a part of our everyday life? When is the best time for you to have one to one time with Jesus? Where is a good place for you to do this?

If we ask God to help us as we pray, he will often drop specific things into our minds which he wants us to pray about. The following are some suggestions of things we could pray about:

- Putting things right with God that have gone wrong.
- Reflecting on God, his character, and his attitude towards us.
- Thanking God for the things he's done for us.
- Asking God for things we need.
- Sharing our hopes and fears, joys and sorrows with him.
- Asking him to help us move on in our relationship with him and with those around us.
- Praying for the Christians and non-Christians we know in their situations.
- Praying for people to come to faith.
- Praying for situations around us and in the world.
- Responding to what we're reading in the Bible.



The Bible says of Moses that he used to talk to God face to face as a man talks with his friend (Exodus 33v11). When we come humbly to God we have the undivided attention of the creator of the universe. As we know and trust this more and more deeply, prayer becomes one of the greatest privileges we can know. As we share ourselves and our lives with God, we are transformed and so is our world.

