

# Prayer

## Why should we pray?

Prayer means talking with God and is like breathing for our spiritual life. God is interested in you and wants a relationship with you. And it's the same as in other relationships: The more often and the more honestly we talk with each other, the deeper and stronger the relationship becomes.

### Matthew 6:5-13

*What do we learn here about prayer?*

## Six types of prayer

**Praise:** Worship God for who He is. (Psalms 34:2)

**Thanksgiving:** Thank God for His mercy and providence. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

**Lament:** Cry out your pain and express your complaints to God. (Psalms 13:1-3)

**Confessing sins:** Ask God to forgive your sins. (1 John 1:9)

**Requests:** Ask God to meet your own needs. (Philippians 4:6-7)

**Intercession:** Ask God to meet the needs of others. (1 Timothy 2:1)

## How God's will affects our prayer

There are 3 different types of prayer regarding God's will:

1. God has already made the decision

Example: "Lord, I want to be born another time and at another place."

→ *No matter how much you pray, nothing will ever change.*

2. God knows that what we pray for is not really good for us. But because we continue to pray for it and don't listen to what He actually wants to say to us, He finally says "okay", hoping that we'll learn from the consequences.

Example: A small child comes to his parents and wants to carry the cup of water to the table. The parents know the table is still too high for them and suggests to carry it together with the child. But the child is stubborn: "No! I do it!" Finally the parents agree. But just as they expected, the child drops the cup.

The parents comfort the child, give him dry cloths and wipe away the water. Again they suggest that they carry the cup together. This time the child agrees and all are happy.

→ *Is what you pray for really good? Do you pray with the right motives?*

→ *You have to take the responsibility for the results.*

3. We pray according to God's will

→ *He will do it! Find out more about God's will and pray it. (1 John 5:14)*

## Traffic lights: An image of God's answer to our prayer

"Yes."	Green light	God agrees and grants your request.
"No."	Red light	God doesn't agree with your request, He has a different opinion.
"Wait."	Yellow light	God isn't responding (yet), so you must be patient.

## Listening to God

In the same way as we talk to God, He wants to talk to us. The more time we spent with Him, the more familiar we get with His voice. Here are four key principles for this:

- **Being still before God:** Find a place where you won't be distracted and you have time to settle your thoughts. For all the things that are still going through your head: Give them either to God or make a note for later so that you can now concentrate on God.
- **Seeing:** God speaks only rarely with an audible voice, so you don't have to focus mainly on your ears. Instead He prefers to use our imagination and often shows us things in front of our "mind's eye".
- **Spontaneous thoughts:** When we have received the Holy Spirit, He influences our thinking. The more we give room to Him, the more He'll shape our thoughts. God doesn't often speak with loud orders, He would rather talk tenderly through the thoughts that come into our minds.
- **Writing down:** It is helpful to write down a conversation with God, including our questions to Him as well as the thoughts that we received as an answer. Don't chew on every thought, asking if it is from God or not, but rather write down everything without filtering it. Later you can check more if you're unsure with some points.

(compare Habakkuk 2:1-2)

## More hints

- We can talk with God just like we talk with another person. He hears what we're saying inside of our heart. Especially when we're together with others it is good to **pray out loud** so that it can become a conversation of all together with God.
- Sometimes we need **persistence** in prayer: "Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." (Luke 18:1).
- We can pray at **any time** and at **any place**.
- **We pray in the name of Jesus** (John 14:13)  
He is empowering you to act on His account. We need to pray what Jesus would have prayed. Then we're praying "His will" and He will answer. Important: "in the name of Jesus" is not a magic formula by which a prayer becomes automatically more powerful.
- God has given us **authority** through Jesus which we can use in prayer. That means we can **declare** things (e.g. speaking out blessings, rejecting sin or renouncing a negative spiritual inheritance). We can also **command** sickness or demons to leave (Luke 9:1-2).

## Application

*Which of the six types of prayer (praise, thanksgiving, lament, confessing sins, requests, intercession) do you want to integrate more into your prayer life?*

*Which questions do you want to ask God? Where and when is a good time?*

## My goals: