

## How to Pray

Leader: Calvin Cook

**Introduction:** "According to the Bible there was a time when God and Adam walked together in the garden and conversed as friends. Then, prayer was as natural as conversation with a colleague or a lover." ~ Philip Yancey.

Today, many of us struggle to find a natural flow to our prayers. Feelings of insincerity, ritual, and repetition reduce our confidence that prayer can really make a difference.

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### 1. Conditions of the Heart (Prayer Busters): Scripture Gives at Least 15 Reasons for Unanswered Prayer.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Unconfessed) \_\_\_\_\_ sin.

***It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.***

~ Isaiah 59:2

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Prayerlessness) \_\_\_\_\_

***... Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it.***

~ James 4:2

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Unresolved) \_\_\_\_\_ conflict.

***So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.***

~ Matthew 5:23-24

***In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.***

~ 1 Peter 3:7

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Selfishness) \_\_\_\_\_

***And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.***

~ James 4:3

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Uncaring) \_\_\_\_\_ attitude.

***Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need.***

~ Proverbs 21:13

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Inadequate) \_\_\_\_\_ faith.

***But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.***

**~ James 1:6-7**

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## 2. Pray "Without Ceasing"

***Never stop praying.***

**~ 1 Thessalonians 5:17**

"Paul is not referring to non-stop talking, but rather an attitude of God-consciousness and God-surrender that we carry with us all the time. Every waking moment is to be lived in an awareness that God is with us and that He is actively involved and engaged in our thoughts and actions."

***"And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.***

**~ Luke 11:9-10**

"We should pray like a salesman with his foot wedged in the door opening, like a wrestler who has his opponent in a headlock and won't let go". ~ Philip Yancey

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## 3. Examples of Prayer

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Arrow) \_\_\_\_\_ prayer.

**~ Nehemiah 2:4**

- Prayer of \_\_\_\_\_ (Repentance) \_\_\_\_\_.

**~ Psalm 51**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Public) \_\_\_\_\_ prayer.

**~ 1 Kings 8:56-60**

Moses' Song to the Lord: **~ Exodus 15**

A Cry to God for Help: **~ Psalm 22**

David's Response to God's Promise: **~ 2 Samuel 7**

A Prayer of Praise: **~ Psalm 104**

Jesus' Prayer for His Disciples and All Believers: **~ John 17**

Paul's Prayer of Thanksgiving: **~ Colossians 1**

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4. The "Model Prayer"

**Pray like this:**

**Our Father in heaven,** \_\_\_\_\_ (Reminder: He's our Father and we are his children)

**may your name be kept holy.** \_\_\_\_\_ (Worship and praise Him in all we do)

**May your Kingdom come soon.** \_\_\_\_\_ (Through us)

**May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.** \_\_\_\_\_ (Through us. Submit to His will)

**Give us today the food we need,** \_\_\_\_\_ (Give us what we need for today)

**and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.** \_\_\_\_\_ (As we have forgiven)

**And don't let us yield to temptation,** \_\_\_\_\_ (Make me alert to Satan's temptation)

**but rescue us from the evil one.** \_\_\_\_\_ (Give me the strength to resist him.)

~ Matthew 6:9-13

(For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory Forever, Amen)

- End your prayer with more \_\_\_\_\_ (Worship) \_\_\_\_\_.

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**Conclusion:** Prayer is not natural, and hasn't been since Adam. It must be continually practiced and developed. Prayer is a conversation, in your words and language, with your Heavenly Father. Prayer is what connects us to the heart of God our Creator. It produces growth and depth in our relationship with Him.

We pray to talk to Him...we read his Word to listen to Him.

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*Suggested Resources:*

Website Suggestion: <http://www.gotquestions.org/how-to-pray.html>

Book Suggestion: [Prayer: Does it Make Any Difference?](#) By Philip Yancey