

**Prayer a Privilege**  
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Although God is everywhere present, yet he is invisible. He is an all-pervading Spirit, yet is perceived by none of our senses. We behold his glorious works in the heavens and in the earth, and may learn something, by careful observation, of the general laws by which the material universe is governed; but still the great Architect is concealed. As far as reason can lead us, we seem to be shut out from all fellowship with our Maker; and whether prayer is permitted would remain forever doubtful, were it not for divine revelation. Indeed, considering man as a sinner, it would seem presumptuous for such a creature to obtrude himself into the presence of a holy God. Scripture teaches us that God may be acceptably approached by sinners only through the mediation of his Son.

Prayer is everywhere in the Bible recognized as proper, and inculcated as a duty. But it is also a most precious privilege, one of the richest blessings conferred on man. It opens a method of fellowship and communion with our Father in heaven; it furnishes a refuge for the soul oppressed with sin and sorrow; it affords an opportunity to the heart overwhelmed with an intolerable weight of misery to unburden itself, to pour its griefs into the ear of one who can pity and help.

The moral effect of prayer is important. It humbles the soul, and excites veneration for the magnificent and holy character of God. But though prayer brings into exercise the noblest acts and emotions of which our nature is capable, yet it would be a grand mistake to confine the efficacy of prayer to their moral effects. Prayer, when offered in faith, for things agreeable to the will of God, actually *obtains for the petitioner the blessings which he needs*. It has an efficacy to obtain forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and deliverance from a thousand evils. Prayer enters into the ears of the Lord Almighty; the prayer of faith is the mightiest engine upon earth. The Lord of heaven has given his word to answer prayer. He will be inquired of by his people, that he may bless them.

God can make any means effectual; and among the instituted means for the government of the world, and the preservation and comfort of his people, prayer holds a high place. The objection that God is immutable, and knows what we need, has no more force against prayer than any other means—no more force than if urged against the necessity of cultivating the ground in order to obtain a crop, or receiving food to nourish the body.

The Christian life is sustained by prayer. By it every grace is exercised, every blessing is obtained. Without the sincere desires of the heart, prayer is nothing; it is worse—it is a mockery. He is the best Christian who prays most. As God is ever near to us, “for in him we live, and move, and have our being,” we are permitted to hold fellowship with him at all times, and in all places. We are commanded to “pray without ceasing”—to “be instant in prayer”—to “pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands.”

In prayer there is not only an outgoing of the soul to God, in acts of faith, love, and confidence, but there is an actual communication from God to the soul. Prayer is a holy converse—a fellowship with God. One hour spent in prayer, will accomplish more good than many employed in study or labor. Surely, then, it is good to draw near to God.