

Prayer

A message from Billy Graham

Have you ever asked yourself what prayer is? Prayer is simply talking to God. It is for every moment of our lives, not just for times of suffering or joy. In fact, we should also use prayer to thank God for everything He has done in our lives.

Many people pray haphazardly. A few words spoken hastily in the morning, then we say goodbye to God for the rest of the day. At night we push through a few sleepy petitions.

That is not the example of prayer that Jesus gave.

The Bible tells us to “pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This doesn’t mean we should spend every minute of the day on our knees, but that we should have a prayerful attitude at all times—acknowledge our dependence on God, obey Him and talk to Him throughout the day. Prayer should not be our last resort; we should start every day by giving it to God.

God loves us and has promised to hear us when we pray. How can you learn to pray? First, understand why prayer is possible.

Prayer is possible because Jesus Christ removed the barrier between us and God—a barrier caused by our sins. You see, sin separates us from God, and because of that, we have no right to come before Him. But by His death on the cross, Christ paid the penalty for our sins and removed the barrier. God then gives us the privilege of coming into His presence when we commit our lives to Christ. The Bible says, “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). If you have never done so, ask Christ to come into your life today.

Then understand that God now welcomes you into His presence and promises to hear you. The Bible says, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14).

Even if God doesn’t seem to answer your prayers at first, don’t stop praying. He loves you, and no prayer goes unanswered. Sometimes, God answers our prayers when we don’t realize it; He might answer “No,” or “Wait.” Yes, we think we know what’s best for us, but God sees the whole picture, and sometimes He lovingly refuses to give us what we request because He knows it isn’t according to His perfect plan.

We should also pray for others—even our enemies—as well as our leaders. When we pray for them, we should have faith that our prayers will be answered, but at the same time, remember to seek God’s will.

The Bible says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind” (James 1:5-6).

Maybe you find yourself praying in church, with a group of friends or at work. Sometimes, though, it might be easier to pray and hear God in silence. God Himself said, “Be still and

know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Try to find a quiet place where you can approach God without distraction and give Him your complete attention. No matter where you pray, remember: Personal testimonies, church history and the Bible all confirm that prayer works.