

DID YOU KNOW:


Corporate prayer has been a major part of the church since its beginning. Sometimes this means one person praying for the congregation like we do on Sundays. Other times the whole congregation will recite a prayer together. The early church used to recite the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) every time they met together!



LETTING OTHERS PRAY FOR YOU

An important element of Christian prayer life is allowing others to pray for you. James, Jesus' brother, wrote that anyone who is sick or in need should come to leaders of the church and ask for prayer. (James 5:13-18)
We at Valley Life would like to help you in any way possible, including prayer. If you have needs that we can pray for, let one of our pastors or community leaders know, and we can pray for you.

WHAT IS PRAYER

A GUIDE TO TALKING WITH GOD

 ValleyLifeChurch

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**GIVE EAR, O LORD, TO MY PRAYER;
LISTEN TO MY PLEA FOR GRACE.**

-PSALM 86:6

THE SHORT ANSWER:

Prayer is the way we have been given to communicate with God. Maybe that is simple to say but doesn't really seem simple when you think about it. First of all, there is the intimidating thought that we are talking to God. But part of the joy of prayer is knowing that God wants us to talk to Him. He may be the ruler of the universe, but He is not too busy for you! Second, there is the realization that communication is a two-way street. When we pray we not only express our thoughts to God, but we also open our hearts to let Him touch our spirits with His own.

JESUS' TEACHING ON PRAYER

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this:

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

-Matthew 6:5-15

ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN PRAYER LIFE

There are many reasons people pray, but they tend to fall under three main umbrellas: petitions, praise, and meditation.

Petitions are those prayers that ask God for something. These are the kinds of prayers that are most familiar to us. Petitioning prayers are just about the only kind we ever see on TV, and, quite frankly, the primary reason most of us come to God. We have needs, and God wants us to ask Him for help. It takes a step of humility to admit need, "casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)

But if all we ever come to God with is our needs, what does that say about our love for Him? That is why prayers of praise are so important. Since we are given so many things from God, our hearts need the opportunity to thank Him and express our awe at His glory! We praise Him for what he gives and who He is.

At times, our prayers are not expressed with our words. Sometimes we pray by simply opening our hearts to the Holy Spirit. In these meditative prayers, we allow ourselves to be open to the words the Holy Spirit might bring to us and we can sometimes even sense God communicating back to us!

Ideally, our personal prayer lives should include all three elements. We praise God for what He has done and who He is. We humbly ask Him to care for our needs. And we take time to listen to the Spirit and find out if He wants anything for us. Like healthy and well-rounded communication in any relationship, a healthy prayer life will lead to a stronger relationship with our Father.