

Prayer

What is prayer?

Luke 10:21-22 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. (22) All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

Prayer is talking to God.

In this passage, Jesus easily switches from prayer to talking to the disciples; it’s as if it is the most natural thing in the world to include His Father in the conversation.

When should we pray?

1 Thess 5:17 pray without ceasing,

It’s always the right time to pray.

What should we pray?

1 John 5:14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Scripture gives us a wide variety of things we can pray about.

But ultimately, if we want our prayers to be answered, we need to pray according to God’s will.

Do we have to fulfil any conditions when we pray?

Ps 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

We need to make sure that our hearts are right with God before we pray; sin is always a block to answered prayer.

This doesn’t mean that we have to be perfect to get our prayers answered, but we do need to make sure there is no unconfessed sin in our lives. (See 1 Jn 1:9)

James 1:6-8 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. (7) For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; (8) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Prayer should be offered in faith, in the expectation that we will receive.

Faithless prayer does not receive answers.

John 14:14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

Prayer should be in the name of Jesus.

This is not a mere formula to be tagged on to every prayer.

Instead, it means that when we pray, we represent Him and His interests, much the same as in days of old, those representing the law might call out, “Stop in the name of the king!” or “Stop in the name of the law!”

It’s not a formula, but a statement of the source of our authority.

See Acts 19:11-16 for an example of people who thought that the name of Jesus was a formula.

What about public praying?

Mat 6:5-6 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. (6) But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

There are many instances of public praying in the Bible, including from Jesus, so Jesus is not implying that we should only ever pray in secret.

However, He is very interested in the heart attitude behind prayer, and prohibits praying as a public show designed to draw attention to the person praying.