

Address for consultation day 16 October 2022

Why do we pray? The answer is so much more than bringing a shopping list! That a bit like comparing prayer with telling your mother or husband what you want for dinner – your relationship with your mother or husband is so much more than that. It is a relationship.

Luke 10. The lawyer says to Jesus' 27(He answered), 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.'

We pray because we love our Father. When I was young I had a boyfriend and we would spend ages on the 'phone talking – for the life of me I cannot remember what about but it absorbed hours of time just hearing each other's voice.

We pray because we have faith in him, trust him, believe in him, need him.

John 6.28 Then (they) the crowd said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' 29Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.'

We pray because we want to please God:

James 1:17

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

We pray to know his heart as he knows ours.

1 John 5:14–15

And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him.

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What it is not praying is praying when we should be acting.

James 2.15 If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? 17 So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

What is not praying is to ask God to bless what has already been decided:

Psalm 127 1 Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labour in vain.

Unless the Lord guards the city,
the guard keeps watch in vain.

2 It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives sleep to his beloved.

We are not expected to use eloquent words and sophisticated phraseology.

Matthew 6.7 'When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

God does not need words, he needs us to come as a child, humble and open hearted. If we cannot find words we can groan, weep or sigh in sadness and solidarity.

Romans 8.26

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

YLT

And Satan hates it when we pray. Why? Here is an extract from Active Christianity:

Prayer is a force. It touches eternal powers and sets them in motion; it moves God to action. It is the inner ministry before God's face, which is the ministry that is most feared by Satan because prayer is a force, the unfolding of an intense spiritual labour that results in great visible works.

The highest form of prayer is an inner, conscious, clear-sighted spiritual work in harmony with our great High Priest to carry out God's plan with His church. Prayer requires that the body, soul, and spirit be subjected to the power of the Holy Spirit. It requires quietness; for only by hearing His voice can the same prayer that Jesus prays penetrate our spirit.¹

The people of God pray alone, we pray together in church, why we pray before important meetings. St Paul said that we should pray at all times:

1 Thessalonians 5.16-18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Satan loves messing with the people of God. He loves emotional chaos, hobby horses, power struggles, disrespect, and grandstanding. He hates it when we mobilise the power of the Holy Spirit in prayerful decision making.

When Jesus returns who will he find who is faithful in prayer, who believes in the power of prayer, who lives in harmony with prayer?

When Jesus comes will he find faith in his church? Faith to pray, faith to act in accordance with his will, faith to weep and groan for a hurting world, faith to build *his* church.

¹ <https://activechristianity.org/prayer-powerful-secret-weapon>