

WHAT IS A BIBLICAL PRAYER?

"It is good to be near God." (Psalm 73:28).

Prayer is as essential to spiritual life as air is to physical survival.

Prayer is communication and heartfelt relationship with God.

Prayer is talking with God and receiving from Him

Prayer is listening to God.

Prayer is worship

Prayer is enjoying the presence of God.

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer..." Romans 12:12

Prayer is not:

Prayer is not simply saying or reciting words.

Prayer is not a repeating formula. (Mathew 6:7).

Prayer is not optional.

Prayer is not made so that God can find out what we need. God already knows what we need. ***"Your Father knows what you need before you ask him"*** (Matt. 6:8).

WHY PRAY?

- **We pray because God commands us to pray.** *"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving."* (Colossians 4:2). *"Pray without ceasing."* (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- **We pray because we need to be safe.** *Ps. 61:1-2; "Hear my cry o God, listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint."*
- **We pray because we love God.** Just as a man and woman in love desire to be together and communicate, so should we with Christ.
- **We pray because we depend on God.** God is our source. He is our life (Colossians 3:4).
- **We need to pray in order to resist temptation.** *"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation."* (Mt. 26:41).
- **We need to pray because it is necessary for men to invite God to act in salvation.** If no one invites God to work here, Satan (the god of this world through man's universal rebellion - 2 Corinthians 4:4) will dominate the affairs of men and eventually the judgment of God will come.
- **We pray in order to know God's power and resurrection and to understand His will.** We should even deny ourselves (sleep, comfort and food) at times in order to pray more and with greater power. (Matthew 6:16; Luke 6:12; Luke 21:36; Colossians 4:2; 2 Corinthians 11:27).

WHY DOES IT SEEM TO US THAT SOMETIMES GOD DOESN'T ANSWER OUR PRAYERS?

1. **Because "we do not always know how to pray as we ought"** (Rom. 8:26). Only prayer according to God's will is granted, *"If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of him"* (1John 5:14-15).
2. **The wisdom of God must refuse what our ignorance insists must be done.** *"Thy will be done"* is not a prayer formula but an attitude.
3. **When prayer remains unanswered we must continue to trust God.** He causes all things to work together for good (Rom 8:28).
4. Sometimes long awaited, will suddenly be given, like Hannah's (1Sam.1: 19-20) and Simeon's (Luke 2:25-35).

5. **Sometimes what we ask for is not part of God's plan for our lives.**
6. **The Bible is clear that living life as a Christian is not free from problems.** Prayer is not a simple remedy to remove the challenges of interacting with the world. What prayer can do is give us God's perspective on the problems, and help us to develop the strength to work through them with Him.
7. **We need to look at ourselves and examine ourselves. There may be something that is not right in our own lives that prevent God from honoring our prayers.**
 - a. Prayerlessness: "*You do not have because you do not ask God.*" James 4:2
 - b. Doubt, without faith (Matt. 8:13, 9:29; Mark 11:24-26; Heb 11:6).
 - c. Un-confessed sin: "*Your iniquities have separated you from your God.*" Isaiah 59:2
 - d. Lack of forgiveness: "*Since God has forgiven us, we should forgive others.*" Ephesians 4:32, Matt. 6:14-15, James 5:14-16.
 - e. Selfishness and wrong motives: "*When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives.*" James 4:1-3
 - f. Uncaring attitudes: "*If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.*" Proverbs 21:13. No concern for others especially orphans and widows (James 1:27). Prayer must never be a justification for failing to help others (1Tim. 2:1-2). Paul called believers to be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant and sacrifice to God (Eph. 5:1-2)
 - g. Without leading of the Holy Spirit there is no assurance of praying according to God's will. Don't know what you are doing: Prayer as Mechanics, Magic and Manipulation and not in the Spirit (Eph. 6:18; Rom. 8:26-28; Matt. 26:41-42). And no prayer is answered which is not in harmony with God's word and will (1John 5:14).
 - h. Don't know Jesus' name and authority or who God is: *Isaiah 44:17 "He makes...a god, his idol,...He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!" John 4:22 "You worship what you do not know...Acts 17:23b "What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you."* (John 14:13-14; Matt. 28:17-19; Lk. 8:44; James 5:13,14).
 - i. Unthankful heart (Phil. 3:6).
 - j. No concern for His church. Not praying with mature believers (James 5:14-15) and with others in unity (Acts 1:4, 2:1,14, 46; 4:32; 5:12,14; 12:12).)
 - k. Don't understand myself as human being, limited, created by God on his image and have free will to pray. Uncertain about your identity. Not knowing who you are in Jesus? "*But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" John 1:12. "See what kind of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" 1John 3:1*
 - l. God hinders our prayer because "I will do it my way and not wait". "*Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long" Luke 11:1 "Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" Psalm 25:5*
 - m. Don't pray earnestly and persistently (the parable of persistent widow Luke 18:1-8; Matt 6:5-8). Persist in prayer primarily as an expression of our complete dependency on God for all aspects of our existence. Persistence is an act of humility as well as an expression of faith. (1Thes. 5:17-18)
 - n. Pray without fasting (Mt. 6:17-18). Fasting helps many to think more clearly. It should under take with a specific prayer intention in mind (Acts 13:2; 14:27). The early church fasted on certain occasions (Acts 13:1-3; 14:23; 2Cor. 6:5; 11:27)
8. **But sometimes prayers will remain unanswered in this life** (Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4). God works in the timescales of eternity, and His time frame can be different from our own. **A personal illustration of prayer not answered in this life:** "*After I (Elie) lost my leg in a land mind explosion, prayers were lifted up for healing and a miracle. The church prayed, friends and I prayed in consistency, we used our faith and dependency on our Father hoping that He will bring back my leg. The answer came to me in a dream one night, after I had drenched my pillow with tears and asking: why Lord, why don't you heal me and bring back my leg? Jesus came to me in a dream and lit up my room with a bright light. I saw myself in heaven; I was stepping on the long grass that had life. Every time I stepped on it, it did not break or die; instead it grew up instantly and took its former shape. I saw my leg growing in front of my eyes until it became perfect. It was an incredible vision that filled me with indescribable happiness. I woke up with a strange feeling that*

my leg was still there. I knew that it was Jesus talking to me. At that moment, Jesus had planted a new hope inside my heart and I realized that God was preparing an eternal body for me that would never die nor be destroyed. At that moment, I felt satisfied and convinced that God answered my prayers. I had lost my leg here, but I had won eternal life and I will get a new body and a perfect leg in heaven.”

9. **When we face unanswered prayer, we join the company of Jesus**, who prayed “*Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done*” (Luke 22:42). Jesus delighted in going God’s will, but he did not delight to go to the cross. The text says that Jesus “*for the joy set before him endured the cross*” (Heb. 12:2).
10. **The people praying do not know God’s wise timing**. For example, the Jews prayed for centuries for the Messiah to come, and rightly so, but it was not until “*the time has fully come*” that that God sent forth his son” (Gal. 4:4). David, who prayed for his son’s life to be save, but it was not (2Sam. 12:20-23). Paul, who asked the Lord three times that his thorn in the flesh be removed, but it was not (2Cor. 12:8-9).

Prayer requests for Running for hope Inc.

Running for Hope Inc. exist to share the gospel of hope and equip Christian worldwide to go beyond their limits and helping the amputees in the third world.