

PRAYER

Posted by Bob Young

“Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you: Because everyone that asks receives; and the one that seeks finds; and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” —Matthew 7:12

The New Testament emphasizes prayer. The importance of prayer is obvious in Jesus' example (especially see the Gospel of Luke) and Jesus' teachings (Luke 18:1ff). Paul (1 Tim. 2:1ff) noted the importance of prayer, writing that people ought always to pray. Many see prayer as asking for and getting answers from God. But prayer includes more than asking. Bible prayers include confession, adoration, thanksgiving, and fellowship with God.

Described simply, prayer is talking with God. Prayer is fundamental to the Christian life. In the Old Testament, not praying in certain circumstances was considered a sin (1 Sam. 12:23).

When we want to understand prayer better, we find helpful guidance in the teachings of Jesus (Matt. 6:1-8) and in the model prayer Jesus gave His disciples—beginning with adoration to God, moving to thanksgiving and confession of sins, seeking reconciliation with others, and praying for our needs and the needs of others, and concluding in Jesus' name (6:9–15).

We also find guidance in Jesus' parables. Jesus himself pointed out that God hears the constant clamor of his people, and that he hears the prayer of the humble more than the prayer of the proud (Luke 18:1-14).

The Bible says many things about prayer, but a helpful summary list suggests that God will answer our prayers when we confess sin (Ps. 66:18), ask in faith (Mark 11:24), abide in Christ (John 15:7), have pure motives (James 4:3), live peaceably with our mate (1 Pet. 3:7), obey God (1 John 3:22), and ask according to his will (1 John 5:14).