

Why Pray?

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Date: 22 January 2012

[0:00] 1 Peter 3, verse 12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.

! But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And the question, why pray? Why pray? Number 1, God answers prayer. God answers prayer. He promises to hear our prayer if we are one of the righteous. His ears are open unto their prayers.

Talking of the righteous, there's a condition. He's not hearing every prayer, but his ears are open unto their prayers. God answers prayer if we are one of the righteous.

It's good to know, isn't it? God hears our prayer and he answers our prayer. Sometimes God answers our prayer differently from how we'd like it to be answered.

[1:07] Someone put it like this. There was a Confederate soldier who wrote this poem. God says, I asked God for strength that I might achieve. I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked God for health, that I might do greater things. I was given infirmity, that I might do better things. I asked for riches, that I might be happy.

I was given poverty, that I might be wise. I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men. I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life. I was given life, that I might enjoy all things. I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I had hoped for.

Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered. I am among all men, most blessed. He answers prayer.

[2:08] He answers prayer. He knows the prayer that we pray before we pray it. But we are to pray it. His ears are open to the prayers of the righteous.

When you pray, He listens to you. When you pray, listen to Him. Listen to Him. It's not just one way. It's two-way communication.

Prayer. Someone put it like this. Prayer is not a way of making use of God. Prayer is a way of offering ourselves to God. In order that He should be able to make use of us.

It may be that one of our great faults in prayer is that we talk too much and listen too little. When prayer is at its highest, we wait in silence for God's voice to us.

For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers. God answers prayer. Why pray?

[3:09] God answers prayer. Why pray? Prayer is powerful. Prayer is powerful. Because it's God we are dealing with.

It's the omnipotent God. The almighty God. Consider the power of prayer. There is power in prayer because of the power of God.

The power of God. God answers prayer. And prayer is powerful.

Our God is omnipotent. He's all-powerful. And we can be empowered as we pray. Do you believe that tonight? Do you believe that your God is all-powerful?

We can pray and tap into His awesome power and know His power working in our lives. In James 5.16 it says, Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that you may be healed.

[4:14] The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. There's that condition again. The righteous. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

There's much to be availed. There's much happens when we pray. If we're praying according to His will. Prayer is powerful. It's powerful.

I know that sometimes we neglect that. I know, for one, I need to pray more. We can all think, how can I be more prayerful? How can I realise that power of God in my life?

Maybe it's prayer that is lacking when we feel like that. It's like an old Puritan preacher, Thomas Watson said, The angel fetched Peter out of the prison, but it was prayer that fetched the angel. You know, Peter was there locked in prison. The church was praying for him. And God sent an angel. Prayer moves the hand of God. The omnipotent one, the powerful, almighty God.

[5:19] Prayer is effective and it's powerful. Consider some of the greats of God, some of the men and women of God through history. God moved in answer to their prayer.

There's so many stories we could tell of testimonies, of accounts, of prayer. People like George Mueller coming to the end of himself and praying, and God abundantly supplying the need of the time.

Another man of God was David Brainerd. David Brainerd was a missionary to the American Indians. And someone wrote this account of David Brainerd.

They said, No miracle attests with the finer force, the truth of Christianity, than the life and work of this godly man. David Brainerd.

Alone in the savage wilds of America, struggling day and night with a mortal disease, unschooled in the care of souls, having access to the Indians for a large portion of time, but only through the bumbling efforts of a pagan interpreter, with the word of God in his heart and in his hand.

[6:33] His soul fired with a heavenly flame, a place and time to pour out his heart and soul to God in prayer. He fully established the worship of God and secured great results.

After spending a whole week in prayer, he spoke with such power that countless number of Indians yielded their lives to God. Countless numbers yielded their lives to God.

The Indians were changed from the lowest form of heathenism to pure, devout, intelligent Christians. Brainerd lived a life of holiness, a life of prayer.

By day and by night, he prayed. Before preaching and after preaching, he prayed. Riding through the wild forest, he prayed.

On his bed of straw, he prayed. Morning, noon and night, he communed with God. And little wonder, he had such power, such power. God was with him, mightily, as he lived in the presence of God.

[7:42] He lived that spirit of prayer. Why pray? Prayer is powerful. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers.

Why pray? We pray because we love God. We pray because we love him. It's a relationship. There's an intimacy. There's a closeness.

There's a communion with God. That is why we pray out of our love for our Lord, for our Heavenly Father. Prayer is having a talk with God, our Heavenly Father.

Father. It's talking with him on a regular basis. The eyes of our loving Heavenly Father are watching over His children. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers.

A story was written of a man called Ivan who lived in the torment and trials of a Soviet prison camp.

[8:50] And one day Ivan was praying with his eyes closed and a fellow prisoner noticed and said with ridicule, prayers won't help you get out of here any faster.

Opening his eyes, Ivan answered, I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God. Why pray?

Because we love God. We love Him. We want His will for our lives. We want to know. We want to commune with Him and find out His will. We want to hear His voice and obey Him.

We pray because we love Him. He's our Heavenly Father. Don't neglect the opportunity, the impulse, the urge to pray. Pray when He urges you to pray.

Pray when He puts it upon your heart. So pray. Pray because you love Him. You've got a relationship with your Heavenly Father. Someone put it like this about praying for others.

[9:53] Someone you know needs your prayers right now. In the army of the Lord, every soldier needs help. Someone needs hope. Someone needs patience. Someone needs courage.

Someone needs love. Someone needs insight. Someone needs determination. Someone needs strength. Someone needs guidance. Think of others when you pray. Sometimes we can make the mistake of praying purely selfishly. Praying just for ourselves. But pray for one another. Pray for one another. There's always more than enough to pray for if we consider our brothers and sisters.

We consider the lost, the people about us when we open our eyes and look around and we have the heart of our Lord. We love Him and His love, His mind is our mind, our love.

And we should pray as He prayed. Why pray? Why pray? Why pray? We pray because we depend on God. We depend upon Him.

[10:58] We ought to, as much as we're sometimes so self-sufficient, aren't we? We sometimes have everything we need, it seems, without praying. Yet, we must come to that place, that reality that we depend upon God.

For our next breath, we depend upon Him. For our lives, for our substance, for our sustenance, for our home, for our families, we depend upon God.

A writer said this, he said, Prayer is weakness leaning on omnipotence. Prayer is weakness leaning upon omnipotence.

Omnipotence, it means the all-powerfulness of God. It's realising our weakness, it's realising His strength, it's realising our utter dependence upon Him. And prayer is something that's always available.

For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers. He doesn't close down, He doesn't sign off. It's like our God, He doesn't sleep or slumber.

[12:08] He doesn't take a break from watching over His children and His prayer, that prayer that we can pray is an opportunity that's available to us.

24 by 7, God's eyes are ever watching over your life. He's ever watching. Let prayer be that natural response of your life every day.

Make prayer a habit. Make it a habit to pray. Sometimes, we can neglect to pray. You know, Corrie Ten Boom, a Christian writer, said, is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tyre?

Sometimes, we think of prayer as something that we turn to when things are going wrong, when it seems like there's a crisis, we turn to prayer as if it was a spare tyre to sort our situation.

But make prayer your steering wheel. Make it that which guides your life as you pray, as you're led by the Spirit, as you can pray without ceasing. The Bible says, pray without ceasing.

[13:14] Too bad some people cease without praying. We give up. We cease without praying. The Bible says, pray without ceasing.

Don't stop praying. Keep on praying. Thank God He does respond to our call. We pray because we depend upon our God. We must.

God forbid that we would depend upon our own strength, upon our own intellect, upon our own ability. We must come to that place of leaning upon His strength, of depending upon His enabling. There's a story of some businessman flying in a plane and there was a crisis happened. Suddenly there was a decompression in this aircraft and things were looking pretty critical and the oxygen mask came down from the ceiling and the plane began to stream towards the ground and one of the men lifted the mask from his face and yelled out to one of the other passengers.

He said, hey Jerry, you used to go to Sunday school when you were a boy. Say a prayer for us. Please, say a prayer for us, Jerry. Don't be stupid, shouted Jerry.

[14:32] The last time I prayed was 20 years ago. But his business companions insisted that Jerry should pray. All right, said Jerry.

Oh Lord, I haven't bothered you for the last 20 years and if you get us out of this fix, I promise you Lord, I won't bother you for the next 20 years.

Now some people treat prayer like that, don't they? As if prayer is something they just call out to God in a crisis and then when it's over you don't think to pray anymore.

But learn to depend upon God. Learn to depend upon Him by the day by day, for the week by week. Not just when you're in a fix, but make it a lifestyle.

An old time preacher said, when we rely upon organisation, we get what organisation can do. When we rely upon education, we get what education can do.

[15:32] When we rely upon eloquence, we get what eloquence can do and so on. Nor am I disposed to undervalue any of these things in their proper place.

But when we rely upon prayer, we get what God can do. When we rely upon prayer, we get what God can do.

Learn to ask of Him. Depend upon Him. Learn to ask of Him. Cooperate with God. Another writer said, prayer is surrender.

Surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boat hook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God. Now when we pray, it's not like we can really change God's will, but we're pulling our will in His direction.

[16:40] We're making our will depend upon Him, our great supplier, our great source, our great strength. Why pray? We pray because we depend upon God.

Why pray? We pray because we need to pray in order to resist temptation. At the Garden of Gethsemane, our Lord called these men to pray.

He said, Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. We need to pray lest we enter into temptation.

And if sin happens, 1 John 1, 9, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Confession is part of prayer, is part of praying. We need to pray so we can resist temptation.

[17:47] Susanna Wesley prayed for her son and she defined sin to young John Wesley. She said, If you are judged of the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of pleasure, then take this simple rule.

Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God and takes the relish of spiritual things, that to you is sin.

As we pray, we become more like Christ. We learn more of His will. We learn more of His person. He makes us more like Himself and He helps us have that overcoming power as we pray to help resist temptation.

Sin will keep you from prayer. Prayer will help you overcome sin. Rest in His keeping power. Why pray? Why pray?

We need to pray because God commands us to pray. Pray. Pray. Pray without ceasing. Be instant or continuous in prayer.

[18:51] Prayer. Pray always. We need to pray because God commands us to pray. James 4.2 He says, you have not because you ask not.

He wants you to ask. He wants you to call out. He wants you to bring your needs before Him. 1 Thessalonians it says, rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks because this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

It's the will of God that you pray. Christian, you're being disobedient when you do not pray. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks. He promises to hear when we pray. In Proverbs 15, 29 it says, the Lord is far from the wicked but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

The Lord is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous. What a promise. What a promise if you're righteous, if you're saved today, he hears your prayer.

[20:08] Now through the roof, through the atmosphere, through the stratosphere, to wherever he is in the great beyond, in heaven, in the heaven of heavens, in the holiest of the holies, he hears those simple words that you speak from your lips and he's as close as a prayer away.

Pray because it's his will, because he commands you to pray. The Lord is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous. God will hear and answer the prayers of the righteous.

Now, friends, tonight, I'm not taking it for granted that all of you are heaven bound. Some of you may not be.

God cannot hear your prayer. It says that our sins have separated us from God. In Isaiah 59, verse 2, Psalm 66, verse 18, it says that God does not hear our prayer if we're holding sin in our heart.

The challenge is to trust him, to trust him. And that simple moment of faith, of receiving his promise of salvation, you can be changed from lost to saved, from unrighteous to righteous, by the mercies of his grace, by the working of his blood shared for you.

[21:50] I urge you today, if you're not saved, trust him. Trust him now. Trust him. Even though you don't understand, even though you can't fathom, none of us can, what that means.

Just trust him. Just trust him. Let go of trying and trust him. Trust him. Depend upon him and know his salvation. As you turn and trust, he saves.

It's a miracle. We can't fathom it. But it's the wonder of Calvary. It's the wonder of the bleeding one dying for you. That's the wonder of it.

And you can become one who is righteous, not by any working of any doing, of any trying, but just of trusting, just of trusting, not in yourself, but in him.

Why pray? Why pray? Because Jesus, our Lord, is our ultimate model. What did our Lord do? How did he guide us?

[22:53] What did he show? He lived a life of prayer, our very Lord. Why did he need to pray? to set for us the example that we should follow in his steps.

He prayed constantly, our ultimate model, the ultimate and absolute one that we must imitate and tread in his steps. Our Lord Jesus was the example of prayer for we that ought to be a people of prayer, a church of prayer.

You know, preacher Bounce said this, what the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organisations, not more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use, men of prayer, men mighty in prayer.

The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come upon machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men, men of prayer.

Now, included in that, we need women too. Men and women who pray. God moves on men and women who pray. God works through men and women who pray.

[24:14] Not the machinery. You know, we can have everything that opens and shuts and all the razzmatazz and everything that the people would count as makes a great church as far as all the technology and all of the frivolity that some would turn to.

But we need prayer, brothers and sisters. We need to pray. We need to pray. The early church was a praying church. A praying church. In Acts 4, verse 24, we read about the power of prayer.

Acts 4, verse 24, it says, and when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord. They lifted up their voice to God with one accord.

Will we do that? We must. We must. Saints of God. Church of God. We must pray. We must pray. Individually and together.

John Wesley said, Bear up the hands that hang down. By faith and prayer, support the tottering knees. Have you any days of fasting and prayer? Storm the throne of grace and persevere therein and mercy will come down.

[25:28] Come to the throne of grace. In time of need, come to the throne of grace. Come to his throne. Engage yourself in prayer. Request his guidance.

Seek his face. Ask him to help you navigate the journey of life. He's the author of life. You're having trouble? Read the book. Come to the author of life.

The author of faith. Give him glory. Pray. He says, Call unto me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things that thou knowest not.

Call unto me. Some have called it God's phone number. Jeremiah 33 verse 3. Call unto me. Jeremiah 33 verse 3 and I will answer thee.

Why pray? Because God answers prayer. He answers prayer. Why pray? Because prayer is powerful. It's as powerful as the almighty omnipotent God.

[26:36] Why pray? Because we love him. He's our heavenly father. He wants to talk with you. Why pray? Because we want to depend upon him, not on ourselves.

Why pray? Because we need to pray lest we enter into temptation. He'll help you in those times of trial, of struggle. Why pray?

Because God commands us to pray. it's not something we should take for granted or put on the shelf in just times of crisis.

Why pray? Because our model, our Lord, our role model, our ultimate example, our Lord and Master pray. If he had to pray, wouldn't we so weaker than he?

for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

[27:37] What camp are you going to sit in today? Will you be a righteous one or an unrighteous? Friends, there's no chance of salvation when he shuts the door, when he says enough is enough, when he says time is up, when the clock ticks to that final moment in history when it's all over, Red Rover.

Friends, time will come to a close. If you're not in Christ, friends, you're in great peril of damnation. It's very clear in the word of God.

Trust him, trust him now. Don't leave this building until you've got peace with God. Please, I urge you today, please don't. Don't toy with God.

Don't toy with Christianity. Make it real. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you today that we can pray. Forgive us, Lord, when we neglect to pray.

Help us, Lord, to learn to pray. Give us, Lord, a desire, a longing to talk with you, to hear from you, to talk with you, to hear your voice, to hear your heart, to help us walk in your steps.

[28:52] Lord, help us to be a people who pray, to depend not on ourselves, but upon your power. Help us, Lord, when we face trial and temptation, when crisis comes, but not just then, help us to pray always.

So have that consideration that you're always watching over us. Your ears are open all the time, and we can just pray, even if it's just a word or a sentence, here and there, we can pray, and you can hear even those cries of our heart.

We pray, Lord, if there's any here present, have yet to trust you, that they'll make heaven their home, as they claim that promise that you give, as they claim the work that you have done on their part.

Lord, help us to walk in your truth, in your life, to be a people who pray, and to keep on praying. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen. Amen.