

## † What Is Prayer? †

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[What Is Prayer? \(billygraham.org\)](https://billygraham.org/answer/what-is-prayer/)

What is prayer? Prayer is **spiritual communication** between man and God, a two-way relationship in which man should not only [talk to God](#) but also listen to Him. Prayer to God is like a child’s conversation with his father. It is natural for a child to ask his father for the things he needs.

There are many promises in God’s Word to encourage us to pray, such as:

- **(Psalm 91:15 -KJV)** *“He shall call upon me and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him”;*  
[Psalm 91:15 -NIV] “He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.”  
[Psalm 91:15 -NLT] “When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them.”  
[Psalm 91:15 -NKJV] “He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.”
- **(Isaiah 65:24 -KJV)** *“And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear”;*  
[Isaiah 65:24 -NIV] “Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.”  
[Isaiah 65:24 -NLT] “I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!”  
[Isaiah 65:24 -NKJV] “It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.”
- **(Matthew 7:7 -NIV)** “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” v.8 “For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”  
[Matthew 7:7 -KJV] *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:”* v.8 *“For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”*  
[Matthew 7:7 -NLT] “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.”  
v.8 “For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”  
[Matthew 7:7 -NKJV] “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” v.8 “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

The Scriptures tell us that we are to pray for one another and also assure us that [God hears and answers prayer](#).

When you receive Christ into your heart, you become a child of God and have the privilege of talking to Him in prayer at any time about anything. The Christian life is a personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ. And best of all, it is a relationship that will last for all eternity.

<https://billygraham.org/story/prayer-101-how-do-i-talk-to-god/>

### [3 Answers From Billy Graham on Talking to God](#)

## [How do I talk to God?](#)

*Billy Graham:* Prayer is simply talking to God—and the most important thing I can say about this is that God wants you to talk to Him! He loves us and He has promised to hear us when we pray.

**How can you learn to pray?** First, understand why prayer is possible.

Prayer is possible because Jesus Christ has removed the barrier between us and God—a barrier caused by our sins. You see, sin separates us from God, and because of that we have no right to come before Him. But by His death on the cross, Christ paid the penalty for our sins and removed the barrier. God then gives us the privilege of coming into His presence when we commit our lives to Christ.

The Bible says, *“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* (Hebrews 4:16 -NIV).

[Hebrews 4:16 -KJV] “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

[Hebrews 4:16 -NLT] “So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

[Hebrews 4:16 -NKJV] “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

If you have never done so, ask Christ to come into your life today.

Then understand that God now welcomes you into His presence and promises to hear you—and He cannot lie. The Bible says, *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us”* (1 John 5:14 -NIV).

[1 John 5:14 -KJV] “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:”

[1 John 5:14 -NLT] “And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him.”

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

Trust His promises and learn to [bring every concern to Him in prayer](#).

<https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-prayer.html>

[What is prayer? | GotQuestions.org](#)

The most basic definition of prayer is “talking to God.” Prayer is not meditation or passive reflection; it is direct address to God. It is the communication of the human soul with the Lord who created the soul. Prayer is the primary way for the believer in Jesus Christ to communicate his emotions and desires with God and to fellowship with God.

**Prayer can be audible or silent, private or public, formal or informal. All prayer must be offered in faith (James 1:6), in the name of the Lord Jesus (John 16:23), and in the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26).** As the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* puts it, “Christian prayer in its full New Testament meaning is prayer addressed to God as Father, in the name of Christ as Mediator, and through the enabling grace of the indwelling Spirit” (“Prayer” by J. C. Lambert). The wicked have no desire to pray ([Psalm 10:4](#)), but the children of God have a natural desire to pray ([Luke 11:1](#)).

- **[James 1:6 -KJV] “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”**

[James 1:6 -NIV] “But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”

[James 1:6 -NLT] “But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.”

[James 1:6 -NKJV] “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.”

- **[John 16:23 -KJV] “And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.”**

[John 16:23 -NIV] “In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”

[John 16:23 -NLT] “At that time you won’t need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name.”

[John 16:23 -NKJV] “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.”

- **[Romans 8:26 -KJV] “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”**

[Romans 8:26 -NIV] “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”

[Romans 8:26 -NLT] “And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.”

[Romans 8:26 -NKJV] “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

- [Psalm 10:4 -KJV] **“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God*: God is not in all his thoughts.”**

[Psalm 10:4 -NIV] “In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.”

[Psalm 10:4 -NLT] “The wicked are too proud to seek God. They seem to think that God is dead.”

[Psalm 10:4 -NKJV] “The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek *God*; *God is* in none of his thoughts.”

- [Luke 11:1 -KJV] **“And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”**

[Luke 11:1 -NIV] “One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

[Luke 11:1 -NLT] “Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

[Luke 11:1 -NKJV] “Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”

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**Prayer is described in the Bible as seeking God’s favor ([Exodus 32:11](#)), pouring out one’s soul to the Lord ([1 Samuel 1:15](#)), crying out to heaven ([2 Chronicles 32:20](#)), drawing near to God ([Psalm 73:28, KJV](#)), and kneeling before the Father ([Ephesians 3:14](#)).**

- [Exodus 32:11 -KJV] **“And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?”**

[Exodus 32:11 -NIV] “But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. “LORD,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?”

[Exodus 32:11 -NLT] “But Moses tried to pacify the LORD his God. “O LORD!” he said. “Why are you so angry with your own people whom you brought from the land of Egypt with such great power and such a strong hand?”

[Exodus 32:11 -NKJV] “Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: “LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?”

- [1 Samuel 1:15 -KJV] **“And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.”**

[1 Samuel 1:15 -NIV] “Not so, my lord,” Hannah replied, “I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD.”

[1 Samuel 1:15 -NLT] “Oh no, sir!” she replied. “I haven’t been drinking wine or anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the LORD.”

[1 Samuel 1:15 -NKJV] “But Hannah answered and said, “No, my lord, I *am* a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.”

- [2 Chronicles 32:20 -KJV] **“And for this *cause* Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.”**
    - [2 Chronicles 32:20 -NIV] “King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to heaven about this.”
    - [2 Chronicles 32:20 -NLT] “Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to God in heaven.”
    - [2 Chronicles 32:20 -NKJV] “Now because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven.”
  
  - [Psalm 73:28 -KJV] **“But *it is* good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.”**
    - [Psalm 73:28 -NIV] “But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.”
    - [Psalm 73:28 -NLT] “But as for me, how good it is to be near God! I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter, and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do.”
    - [Psalm 73:28 -NKJV] “But *it is* good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, That I may declare all Your works.”
  
  - [Ephesians 3:14 -KJV] **“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,”**
    - [Ephesians 3:14 -NIV] “For this reason I kneel before the Father,”
    - [Ephesians 3:14 -NLT] “When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father,”
    - [Ephesians 3:14 -NKJV] “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,”
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Paul wrote, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”* ([Philippians 4:6–7 NIV](#)).

- [Philippians 4:6-7 -KJV] v.6 **“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. v.7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**
  - [Philippians 4:6-7 -NLT] “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. v.7 Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”
  - [Philippians 4:6-7 -NKJV] v.6 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; v.7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

### **Worry about nothing; pray about everything.**

Everything? Yes, God wants us to talk with Him about everything. How often should we pray? The biblical answer is **“pray without ceasing”** ([1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)). We should keep a running conversation going with God all day long. Some find the [ACTS formula of prayer](#) helpful, but there is really no special formula for [how to pray](#) in the Bible. We should just do it. We can pray under any and all circumstances. Prayer develops our relationship with God and demonstrates our trust and utter dependence upon Him.

## The ACTS model for prayer includes these elements:

**Adoration** – The **A** in the **ACTS** model stands for **adoration**, which means worship—glorying and exalting God. Through adoration, we show our loyalty and admiration of our Father. As we pray, we are called to worship God in adoration. This could be a song of praise to Him, praying a psalm of worship, declaring His attributes, or a myriad of other forms of worship.

**Confession** – The **C** in the **ACTS** model stands for **confession**. The word *confess* means “to agree with.” When we confess our sins, we agree with God that we are wrong and that we have sinned against Him by what we have said, thought, or done. God forgives us and restores our fellowship with Him ([1 John 1:9](#)).

**Thanksgiving** – The **T** represents thanksgiving. [Philippians 4:6](#) says, “With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (ESV). How is thanksgiving different from adoration? The difference is that worship focuses on who God is; thanksgiving focuses on what God has done. We can thank God for many things including His love, salvation, protection, and provision.

**Supplication** – The **S** stands for **supplication**, which refers to prayer for our and others’ needs. A supplication is a request or petition. We may pray for mercy ([Psalm 4:1](#)), leading ([Psalm 5:8](#)), wisdom ([James 1:5](#)), and much more. Paul encouraged us to make “supplication for all the saints” ([Ephesians 6:18, ESV](#)), which means to pray diligently for our brothers and sisters in Christ. (ESV – English Standard Version)

Prayer is the Christian’s way of communicating with God. We pray to praise God and thank Him and tell Him how much we love Him. We pray to enjoy His presence and tell Him what is going on in our lives. We pray to [make requests](#) and seek guidance and ask for wisdom. God loves this exchange with His children, just as we love the exchange we have with our children. Fellowship with God is the heart of prayer. Too often we lose sight of how simple prayer is really supposed to be.

When we make petitions to God, we let God know exactly where we stand and what we would like to see happen. In our prayers, we must admit that God is greater than we are and ultimately knows what is best in any given situation ([Romans 11:33–36](#)). God is good and asks us to trust Him. In prayer, we say, essentially, “*Not my will, but your will be done.*” The key to answered prayer is praying according to the will of God and in accordance with His Word. Prayer is not seeking our own will but seeking to align ourselves with the will of God more fully ([1 John 5:14–15](#); [James 4:3](#)).

- [[Romans 11:33-36 -KJV](#)] v.33 “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!  
v.34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?  
v.35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?  
v.36 For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”
- [[1 John 5:14-15 -KJV](#)] v.14 “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: v.15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”
- [[James 4:3 -KJV](#)] “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.”

The Bible contains many examples of prayer and plenty of exhortations to pray (see [Luke 18:1](#); [Romans 12:12](#); and [Ephesians 6:18](#)). God’s house is to be a house of prayer ([Mark 11:17](#)), and God’s people are to be people of prayer: “...*Dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love...*” ([Jude 1:20–21 NIV](#)).

- [Luke 18:1 -KJV] “And He spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;”
- [Romans 12:12 -KJV] “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;”
- [Ephesians 6:18 – KJV] “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”
- [Mark 11:17 -KJV] “And He taught, saying unto them, *Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.*”
- [Jude 1:20-21 -KJV] v.20 “**But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, v.21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.**”

[Jude 1:20-21 -NIV] v.20 “But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, v.21 keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.”

[Jude 1:20-21 -NLT] v.20 “But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, v.21 and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God’s love.”

[Jude 1:20-21 -NKJV] v.20 “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, v.21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

**Defined:** {Internet search}

**prayer** [prer] noun. a solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or an object of worship: an earnest hope or wish:

synonyms: [invocation](#) · [intercession](#) · [orison](#)

**invocation** in·vo·ca·tion [ˌɪnvəˈkɑːʃ(ə)n] noun. the action of invoking something or someone for assistance or as an authority: the summoning of a deity or the supernatural:

**intercession** in·ter·ces·sion [ˌɪn(t)ərˈseʃən] noun. the action of intervening on behalf of another: the action of saying a prayer on behalf of another person:

**orison** OR·I·SON [ˈôrəsən, ˈôrəzən] noun. a prayer.

synonyms: [entreaty](#) · [plea](#) · [appeal](#) · [petition](#) · [solicitation](#) · [exhortation](#) · [urge](#) · [prayer](#) · [invocation](#) · [suit](#) · [request](#) · [application](#) · [beseeching](#) · [begging](#) · [pleading](#) · imploration · [obsecration](#)

**supplication** sup·pli·ca·tion [ˌsəpləˈkɑːʃ(ə)n] noun. the action of asking or begging for something earnestly or humbly:

synonyms: [entreaty](#) · [plea](#) · [appeal](#) · [petition](#) · [solicitation](#) · [exhortation](#) · [urge](#) · [prayer](#) · [invocation](#) · [suit](#) · [request](#) · [application](#) · [beseeching](#) · [begging](#) · [pleading](#) · [orison](#) · imploration · [obsecration](#)

{ **Consecration:** for *spiritual sanctification in holiness & righteousness, repentance; to seek right way of God; to receive His understanding & guidance* }

**fast:** Hebrew word 6684: **tsûwm** (*tsoom*)- to cover over (the mouth), *i.e.* to fast;  
Greek word 3522: **nēstlēuō** (*nace-tyoo'-o*)- to abstain from food (religiously): fast

**pulse:** Hebrew word 2235: **zêrôa** (*zay-ro'-ah*) means something sown *i.e.* a vegetable (as food): pulse [2 Samuel 17:29; Daniel 1:12, 16]