

**IF I COULD
ASK GOD
ANYTHING**

**20 Answers
to Your
Questions
About Prayer**

awesome
Bible answers
for curious kids

kathryn
slattery



What Is Prayer?

Prayer is a conversation with God. One part of a conversation is talking. The other part is listening. God created you to enjoy a personal relationship with Him. The more time you spend with God, the better you get to know Him and the more you grow to love Him.

God wants to listen to you.

(Psalm 34:15)

He is interested in all your thoughts and feelings. He is interested in all your friendships, hopes, and dreams. He is interested in everything about you (Psalm 139:1).

God wants to talk to you.

(Isaiah 30:21)

He wants to comfort you when you are feeling sad, lonely, worried, or afraid. He wants to laugh with you when you are happy. He wants to help you when you have a difficult decision to make.

Why is God so
interested in
listening and
talking to you?

Because God
loves you.
(1 John 3:1)

Do I Need to Use Special Words When I Pray?

You don't need to use special words when you pray. You don't need to use fancy language. You don't need to memorize prayers. You don't need to recite prayers written by other people. You don't need to write down your thoughts before you pray. You don't even need to speak out loud. It's perfectly all right to have a conversation with God silently. This is because God hears your thoughts.

When you pray, just be yourself. Talk to God as if He is your best friend in the whole world. It is all right to cry when you pray. It is all right to laugh too.

Jesus was so close to God that when He prayed, He called God "Abba," which means "daddy" or "papa" (Mark 14:36). Jesus says this is how we should pray to God too.

What should you
pray about?

Everything! The apostle Paul wrote, "Pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks." (Philippians 4:6 NCV)

Do I Have to Kneel When I Pray?

You do not have to kneel when you pray. You do not have to close your eyes. You do not have to bow your head. You can pray standing, walking, or sitting. You can pray while you are riding the bus to school. You can pray while you are walking the dog. You can pray while you are lying in your bed at night. If you like, you can pray while you are standing on your head!

Many Christians pray standing up, with their hands held apart, palms up, toward God. Other Christians kneel when they pray. Kneeling is a position that shows you are humble before God. The word *humble* means lowly, or near the ground.

Bowing your head and closing your eyes can help you concentrate.

God does not care what position you are in when you pray.

God just cares that you pray (Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

What Is the Lord's Prayer?

When Jesus walked and talked on earth, the disciples noticed that He had a different way of praying. Jesus didn't use fancy language or memorized prayers. He didn't call attention to Himself when He prayed. Often, He slipped away to a quiet place for time alone with His Father God. When Jesus prayed, His words flowed naturally from the bottom of His heart. When Jesus prayed, it was as though He was talking to His best friend in the world.

Jesus' disciples wanted to pray like He did. So they asked, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). The answer that Jesus gave became known as the Lord's Prayer. It is the most famous prayer in the world. It is repeated by millions of Christians every day around the world.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever.
Amen.
(Matthew 6:9–13 KJV)

Why Do We Say “Amen” at the End of Prayers?

The word *amen* means “yes, it is certain” or “so be it.” We say “amen” at the end of a prayer to show that what we have said to God is true. We say it to show that we believe that God has heard our prayer. We say it to show that we believe God will answer our prayer (see Psalm 41:13; 1 Corinthians 14:16).

Amen

What's the Difference Between “Saying Grace” and “Saying a Blessing” Before Meals?

Grace is a beautiful word. It is used in many ways. The word *grace* means “pleasing.” To “say grace” is to offer a prayer of thanksgiving before a meal.

Some Christians refer to the mealtime prayer as “saying a blessing.” To say a blessing is to ask God to bless the food that one is about to eat. The word *bless* comes from an old English word which means “to consecrate, or set apart as holy.”

The Bible tells us that Jesus took time to bless the bread before giving it to the disciples to serve five thousand hungry people (Matthew 14:19 KJV, TLB, RSV; Mark 6:41 KJV, RSV; Luke 9:16 KJV, RSV). Other versions of the Bible say that Jesus “gave thanks” before breaking the bread (Matthew 14:19; Mark 6:41 TLB; Luke 9:16 TLB).

Some Christians make up a new prayer each time they eat. Others recite a short memorized prayer. Many Christians like to hold hands when they say grace.

Sometimes we are so hungry it is easy to forget to thank God for our food. But even if you are very hungry, saying grace doesn't have to take a long time.

Here are three short blessings many Christians say before eating:

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| 1. God is great. God is good. Let us thank Him for our food. Amen. | 2. Thank You for the world so sweet. Thank You for the food we eat. Thank You for the birds that sing. Thank You, God, for everything. Amen. | 3. Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive from your bounty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. |
|--|--|--|

Is It OK to Say Grace in a Restaurant?

Yes, it is OK to say grace in a restaurant. God is happy to hear from you any-time, anywhere!

When you say grace in a restaurant, remember to be considerate of other people dining around you. The purpose of saying grace is not to draw attention to yourself (Matthew 6:5). The purpose is to simply thank God.

What's a Good Bedtime Prayer?

Bedtime is a great time to talk to God. You can thank Him for the day you just had. You can talk to Him about tomorrow. You can ask God to be with you in your dreams. You can ask God to send His angels to watch over you while you sleep (see Psalm 91:11).

**Sometimes it is nice to say a short prayer
with your mom or dad before you go to sleep.**

HERE IS A POPULAR BEDTIME PRAYER FOR CHILDREN:

Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
Let Thy love guide me through the night.
And wake me with Thy morning light.
God bless Mom and Dad and . . .
(Here you can have fun listing everyone
in the whole world you care about!)
I pray all these things in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Can I Know for Sure That God Hears My Prayers?

Yes, you can know for sure that God hears you when you pray. You can also know that God sees you when you pray.

How can you know this? The Bible promises, "The LORD sees the good people and listens to their prayers" (Psalm 34:15 NCV).

God's Word also promises, "How gracious [God] will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you" (Isaiah 30:19). The apostle John wrote, "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).

God promises that He hears and sees you when you pray.

You can trust God about this, because He always keeps His promises (Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Corinthians 1:9).

Can I Know for Sure That God Will Answer My Prayers?

Yes, you can know for sure that God will answer your prayers.

Jesus promised, "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24). Jesus also promised, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

**God promises that He
will answer your prayers.**

Sometimes God's answers are not what we want to hear. Sometimes He answers no or wait. God may not always give you what you want. But you can trust that God will always give you what you need. This is because God loves you and knows what's best for you. God always gives you the perfect answer to your prayer.

Can God Actually Talk to Me?

Yes, God can actually talk to you. The secret is to learn how to hear His voice. Sometimes that means taking time to be quiet and listen.

This is not always easy to do. It is easy to be distracted by the TV. Or the sound of cars going by. Or the smell of dinner cooking. Sometimes it is easy to be distracted by the noise of your own thoughts! It is easy to let your mind wander. Instead of listening for God, you find yourself thinking of a cool glass of milk and fresh-baked chocolate-chip cookies . . . Yum!

But wait. Back to learning how to hear God's voice!

God's voice is different from our thoughts. God says things you never would think of yourself. God's voice is a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:12). Sometimes God speaks a Bible verse. Sometimes He speaks through the words in a book or sermon. Many times God speaks through people we love. Sometimes God speaks a tender word of comfort. Sometimes He speaks a stern word of wisdom. God always knows exactly what you need to hear (Isaiah 30:21). Take time to listen to God.

Why is God
so eager to talk
to you?

Because God loves you.
(1 John 3:1)

Is It OK to Pray for Help on a Test?

Yes, it is OK to pray for help on a test. But prayer is not an excuse for not being prepared! Prayer is not a magic wand. God expects you to do your homework and study for tests. That is your responsibility.

On the day of a test, you might pray, "God, You know how hard I've studied for this test. Please help me not be nervous. Help me remember everything I can and do my best. Thank You for caring so much. I love You. In Jesus' name, amen."

If you have not done your homework or studied as you should, ask God to forgive you. And ask Him to help you be better prepared next time!

God wants to help you do well in school.

God wants the best for you in all things (Jeremiah 29:11)!

What Does It Mean to Pray “in Jesus’ Name”?

Many Christians close their prayers with the words, “In Jesus’ name, amen.” This is because Jesus said to the disciples, “I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” (John 14:13–14).

Saying the words “In Jesus’ name” at the end of a prayer is not like a magic formula. It does not guarantee that God will answer your prayer exactly the way you want. When you pray to the Father “in Jesus’ name,” it is a way of telling God you know His Son, Jesus. You love Jesus. You trust Jesus. When you pray to the Father in Jesus’ name, it is a way of saying, “Whatever You think is best for me, God. Not my will, but Your perfect will be done.”

It is not necessary to end every prayer with the words, “In Jesus’ name.” This is because God does not care about the exact words you use when you pray. God does care that you mean what you say.

When you pray, God wants you to speak to Him sincerely, from the bottom of your heart. Why is this? Because God loves you (1 John 3:1).

Is It OK to Pray Out Loud with Another Person?

Yes, it is OK to pray out loud with another person. In fact, you can pray with as many people as you like! This is because there is special power when you pray with other people.

Jesus said, “If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:19–20).

The next time you are with friends, you might want to try praying together. See what an exciting experience praying with friends can be!

TEN TIPS FOR PRAYING OUT LOUD WITH FRIENDS:

1. You might sit or stand in a circle—whatever is comfortable.
2. You might hold hands.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Ask God’s Holy Spirit to be with you to help guide your thoughts and prayers.
5. You don’t have to pray in any special order.
6. Expect times of silence. Don’t feel that you need to break the silence.
7. Listen for God’s Holy Spirit during times of silence. He might give you ideas about what to pray.
8. Jesus promises that He is with you when you pray (Matthew 18:19–20). See if you can feel His presence.
9. When you feel that everyone has had their turn speaking, listen to the silence one last time.
10. You might close by saying the Lord’s Prayer together.

Is It OK to Pray with a Friend over the Phone?

Yes, it is OK to pray with a friend over the phone. It is also OK to pray with a friend over the computer. God hears your prayers, no matter where you say them.

God hears your unspoken prayers too.

God is such a good listener that He knows what you need even before you ask Him (Matthew 6:8)!



What Is a Prayer Journal?

A prayer journal is like a diary between you and God. It provides a written record of your prayers.

If you decide to keep a prayer journal, it doesn't need to be fancy. It can be as simple as a spiral notebook. Some people write in a prayer journal every day. Others write in it once or twice a week. Whatever works for you is fine. God is always happy to hear from you.

When you write in your prayer journal, be sure to put the date at the top of the page. That way, as weeks go by, you can go back and see how God has worked in your life. When you are feeling low, reading through your prayer journal can help you remember how God has helped you in the past (Deuteronomy 8:2; Psalms 77:11; 78:35; 105:5; 143:5; Isaiah 46:9; Matthew 16:9–10).

Should you choose to keep a prayer journal, you will be amazed to see how God answers your prayers!

What Should I Do When I Can't Think of What to Pray?

There's no way you *have* to pray, but one easy way to remember how to pray can be found in the word ACTS. In the Bible, the book of Acts tells the story of the early church. Like Christians today, the early Christians prayed a lot (Acts 1:13–14)!

The ACTS way of praying works well for all kinds of prayer. You can use the ACTS way of praying when you pray out loud. You can use it when you pray silently. You can use it when you pray by writing in your prayer journal.

THE ACTS WAY TO PRAY

A ADORATION. Start your prayer time by praising God. Tell God how wonderful He is. Tell God how much you appreciate His love.

C CONFESSION. Confess to God all the ways you've let Him down. Tell God you are sorry for your sins. Ask for His forgiveness.

T THANKSGIVING. Thank God for all the good things in your life. Once you get started, this may take longer than you think! No matter what your troubles are, there is always much to be thankful for.

S SUPPLICATION. The word *supplication* means to humbly and earnestly ask. Tell God what's going on in your life. Share your prayer requests. Don't hold back. Tell God everything, from the bottom of your heart. God loves you, and He wants to hear every detail.

What Is Intercessory Prayer?

Intercessory is a big word that means “to ask on another’s behalf.” Intercessory prayer is praying for another person.

Say you have a friend who is very sick—so sick he can’t pray for himself. When you pray for that friend, you are asking God for healing on his behalf. To pray for another person is a very loving thing to do. It is also good for you.

The apostle Paul wrote, “Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need” (Philippians 4:6 NCV).

When someone you love is in trouble, God doesn’t want you to worry. God wants you to pray (1 Peter 5:7)!

Is It True That When Jesus Was on Earth, He Prayed for Me?

Yes, it is true that when Jesus was on earth, He prayed for you.

Before Jesus died, He had a big conversation with His Father God. First, He prayed for Himself. Then He prayed for His disciples. And then He prayed for all the believers in the world—including believers who hadn't been born yet! He prayed for *you*. Isn't that amazing?

After Jesus prayed for His disciples, He said, "I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:20–23).

Jesus prayed that you will know and love God like He does. Jesus prayed that others will love and believe in Him because of you.

Jesus prayed that you will love and enjoy being with other Christians.

Why did Jesus pray
all these things
just for you?

Because He loves you.
(John 15:9, 13)

Do Miracles Still Happen Today?

Yes, miracles still happen today! Miracles are God's way of showing how much He loves us. Sometimes miracles can help people believe in God and Jesus.

**The word *miracle*
means “wonderful.”**

Miracles are not magic tricks. They are things God does that are above the laws of nature. Miracles are real, and miracles still happen.

The same power that God gave to Jesus to help and heal people is available to Christians today. Jesus was very clear about this when He said, “Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” (John 14:12–14).

Sometimes, when a prayer is answered with a miracle, it is easy to say, “Oh, that was just a coincidence” or, “I was just lucky.” But God is bigger than coincidences or luck. God is like the glue that holds everything in our lives together (see Colossians 1:17).

**Miracles happen every day. They are
one way God shows that He loves you.**

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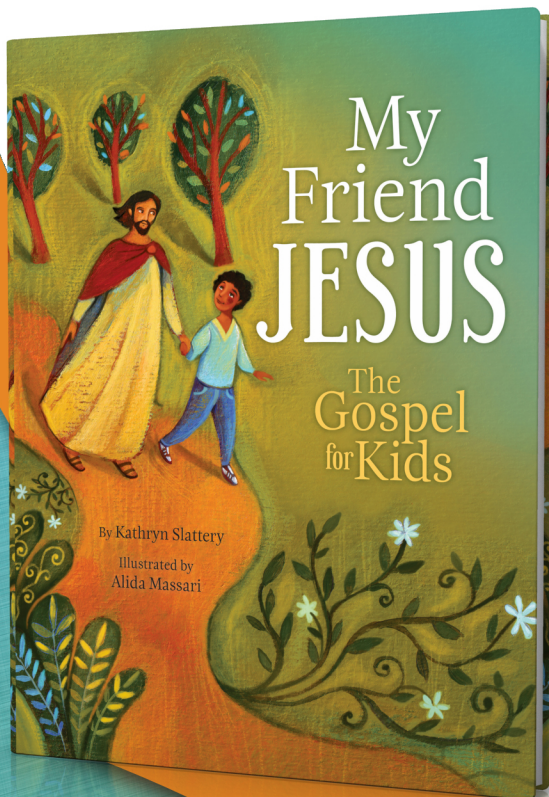
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