

26 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING!

QUESTION #5: DOES PRAYER MATTER?

Prayer is the most important subject in practical religion. All other subjects are second to it. Reading the Bible, keeping the Sabbath, hearing sermons, attending public worship, going to the Lord's table,-- all these are very weighty matters. But none of them are so important as private prayer.

- J.C. Ryle

1. WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is personal communication with God.

A. PRAYER EXPRESSES OUR TRUST IN GOD

God wants us to pray because it expresses our trust in him and is a means whereby our trust in him can increase.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread . . . (Matthew 6.9-11)

In him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17.28)

We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you. (2 Chronicles 20.12)

B. PRAYER CHANGES THE WAY GOD ACTS

If prayer is communication with God, He will respond when we pray to Him.

You do not have, because you do not ask. (James 4.2)

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7.14

Everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matthew 7.7-11)

2. HOW SHOULD I PRAY?

When we pray, we must put our faith in the person of God, not in a hope that He will agree with us.

A. ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

Your will be done. (Matthew 6.10)

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us." (1 John 5.14)

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." (John 15.7)

B. WITH FAITH

And they went and woke [Jesus], saying "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was calm. He said to them, "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8.24-25)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach. . . . But let him ask in faith, with no doubting. (James 1.5-6)

C. PERSISTENTLY

[Jesus] went away and prayed, saying the same words. (Mark 14.39)

In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. (Luke 6.12)

D. HUMBLY

Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. (Matthew 6.9)

E. PRIVATELY

[W]hen you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who sees in secret. (Matthew 6.6)

F. WITH OTHERS

[T]hey lifted their voices together to God. . . (Acts 4.24)

3. WHY SHOULD I PRAY?

A. IT BRINGS JOY (DELIGHT)

Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. (John 16.24)

B. IT BRINGS HUMILITY

Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them . . . (Acts 4.24)

C. IT BRINGS GOD GLORY

Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14.13)