

Why Prayer?

Praying for Yourself and Others



Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. EPHESIANS 6:18

Sometimes people can think of prayer like a cosmic vending machine or a genie in a bottle. We ask God for what we want and then, *Poof!*, we expect it to happen.

While God wants us to bring our requests to him, he wants so much more. He wants us to bring all of our lives to him... our joy and celebration, our sadness and despair, our fear and our faith, our thanks and our praise, our needs for this day and every day. Even though God already knows every detail of our lives, he never tires of hearing from us. God also wants us to share everything with him so that he can help bear the burden of whatever it is that we're carrying (Matt. 11:28-30). As Jesus does this for us, he then calls us to do the same for others (Luke 10:30-37, 2 Cor. 1:3B-4A)... to listen, to comfort, to help, to pray.

Prayer also moves God into action (Matt. 18:19-20). Not because we need to twist a reluctant God's arm into helping us, but because God is ready and waiting for us to boldly come before him and ask (Matt. 7:7). As Martin Luther wrote, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. It is laying hold of his willingness." What does that mean? How do our prayers "lay hold of God's willingness" when God promises that he has a plan for each of our lives?

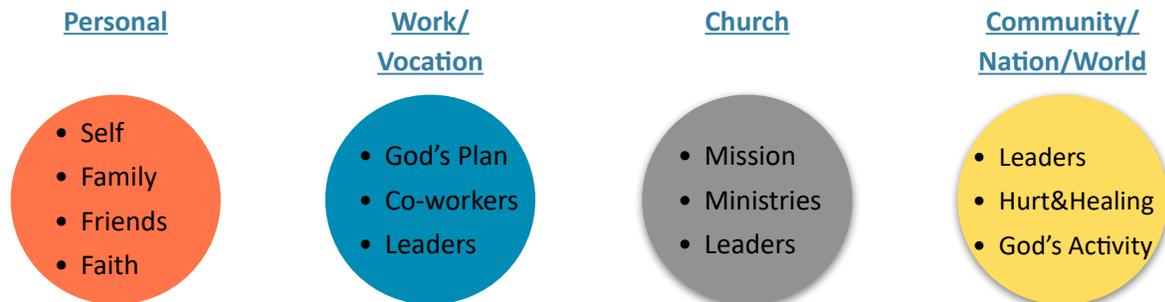
"[While God's ultimate plan is inflexible, the implementation of his plan, or will, is not. God does not change in his character or purpose, but he will alter his strategy because of the appeals of his people (Ex. 32:11-14). We do not change God's intention, but we can influence his actions. After all, we are ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). Ambassadors represent the king. They speak with the authority of the throne.... If an ambassador sends a request to the king, will the king listen? If you, God's ambassador in this world, come to your king with a request, will he listen? By all means. You have a 'seat with [Christ] in the heavens' (Eph. 2:6). As with a congressman, you represent a district... you speak on behalf of your family, neighborhood, or [sports] team. Your sphere of influence is your district. And as you grow in faith and prayer, your district expands, and God may grow your concerns to include much more.

When we come before God on behalf of others, we acknowledge our inability and God's ability."¹ *Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.* MATTHEW 19:26.

1. Max Lucado, *Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2014), 73-75.

Putting It into Practice

Rings of Prayer: Practice casting your prayer net wider and expand your prayers to include a greater sphere of influence. Begin regularly praying for the following, and see where God takes your prayers!



Work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare. JEREMIAH 29:7

Taking It Further

Praying with Others: Praying bold prayers with others over the same requests moves God into action (Matt 18:19-20). Commit to praying regularly for and with another person or group, such as...

- Your small group, each time you meet and for one another throughout the week
- A trusted friend, group of friends, co-worker(s), mentor, family, spouse
- On the Christ Church [Prayer Wall](#)
- By joining the Christ Church [Prayer Partners](#) or [Prayer Warriors](#) team

Share with one another your *God Stories* of answered prayer and witness the power of God through prayer at work in your lives and community.

All the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them... hear their threats, and give us great boldness in preaching your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of Jesus." After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness. ACTS 4: 24,29-31