

Prayer

When people become God's children, they will naturally want to talk with him. Talking with God is what the Bible calls prayer. It is an act of living fellowship with God, through worshipping him, thanking him, praising him, confessing to him and making requests of him.

As Christians we can pray anywhere and at any time. We do not need any church building, church official or church book to be able to pray. Nor do we have to learn a special language. We can pray silently or audibly, in any position: standing, sitting, walking, kneeling.

We should develop the habit of making time each day to be alone with God to pray. Jesus recognized the need to set aside time specifically for prayer. If we begin our regular prayer times by reading the Bible, our prayers will have more freshness and meaning. Prayer will be a response to what we learn from God through the Bible.

Confidence, with respect

Prayer is more than merely asking God for things. Jesus pointed out some of the main elements in prayer giving us some guidelines in what has become known as the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).

In simple everyday language, the main part of the prayer is as follows:

'Our Father in heaven, may your holy name be honoured, may your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need. Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us. Do not bring us to hard testing, but keep us safe from the Evil One.'

Jesus gave us this prayer not to provide us with words to repeat in a ritual, but to show us how to pray. Jesus shows that when we pray, we may confidently make requests of God, but we should also worship God. In fact, the prayer opens with an expression of worship.

Worship

Worship is difficult to define, for it is both an attitude in which Christians live and an exercise that they carry out. We humble ourselves before our Lord as those who serve, honour and adore him in acknowledgment of all that he is as the almighty and glorious God. Although we have a warm and close relationship with God, we also have a deep respect for him.

As Christians we come to God confidently because we are his children. Christ has made free access to God possible. Praise and thanksgiving are inseparable from worship. As we praise God for all that he is and thank him for all that he has done, we will find that our lives and our prayers are full of joy.

Adapted from 'The Christian's Life' pp10-11