



What Is Prayer?

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Many ask, "What is prayer?" with expectations that there is a very simple definition for a word with such a complex meaning. The disciples themselves did not understand fully the meaning of prayer and had to ask the Lord Jesus Christ, "Lord teach us to pray. (Luke 11:1)" We find historically the saints also differed in their answers about the definition of prayer:

St Augustine defined prayer by saying "It is the key of Heaven, by its power you can do everything. It is the shield of our lives, source of all virtues, the ladder upon which you rise to God, the work of angels, and the basis of faith."

St Basil the Great defined prayer as "Being attached to God in all moments and situations of life. Then life becomes one prayer, without interruption or disturbance."

St Isaac, who was great among the educated, defined prayer according to his experience, as "Prayer is the continuous remembering of God in the heart of his followers. It is the sailing of our minds to God. It empties the conscience from all present matters, is a heart whose sight is completely fixed on the longing for the coming Hope. Prayer is the cry of the mind which calls without will from the anguish in the heart."

St John Chrysostom said, "Prayer is a great weapon and endless treasure, richness which never falls, a quiet haven...it is the source and basis of countless blessings. It is strong, even stronger than strength itself."

Prayer is a means for us to come close to God. It is actually having the privilege of speaking with God.



St John Chrysostom

Calling upon the Holy name of God is the essence of our faith. It is the words on our lips, the thoughts of our minds, and the deeds of our lives.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave prayer all power and might. "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing you shall receive. (Matthew 21:22)"

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6)"

The work of prayer is distinguished above any other work. "Prayer avails much (James 5:16)." Because of the superiority of prayer, the Lord appointed the angels to present it to Him. "Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And he was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne (Revelation 8: 3-4)." Prayer pleases God and delights the angels and Heavenly Hosts.

There is nothing more deterring to Satan than prayer. **St Tadros the Egyptian** was known as a saint of prayer. Once while he was inside his room in the Eskeit desert, a devil came and tried to enter the room, but he could not because the saint tied him down



outside the room by prayer. Another devil came and tried to enter the room, but again the saint tied him down by prayer. A third devil came and found the first two tied down outside the room and asked them for the reason of their oppression. They replied that there is someone inside the room praying, preventing them from entering. This third devil became angry and tried to push his way into the room, but was also tied down by the saints' prayer. The devils were frustrated and begged the saint to let them loose. The saint untied them and told them to go away and they went away with great shame.

Finally, prayer is just as necessary for those living among worldly walks of life as it is to those who devote their lives to prayer. Everyone needs to make use of every opportunity to pray. The Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that "men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1) and the Apostle commands the believers saying "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). King David was very busy with his kingdom and affairs of this world, yet he used to say, "I have set the Lord always before me" (Psalm 16:8). "Seven times a day I praise You because of your righteous judgments" (Psalm 119: 164). "At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You, because of Your righteous judgments" (Psalm 119:62).

God's presence continuously surrounds us. Yet there is only one place on earth that we can actually meet Him. Only in the depths of our heart, can we truly seek Him and talk with Him. If we desire to feel the presence of God we must enter inside ourselves. This is how love for God is born. This is prayer.

Let us all watch therefore and lift up our hearts to God in prayer that we may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man.

My beloved Youth,

I have received this request for your prayers. Mary Bassily of Simpsonville, SC has been very ill the last two years without any improvement in her condition. Her friends write,

"There is only one Doctor that has healed cases such as Mary's. We beg everyone to donate. You might think that this Doctor requires a lot of money to treat our dear friend. The truth is actually that no amount of money will suffice for this Doctor. A simple one-minute prayer from your heart will be more than enough.

This Great Physician has raised three people from death, and we all know the miracles and healing that only He is capable of. I just pray that you do not feel a one-minute-prayer is too much of a donation!

God's message is clear "Pray for one another, that you may be healed. (James 5:16)" All we ask you to do is to take a minute and pray for our friend."

Dear Lord,

We know Your power and might. We all know that You can make us walk on water, but only if you will to do so. My God, the centurion said to You, "only speak a word and my servant will be healed." And the leper shouted, "Lord if you are willing, you can make me clean." And we too, the sinners beg You saying, "Lord if you are willing, Mary will be healed." Through the intercessions of You holy mother Mary and the prayers of Pope Kerollos, and his friend, the miraculous martyr St Mina, O Lord listen to out prayers concerning Your beloved daughter, Mary Bassily, and let thy will be done. Amen.

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