



TALKING WITH GOD

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“What is Prayer”?

Two types of activity are referred to as prayer. Any speech by a human anywhere on the globe addressed to a deity or an object of worship is commonly called “prayer”. While God will be aware of what they are saying and can be trusted to respond appropriately to this human activity, such speech may not necessarily be the sort of communication He most desires.

The second activity, what we call prayer in this article, falls within the definition mentioned above, but actually is less common and much narrower in scope. It is our communication as those who have been born again as children of God with our Dad. Only God having planted His Spirit within us makes real prayer possible. This happens when we are born again into God’s family (Rom. 8:15). The Spirit within us desires to inspire and guide our prayers each day (Rom. 8:26, Eph. 6:18). He already knows what He would like to do, and so He gives us a burden to pray in that direction. Many believers testify how they have been prompted to pray for someone, only finding out later that the person they prayed for was facing a real challenge or danger at that precise time.

Real prayer is an activity of God, which our mighty salvation enables us to take some small part in. The Lord Jesus is the Great Intercessor, and He does not change (Luke 22:32, Heb. 7:25, Zech. 1:12, Mal.3:6). If others fail to pray for you as they should, He can personally cover the gap with His prayers.

There will be an element of making requests for things in our private prayer, alongside worship, praise, and thanksgiving. But we must remember that God is a *person* who loves us and greatly desires our fellowship (Rev. 21:3). Prayer is not some sort of slot machine. We pray because of our growing friendship with God, and as part of that, we ask Him to help other people and lastly to help ourselves. The “Lord’s Prayer” centres on God Himself rather than human needs (Matt. 6:8-15). When we are primarily concerned about the extension of God’s loving kingdom authority in the lives of others, we find He takes care of many of our own needs (Matt. 6:33).

The Apostle Paul had deep concern for the growth of believers. Epaphras “always laboured earnestly” for the Colossian church (Col. 4:12). How we choose to allocate our time each day

should show our love for God and our fellow humans. Praying God's best for those around us (even those who are causing us problems!) is an expression of God's love working through us. If we lose that love, we lose much (1 Cor. 13:2, Rev. 2:4). Love is shown by deed and truth (1 John 3:1-18). We may not receive, because we do not ask, or ask with wrong motives (James 4:2, 3). Rolling our burdens onto the Lord in prayer brings us peace (Phil. 4:6). But I would suggest that the relationship aspect of our daily times with the Lord is more important than getting "results".

(Ian Macaulay)

Doing Prayer

Companions for the journey: walking each other home to Jesus

The dictionary defines a companion "as a person you spend a lot of time with often because you are friends or because you are travelling together". I love the concept of **companionship** because it gives you a warm feeling knowing that you are not alone and that there are others who are with you through the good and the bad times of your life journey. Being in a **prayer triplet** is about such companionship and is a real blessing and privilege.

In Matt. 18:20 it says, "where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." When we pray in our triplet each week, we know that God is present. Over the months we have experienced His healing, refreshing, peace and love as he works in our hearts and gradually changes us. "Co-incidences" start happening, things begin to change, and our faith is strengthened. By sharing our burdens and needs with one another, we are encouraged and supported to carry on. By being honest, open, and accountable to each other we grow spiritually.

My first experience of being in a Prayer Triplet was at Mission England when I met with my sister and a friend before school to pray. Our prayers were simple and heart felt and we saw many answered prayers. God does not always answer our prayers in the way we want but the more we pray the more God gives us peace and the ability to cope in difficult situations. I have always found it easier to pray with others, and I have never ceased to be amazed at how God's power is unleashed through faithful, constant prayer.

So why not give it a try? Start your own prayer triplet:

- **Ask God to guide you to two friends with whom you can pray**
- **Commit to meeting regularly (every week or fortnight)**
- **Meet over coffee, WhatsApp, or phone**
- **To help you pray share Scripture, focus on a Psalm, worship together, experience silence and times of contemplation.**
- **Keep praying! It might take a few goes for you to feel comfortable praying with each other but as you persevere God is faithful, and changes will start to happen.**

"Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure" (D.L Moody)

(Lisa McArdle)

Sharing Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for all who share life's journey with us; may we be faithful in praying for them. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you share life's journey with us; may this give us peace, hope and joy, whatever the road ahead may be. Amen.

(Julia Pratt)