

Ask, Seek, Knock
Prayer: Obligation or Invitation?

In the Bible we are commanded to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and to continue in prayer (Colossians 4:2). God wants to hear from us, to be in regular fellowship with us when we belong to him.

Prayer is much more than an obligatory response to God’s command. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” That is a very inviting verse to get us to pray.

God uses our confident prayers to bring us help in times of need.

As you begin this study ask God to be your Helper in growing your understanding about prayer and your desire to “approach the throne of grace” confidently.

1. Read and think about Hebrews 4:16 (second paragraph above).

A. What does it mean to confidently approach the throne of grace?

B. Read Psalm 45:6 and 47:8, and Revelation 3:21. Who sits on the throne?

C. What situation in your life do you need to confidently approach the throne of grace fully expecting mercy and grace from God?

2. Read Luke 11:5 – 8. Jesus teaches this parable as part of His instructions to His disciples about how to pray.

A. Why does the neighbor give the man the bread?

B. What example does this set for us regarding prayer?

C. Why do you think the man asking for the bread chose to go to this particular neighbor?

3. How do your prayers demonstrate confidence and persistence?

4. Jesus continued to teach about prayer in Luke 11:9-10. What do these verses promise when you consider the context of Luke 11:1-4?

5. Read Luke 11:11-13.

A. What does Jesus specifically tell us to ask for? _____

B. Will God always give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? _____

C. Is this something we need to ask for more than once? Why?

6. Look up the following verses and record what you learn about prayer.

A. Psalm 7:17

B. Psalm 50:14, 23

C. Psalm 100:4

D. Matthew 5:44

E. Matthew 6:5-8

F. Matthew 6:9-13

G. Luke 5:16; 6:28

H. Luke 10:2

I. Luke 18:1

J. Acts 8:22

K. Romans 8:26; 12:12

L. 1 Corinthians 14:15

M. Colossians 4:2

N. 1 Timothy 4:4-5

O. James 5:13-16

7. There is a pattern for prayer represented with the acronym ACTS. Define each term in your own words.

A. Adoration

B. Confession

C. Thanksgiving

D. Supplication

8. Many of the Psalms (as well as other parts of the scripture) can be prayed back to God. For instance Psalm 145:8 says, “The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” This could be prayed back to God as, “Lord, you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love” in an effort to praise Him for His attributes in the verse.

Take the following verses and rewrite them as a prayer to God.

Psalm 111:7-8, “The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy; they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.”

9. What is the promise of 1 John 1:9?

10. What does Philippians 4:6 teach about prayer regarding thanksgiving?

11. What promises does God make in John 14:13 and 16:23 and 1 John 5:14?

B. What are the promises contingent on?

C. What reason does John 14:13 give for why God does this?

D. What could you do so that you know God well enough to pray in His will?

E. What do you think it means to “pray in Jesus Name?”

13. Read Isaiah 59:1-2. A. Will God answer all of our prayers according to this verse?

B. What will keep Him from answering?

C. What sin could be separating you and God’s answers to your prayers?

14. From the verses you have studied, what gives you confidence to approach God in prayer?
