

Prayer

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)¹

Introduction

The Bible has much to say about prayer. What is prayer? What are God's instructions to members of the body of Christ concerning prayer? With a few exceptions, the following study focuses on prayer as it is presented in the letters of the Apostle Paul.²

In times past, God verbally spoke with some individuals.³ God talked with Adam and Eve about their sins and told them the consequences (Genesis 3:8-19). God talked with Cain about his murder of Abel and the consequences of his sin (Genesis 4:9-15). Abraham and God had a conversation by means of a vision (Genesis 15). Moses not only talked with God, but argued his case before Him (Exodus 3:1 – 4:17). Later, God communicated to Joseph and Mary through an angel during dreams and through the physical presence of an angel (Matthew 1:20-23; Luke 1:26-38). These are only a few of the examples of God and individuals talking to each other *directly*, through visions or dreams, or through angels.

Today, in this dispensation of grace, believers do not and cannot converse with God in this manner. God no longer talks to people directly, through visions or dreams, or through angels. God communicates to us by enabling us to understand His written word, which is complete (Ephesians 1:17-19; Colossians 1:25). Because God has written down everything we need to know (II Timothy 3:16-17), we are warned that those who speak of revelations through visions are speaking their own minds and not for God (Colossians 2:18-19). We are also sternly warned that God will not communicate anything new or different to us through angels (Galatians 1:8).

So, if God *talks* to us through His written word, how do we talk to Him? This is what prayer is about. God has provided this method for us to talk to Him and has revealed to us all we need to know about prayer.

¹ All references are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible* (1996). Words in brackets are either equivalent words from the *King James Version* or, if in italics, were added by the author for clarification.

² Paul was chosen by God as the apostle of the Gentiles and, through revelations by Jesus Christ, was the dispenser of the gospel of the grace of God. See the author's **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ** and **Follow Paul** for more discussion on these truths.

³ Because God dwells in the heavens in unapproachable light and hasn't been seen, and can't be seen by any man (I Timothy 6:13-16; Psalm 104:1-2), it may have been Jesus Christ as God's representative who walked in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8) and who talked to specific men beginning with Adam.

Why Should We Pray?

Most importantly, we should pray because God wants us to pray. We are instructed to devote ourselves to prayer (Romans 12:12), and to pray without ceasing because this is God's will for us (I Thessalonians 5:17-18).

Devote yourselves to [Continue in] prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.
(Colossians 4:2)

Why does God want us to pray to Him? All those who believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again are saved from the consequences of sin and are children of God (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 8:14-17). What kind of relationship is it if there is no two-way communication between a parent and a child? How does a child truly understand the desires of the parent, or how can a child truly feel secure in the parent's love if there is no communication? God is our Father and we are His children. Is it not reasonable to think that if God loves us enough to save us from our sins, accept us as His own children, and reveal His will to us through His written word that we should want and need to talk to Him?

Who Do We Pray To?

Hopefully all believers understand that we are not to pray to idols, angels, dead saints, ancestors, earthly things (Mother Earth, Father Sky, animals, mountains, etc.), or the universe. Such prayers are fruitless and contrary to God and His will. However, there are uncertainties among the brethren concerning whether or not we should pray to God or Jesus or both. Does it matter? What does Scripture say?

The book of Psalms is full of the meditations, prayers, and praise of David towards the Lord God. He was not aware that there was a Son of God or that his salvation was sealed through the future redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. David knew God and prayed to Him.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, He instructed His disciples to pray to "Our Father" (Matthew 6:9). Of course, when Jesus prayed for His disciples, He prayed to His Father (John 17). What greater example can we have than that of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Did the path of communication change after the death and resurrection of Christ? It is a glorious truth that He is our intercessor and mediator between us and God the Father (Romans 8:34; I Timothy 2:5). We are in Christ and all that we have is because of what He did for us at the cross. However, this does not mean we can or should pray to Jesus. The Holy Spirit also intercedes for us (Romans 8:26-27), but we are never instructed to pray to Him.

Paul was called to be the apostle of the Gentiles by the will of God to proclaim the gospel of His grace (Acts 20:24; Romans 11:13; Galatians 1:1, 11-12; Ephesians 3:1-12). His message was centered on Jesus Christ and all that was accomplished through His death, burial, and resurrection. However, Paul did not pray to Christ—he prayed to God the Father and was able to do so because of Christ's intercessory work for us. *Every* example of Paul's prayers and what he prayed for indicate that his prayers were to God the Father (e.g., Romans 1:8-10; Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-21; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; 3:17). Brethren, it matters to God to whom we pray.

What Does Prayer Do?

Does God answer prayer? If so, how? Does He answer prayer with a “Yes,” “No,” or “Wait”? Does prayer change what God was planning to do or allow?

In the gospel accounts, the disciples were given the promise that anything they asked in the name of Jesus, believing, they would receive (e.g., Matthew 7:7-8; 18:19-20; 21:21-22; John 14:13-14). Although it is beyond the scope of this study, this promise was part of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven to Israel, and prophetically applied to believers controlled by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; 4:17, 23; Acts 1:4-6; 2:1-4; Ezekiel 36:26-27). Prayers would be *answered* or fulfilled as requested because they would be according to the will of God.⁴

Does God promise to respond according to our requests? Not in this dispensation of grace.⁵ In fact, there is no indication that God *answers* our prayers. Because we still have an old sin nature, we do not know how to pray as we should. That is, we are unable to knowingly make a request in accordance with the will of God. Instead, we are promised that God is able to do far more abundantly beyond all we ask or think. Perhaps an even greater and more personal promise we have is that the peace of God will guard our heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He [God] who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He [the Spirit] intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:26-28)

Now to Him [God] who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us. (Ephesians 3:20)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

We are instructed to take our concerns (for ourselves and for others) to God in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6). Supplication means to ask for something humbly or earnestly, or to make an earnest request or petition. To make this humble request

⁴ At Pentecost, the apostles and disciples received the gift of knowledge along with the other sign gifts—tongues, healing, casting out demons, raising the dead, etc.—when the Holy Spirit descended upon them in power (Mark 16:17-18). Therefore, for a time, they thought and acted according to the will of God. These sign gifts were withdrawn by God when the *completed* revelation of the gospel of His grace was committed to us through Paul, which did not occur until after the Acts period but did occur before the end of Paul’s ministry. See I Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 3:1-12; Colossians 1:25-27; Philippians 2:25-27; I Timothy 5:23; and II Timothy 4:20. The withdrawal of these gifts was also related to the setting aside (hardening) of Israel by God (Romans 10:1-3; 11:25; I Corinthians 1:22-24; II Corinthians 3:14-15).

⁵ See the author’s **Which Gospel?, The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and The Mystery (God’s Secret Plan)** for more about this dispensation of grace and the differences between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God.

with thanksgiving acknowledges that God is sovereign and that He operates according to His will instead of our will (Ephesians 1:11; Philippians 2:13).

If something turns out as requested, either very soon or at some later date, then one might consider in practical terms that God responded with a “Yes” or “Wait.” However, this does not necessarily mean that when things turn out as we prayed that it is in accordance with the will of God. Nor does it mean that God *answered* our prayer. Let’s look into this a little further.

If something turns out according to how we prayed, we are often quick to say “God heard our prayers” or “God is good.” Think about this. What if it doesn’t turn out as we prayed? Does this mean that God didn’t hear our prayers or that God is not good? To avoid this dilemma, we are often quick to explain the lack of a positive answer by convincing ourselves that we didn’t pray hard enough or have enough people praying for us, or that some unconfessed sin was blocking our prayers. These explanations are not supported by Scripture. Furthermore, what are we implying when we think that God *answered* our prayer? Doesn’t that mean that we made God aware of something and that He acted upon it according to our desires? Is this how prayer works?

Many people, whether children of God or not, claim answers to their prayers because they apparently received what they asked for. God makes no promises to even hear the prayer of an unbeliever, although we know He hears the prayer of a person who humbly acknowledges his need for salvation and the saving work of Christ (the account of Cornelius in Acts 10 is an example). Furthermore, many believers claim answers to prayers that are contrary to the will of God because their requests are motivated by selfishness or greed, or they are claiming promises not intended for members of the body of Christ. It is easy to forget that we can be fooled and controlled by our very powerful and deceiving sin nature (Romans 7:14-25), and that Satan is working around us disguised as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

If what we pray for does not turn out as we hoped (an apparent “No”), it does not necessarily mean we should not have prayed for it. Again, we are to take all our concerns to God in prayer even though we do not know how to pray as we should. If our desire is not fulfilled as we hoped, our response should be to praise God that He is working things out for our good and according to His will that is beyond our comprehension. He has promised us His peace when our request is made humbly and earnestly with thanksgiving. It should be comforting to us to be in such personal communication with God that we can see how He is working in our lives and in those around us.

How often have we earnestly prayed that a loved one, a friend, or even a stranger who we have a concern for be saved and have never known if it actually happened, or perhaps years later found out that the person did become a child of God (an apparent “No” or “Wait” at the time)? When we pray, we must remember that God works things out according to His will and according to His time. We should not be discouraged if things do not go as we hoped and prayed, but we should continue in prayer and wait on the Lord with patience and joy.

Prayer in Action

Although the Corinthian believers may not have known the extent of the difficulties faced by Paul and his coworkers in Asia, where even death appeared imminent, they prayed for them. Paul and the others were delivered from the threat of death, and Paul thanked the Corinthians for their prayers

(II Corinthians 1:8-11). The Corinthians were sharing in their affliction and could rejoice in their deliverance. Were Paul and his coworkers spared because of the Corinthians' prayers, or were their prayers in accordance with the will of God?

While Paul was in prison in Rome, he was thankful to the Philippian believers and *knew* he would be delivered through their prayers (Philippians 1:19). Certainly, the hope of the Philippians (and of Paul) was that Paul would be delivered from prison. However, he ended up being put to death. Were their prayers fruitless and was Paul's hope without merit? No, because Paul's imprisonment furthered the gospel of Christ, and Christ was magnified (exalted) whether in Paul's life or his death (Philippians 1:12-21). So, Paul was delivered, though not in the manner hoped and prayed for by the Philippians—he was delivered from suffering in prison to Christ Himself. Furthermore, he was comforted knowing that his fellow brethren were sharing in his afflictions—he truly felt a bond with them (Philippians 1:3-11).

Prayer and God's Will

Can we change God's will through prayer? In other words, can we impose our will on God and convince Him to do something He did not intend to do? Some people think so, or at least their actions imply they believe so. Some believe that if enough people pray for a specific thing to occur that it will happen. Others believe that if people are praying in a manner to keep God's attention for 24 hours a day without a break (a *prayer chain*) that He will surely hear the request and grant it as desired. When things turn out as hoped, or at least seem to, they often take credit for the answered prayer ("It happened because we prayed."). Brethren, God is not hard of hearing, nor does He need to be convinced to do anything. He works all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11). It does not seem hard for us to believe that God will fulfill all the prophecies recorded in Scripture just as He said, but why is it so hard for us to believe that God is working in our lives according to His will and for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13)? If we think we can get God to do what we want, then who is greater—us or God?⁶

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work [do] for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)

How Does Prayer Work?

From God's perspective, the process of prayer is summarized in Romans 8:26-28. In this short passage we are told the following things.

- The Holy Spirit helps our weakness or deficiencies.
- We do not know how to pray as we should, but God knows our hearts.
- The Holy Spirit intercedes between us and God in His words and according to the will of God.
- God causes all things to work together for good for His children.

⁶ See the author's **Salvation and the Sovereignty of God** that examines God's sovereign will in all things.

Our weakness comes from the fact that even as children of God we still have a sin nature. As we make our requests known to God in prayer, we do not know if they are in accordance with the will of God because of our sin. Also, because we are human and have a sin nature, we do not know God's language. Thankfully, however, God knows our true intentions and desires, and the Holy Spirit interprets our prayers in God's unspeakable language and according to His will. In this way we are assured that God is working things out for our good whether or not we asked for the right thing and in the right manner.

What Should We Pray For?

Even though we need to have the Holy Spirit interpret our prayers to God for us because we are unable to pray as we should, we have abundant guidance about what God wants us to pray for. Please consider the following instructions and examples. We should:

- Thank God for saving us and our fellow brethren (Colossians 1:12-14).
- Pray that others would be saved (Romans 10:1; I Timothy 2:1-4).
- Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving we are to make our requests to God (Philippians 4:6).
- Give thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God (Ephesians 5:20; I Thessalonians 5:18).
- Receive all things with gratitude or thanksgiving to God (I Timothy 4:4-5).
- Remember our fellow believers in prayer and thank God for them (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 1:3-5; Colossians 1:3-4; 4:12-13).
- Pray for those who minister to us that they would further the gospel and the glory of our Lord, take advantage of opportunities as they come, speak with boldness, endure difficulties, etc. (II Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:19-20; Colossians 4:2-4; I Thessalonians 5:25; II Thessalonians 3:1-2).
- Pray for our governing authorities so that we may live a quiet life in godliness and dignity (I Timothy 2:1-2).⁷

Is anything too big, or too small, to pray about? Remember Philippians 4:6—we are to be anxious or careful for nothing and take everything to God in prayer. God is bigger and greater than we can imagine. He knows everything about us—what we are doing, our thoughts, and even the number of our hairs on our head (Psalms 139:1-6; Matthew 10:29-31). God knows our needs and provides for us (Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:19-32). In His power and grace, God is able to do far beyond what we ask or think. Therefore, we should go to God in prayer with any concern or unselfish desire we have.

⁷ This passage does not mean that those in authority will be good to us if we pray for them. Instead, if we truly recognize that they are in authority by the will of God (Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17; Proverbs 21:1) and pray for them as God desires us to do, then we will experience the peace of God and will be better equipped to live for Christ whether those in authority are good or bad. See the author's **Governing Authority** for more on this subject.

How Should We Pray?

The Time for Prayer

As discussed above, we do not know how to pray as we should; however, Scripture has provided many guidelines for us as we communicate with Almighty God. For example, we are instructed to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17), to continue or be devoted in prayer (Romans 12:12), and are given an example of devotion to prayer night and day (1 Thessalonians 3:10). Additionally, as we pray, we are to do so with alertness and thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2).

How do we do this? Does this mean we should be spending every waking hour in prayer or at least in an *attitude of prayer*? This is not possible or practical. There are many things we do everyday that require our attention other than to God. We may need to focus on the person we are talking to, the needs of a relative or friend, our job or other necessary activity, a teacher's lesson, a test, driving, a sports or music activity, etc. Unlike God, we are unable to direct our full attention to more than one thing at a time.

If we assume these instructions are not literal, then what could they mean? Please consider the following possibility. Think about something that is important to you, such as a person (friend, relative, or other person that comes to mind) who needs salvation, a person who is going through personal difficulties, an existing or upcoming situation that is weighing on your mind, etc. If it is something important, we usually think about it often, or at least we should think about it often. God wants us to be humble and unselfish concerning the people around us and be attentive to their needs (Philippians 2:3-4; Galatians 6:2). God wants us to pray to Him about them and their needs, as well as our own needs and concerns (Philippians 4:6). He wants us to do so with sincerity and devotion and with thanksgiving—we should humble ourselves before God, recognizing His grace, sovereignty, and power. We should not give up on prayer or stop praying. Any time of the day or night is a good time to pray—we are not bound by God to pray at certain times of the day or night.

The Manner of Prayer

Our Lord taught His disciples the manner in which to pray and we should take heed to follow those instructions. Specifically, we should not pray to get the attention of those around us, we should not use vain or meaningless repetition, and we should understand that God knows our needs even before we ask Him. Before Jesus told His disciples the manner in which they should pray, He first gave them the followings warnings as recorded in Matthew 6:5-8:

- We are not to be hypocritical in our manner of prayer. We should make sure that when we pray that our devotion is to God and not to ourselves or to others. The intent of prayer is not to be seen or heard by people around us but to talk to God. If we pray in a public place, do we hope that the people around us notice that we are praying? If we pray with a group of believers, do we hope for or are we spurred on to greater words of wisdom by an "Amen" from one or more of the group? Think about how often prayer is used as a tool of preaching. Is the preacher or evangelist really talking to God or is he using prayer as a means for summarizing his sermon or calling the hearers to action? When we pray, are we truly talking to God with humility and devotion or are we being hypocrites by putting on a show for those around us?

- We are not to pray in a repetitive manner. Many religions promote repetitive prayer—repeating the same words or phrases in a particular situation or over a specified period of time. They think that by their many words they will be heard by God. This is contrary to God’s will. Unfortunately, believers can fall into the same trap, as repetition of words and phrases is becoming more common in prayer and worship services. God is not deaf. He knows our thoughts. If we think we are more likely to get God’s attention by saying (or singing) something over and over again we are fooling ourselves, belittling God, and being disobedient to Him. For this reason and others, we should not repeat the so-called *Lord’s prayer*.⁸

God knows what we need before we ask Him. Indeed, He provides for us beyond what we ask or think. If we realize that God is working in us according to His will and is working out all things for our good, then when we pray, we should not be of the mind to try to convince God to do things according to our will. Praying in a hypocritical or repetitive manner in effect places our will above God’s will—prayer is being used to serve our purpose instead of His purpose. God wants us to take all of our concerns and desires to Him in prayer with humility and thanksgiving, deferring to His will.

Although we should heed Matthew 6:7 and not repeat the *Lord’s prayer*, the components of that prayer apply to any prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). We see that we are to pray to God the Father, recognizing that He is the sovereign Almighty God and that He will accomplish His will in all things (Romans 8:26-28; Ephesians 1:11; Philippians 2:13). We should pray with thanksgiving, knowing that God will meet all our needs (Ephesians 3:20). Furthermore, we should pray with humility, realizing the forgiveness we have through Christ and that we should be dependent upon God when facing temptations (Ephesians 4:32; I Corinthians 10:13).

The Apostle Paul refers to bowing his knees before the Father as he describes to the Ephesian believers his prayer for them (Ephesians 3:14-21). Does this mean we should physically bow on our knees when we pray? Although Paul may have bowed on his knees at times when he prayed, it is unlikely he always did so as he prayed without ceasing whether night or day. We are to pray to the Almighty God with humility, devotion, and alertness. For some cultures, and perhaps for some people in any culture, a demonstration of humility or respect is to bow on one’s knees. Certainly, God deserves our humility and respect, and bowing before Him as we pray may be just what we need to focus our full attention on Him.⁹ However, the main point is to be humble and respectful before God. We can do this whether we are kneeling, standing, sitting, or lying down. Because we can pray to God anytime or anywhere, there are many situations where bowing on our knees is inappropriate or impossible.

Most churches hold prayer meetings and some organize prayer chains. Prayer meetings can be a good time of fellowship where believers are of one mind while they pray for the needs of others. Paul and his coworkers apparently prayed together at times (Colossians 1:3, 9). However, we must be careful that a prayer meeting is not used as a means to be seen or heard by others, as a forum for preaching through prayer, or as a source for gossip or rumors. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of a prayer chain

⁸ The prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 wasn’t Jesus’ prayer to God (it would be more appropriate to refer to His prayer recorded in John 17 as *the Lord’s prayer*). Jesus instructed His disciples to *not* be repetitious in their prayers (Matthew 6:7). Furthermore, please consider that if the specific words were meant to be repeated, then why are the words of this prayer different in Luke 11:1-4?

⁹ God does not require us to do bow before Him in prayer. If we do so, we should not bow before God in order to be seen by others or to appease Him (Colossians 2:20-23).

is misguided and inadvertently uses prayer as a tool for our own will. If a group of believers truly has a burden for a person or situation, then it is a good thing that they share in it through prayer as long as it is without the unscriptural constraints as to who prays when and for what.

What about written prayers? If writing out a prayer is done to make sure we get the words right, then we should reexamine our reason for praying. If we feel we need a prepared prayer to pray in a public setting, then maybe we should not be praying in that situation in the first place. Is praying to God by reading a prayer written by someone else something that He expects or desires from us? Prayer should be spontaneous and from the heart, with humility and sincerity. We need to remember that prayer is personal—it's between the individual and God (Matthew 6:5-8). We should talk to God, in our own words, in the same way we talk to anyone we love and respect. We will see what Paul prayed about, but we do not know the actual words that he prayed.

Paul's Prayers

On many occasions in his letters to his fellow believers, Paul referred to what or for whom he was praying. In these examples, Paul:

- Thanked God the Father for saving us by His grace through redemption in Christ (Colossians 1:12-14; II Thessalonians 2:13);
- Prayed for the salvation of his kinsmen—his fellow Jews (Romans 10:1-3);
- Thanked God for his fellow brethren—for their faith and their love for others (Romans 1:8-9; Ephesians 1:15-16; Philippians 1:3-5, 9; Colossians 1:3-4; I Thessalonians 1:2-3; II Thessalonians 1:3; Philemon 4-6);
- Prayed that he could visit the believers whom he desired to see (Romans 1:10; I Thessalonians 3:9-11);
- Constantly remembered Timothy in his prayers day and night, longing to see him (II Timothy 1:3-4);
- Prayed that God would open the eyes of other brethren so that they would know God and the love of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, be strengthened with the power of God through His Holy Spirit, and walk worthy of their salvation so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in them and that they would be glorified in Him (Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-19; Colossians 1:9-12; II Thessalonians 1:11-12);
- Prayed that Christ would dwell in the hearts of the brethren through faith and that they would be rooted and grounded in love and would increase and abound in love for one another (Ephesians 3:17-19; I Thessalonians 3:12);
- Praised and glorified God for being able to do far more in us and through us than we could ask or think (Ephesians 3:20-21);
- Thanked God in all his remembrance of the Philippian believers (Philippians 1:3-4);
- Prayed that the brethren would abound in real knowledge and discernment in order to be sincere and blameless before God (Philippians 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 3:13); and
- Thanked God that the Thessalonian believers received the message from him and his coworkers as the word of God and not as the word of men (I Thessalonians 2:13).

In these references to Paul's prayers, we see that he praised and glorified God, was thankful for all that God had done and was doing through the love of our Lord Jesus Christ for the brethren, and was thankful for the faith and love of his fellow saints. Paul was devoted to prayer, and his prayers were sincere and unselfish. Additionally, he was not afraid to tell the brethren that he was praying for them and for what purpose.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father [of our Lord Jesus Christ], from whom every family [of whom the whole family] in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him [God] who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works within us, to Him [God] be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.
(Ephesians 3:14-21)

Summary

It is wonderful and a blessing to be a child of God. We have much to be thankful for. However, life can be very difficult at times for us and for our loved ones and friends. God wants us to take our concerns to Him in prayer. He wants us to remember our fellow brethren in prayer. Additionally, God wants us to pray to Him with humility and thanksgiving.

There is no set formula or time for prayer. Whether standing or kneeling, whether day or night, we can and should talk to God in prayer. We are able to do so because of what Christ did for us at the cross. We have the Holy Spirit to interpret our desires in accordance with the will of God. We have God in all His grace and power working for us.

God has not promised to grant our requests. However, He has promised us His peace that passes all understanding, and He has promised to work all things out for our good. Furthermore, He has promised to meet our needs beyond all we could ask or think. Praise and thanks be to God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

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