

Who Prays When You Pray?

By A K Whitehead

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When we pray, who does the praying? Almost any knowledgeable Christian will give the same response to that question. In fact, it is a question which separates the knowledgeable from the less knowledgeable Christian.

The response, of course, ought to be that it is the Holy Spirit who does the praying, not us. For example, Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:18 that we should pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. So however we are praying and whatever we are praying for, it should be the Holy Spirit who is doing the praying.

But is it?

Establishing Our Priorities

Sometimes we are so caught up in our own problems and difficulties that we perhaps miss-remember what Paul tells us in Romans 8:26. We behave as if he said that, when we do not know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit will pray on our behalf.

In fact, when we think about it, that would be a contradiction of Ephesians 6:18. Of course, what Paul actually says in Romans 8:26 is that the "Spirit helps us in our weakness." This weakness is a general condition, not a specific one! For Paul goes on to say that "We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." (New International Version).

Again note that there is a general statement here: "We do not know...", He does not say "On those occasions when we do not know what to pray for..."

We often think we know what to pray for. Some of us may consider that we always know what to pray for. We either ignore what Paul says,

or we do not know what he says, or we do not want to meet what he says "head on", as it were.

In effect, we establish our own priorities in prayer. Moreover, we establish in them preference to whatever the priorities of the Holy Spirit happen to be.

Some Of Our Problems

There are several important problems which we tend to have in allowing the Spirit to establish his own priorities in our prayers.

1. We lack faith. We do have faith, certainly, but do we use it? If we don't, it will not grow. Here, we need to have sufficient faith to know that the Spirit does hear us and responds to us.

2. We lack trust. This is certainly a strict concomitant of faith. If we do not have sufficient of the former, we shall certainly be deficient in the latter! Can we trust the Spirit to pray through us? and for what is most needed at this time?

3. We lack experience. If we don't exercise our faith, and if we don't trust, we shall never accumulate that essential experience of allowing the Spirit to pray through us. We shall never know whether he does or doesn't

Establishing the Priorities Of The Holy Spirit

So how do we accumulate that experience? Simply by doing what the New testament tells us to do. In chapter 14 of John's gospel Jesus gives us a whole list of what the Spirit will do for us as a consequence of his indwelling.

If we really do believe in that indwelling of the Spirit, we should know that he is always there for us to turn to. And not least in prayer. In fact, looking at what Jesus says in this passage, prayer is by far the easiest way to learn how the Spirit communicates with us.

So next time we come to pray, we do not arrive with a self-generated list of what we think we ought to be praying about. Instead, we:

1. Make a deliberate effort to come to an internal state of quietness. There are various ways of doing that. One pray-er used to stand before his chair and reflect that here he was going to meet God. Or try a very reflectively prayed formal prayer. Or spend time bringing before God all those sins through which you have offended him since the last time you prayed. These are just helps at the start.

2. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead your pray. Then "listen". Not for some inner or external voice to speak, but for the Spirit to speak his thoughts into your mind. They will like as not simply come as thoughts.

Have the courage of faith to follow them. Have the courage not to pray anything if nothing comes. The pastor of the largest parish in the world, Paul Youngi Cho says that he never preaches on Sunday what the Spirit has not given him on Saturday. If he receives nothing, he simply does not preach.

It is as simple as that. If you practice Christian meditation on Scripture this will all be very easy for you because one cannot properly meditate on God's word by doing it one's self. The Spirit has to do it. We learn how to let him. In the process one learns how to recognise the different ways in which The Holy Spirit speaks to us.

Although it is easier through meditation, we can still learn to listen and hear and be guided by him through other forms of prayer.

About The Author A K Whitehead Web Site: www.christianword.co.uk Experience: Over twenty years in Christian healing and teaching. Qualifications: B.A., M.Phil., Camb Univ Cert in Religious Studies Conditions of use: This article may be reproduced on condition that it is unaltered and that all this information is included.

Prayers - How They Work?

By CD Mohatta

Prayers have been talked about since many centuries. Every time, someone falls in a trouble, he/she wants to pray. But many people complain that their prayers are not getting answered. People of every religion believe in prayers. Internet is full of websites that have prayer requests. A prayer is asking the God what ever we want. In ordinary life we ask people what we want. Similarly in a prayer we ask God what we want. But since God is invisible we do not know his response to our prayers and that creates lot many wrong ideas. What is the correct way to pray? Let us discuss about this.

Let us take any every day problem. Whenever we face a problem, we approach someone to solve that. For example, we want a ticket for a flight and we are not getting it. If we are desperate to get the ticket, we would try to contact everybody who can get us that ticket. If we are not desperate, we will stop making efforts after hearing the first no.

The same way- it works for prayers. If you are desperate about something, you will pray with emotions. You will keep praying till your problem is solved. You will be focused in your prayer and your prayer will be a moving prayer. Imagine the passion in a prayer made by a mother to save her child. That kind of prayer can move mountains. Those people who complain that their prayers do not work, are not praying with sincerity of effort. They have lack of faith in their prayer. This lack of faith gets reflected in the way they pray. They are themselves not sure about getting results. That is why when they pray the prayer has no effect. After that they complain that their prayers do not work. Should they do that? If you are looking for results, pray with sincerity and pray with passion. Keep praying till your prayers are not answered and have faith.

The author CD Mohatta writes for <http://www.wishafriend.com> where you can get myspace graphics, comments, layouts, backgrounds, codes, etc. The author also writes quizzes for <http://www.funquizzes.com> and text for free ecards and greetings at <http://www.ecarduniverse.com>

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