



# THE WAY TO PRAY

MDWK Winter 2023  
Donelson First



# The Way to Pray

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# WHY PRAY?

What is prayer?

Prayer is my single greatest opportunity to communicate with & have the undivided attention of the Creator of the world.

The dilemma: If God already knows everything that I need and He already knows every request I will bring to Him, why pray?

1. When I pray, I express trust in God.

I say when I pray:

God, I believe in You.

God, I believe in Your ability.

God, I believe in Your desire to work all things for Your glory and for my good.

Scripture does not say:  
Trust God can.

Scripture does say:  
Trust God will!

“

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose.

”

Romans 8:28

2. When I pray, I experience the delight of God.

Psalms 147:11:

The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.

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# WHY PRAY?

3. When I pray,  
I expect answers from God.

If I do not expect to hear from God, I will not hear from God.

Matthew 21:22:

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.

God desires I pray expecting Him to both hear and answer my prayers.

Mark 11:24:

Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe you have received it, and it will be yours.

The key to expecting God to answer =  
A desire and a passion for a deeper  
experience with God.

A robust prayer life for Donelson First  
begins with a desire and a  
passion within each of us  
for a deeper experience  
with God.

## PASSAGES

MATTHEW 6:5-13

LUKE 11:9-13

JAMES 1:5-7

## PRAYER

LORD, GIVE ME A DESIRE AND  
A PASSION FOR A DEEPER  
EXPERIENCE WITH YOU.

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# MISTAKES I MAKE

Prayer is my single greatest opportunity to communicate with & have the undivided attention of the Creator of the world.

My greatest accomplishment in life as a Christ-follower will be to learn the way to pray.

3 Mistakes I make when I pray...

Mistake #1: I don't ask God how to pray.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

**KNOW (HEBREW) = INTIMACY, INCLUDING SEXUAL RELATIONS, IN RELATIONSHIPS**

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10

God already has the plans for my life. My prayer life should hinge upon Him leading my prayers so that I follow the plans He already has prepared for me.

Mistake #2: I don't ask God for "big" when I pray.

I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

Psalms 81:10

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# MISTAKES I MAKE

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.

Ephesians 3:20

What immeasurably more have I missed by not asking "big" of God?

Mistake #3: I don't expect God to answer all I pray.

My trust in God is often defined by my experience with God.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

UNDERSTANDING (HEBREW) =  
GOOD SENSE  
AND CLEVERNESS

My trust should be less about my experiences and more about God's promises.

Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Mark 11:24

## PASSAGES

PSALM 25:4  
PSALM 143:10  
JAMES 4:2

## PRAYER

**HAVE I MADE A MISTAKE  
WHILE TALKING WITH  
YOU BY NOT:**

1. ASKING YOU HOW I SHOULD PRAY?
2. ASKING YOU FOR "BIG" WHEN I PRAY?
3. EXPECTING YOU TO ANSWER ALL I PRAY?

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WHEN I DON'T  
FEEL LIKE  
PRAYING

Prayer is my single greatest opportunity to communicate with & have the undivided attention of the Creator of the world.

My greatest accomplishment in life as a Christ-follower will be to learn the way to pray.

This should be my aspiration:

To have a prayer life with the Lord more intimate than any other relationship in my life.

Mistake #4: I don't pray when I should pray.

Because he turns his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.

Psalm 116:2

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4

DARKNESS (HEBREW) = GLOOM; THE DARKEST OF GLOOM

The Way to Pray When I Don't Feel Like Praying

1. Acknowledge.

Life is hard and tough and difficult and broken and depleting and frustrating and hurtful and sometimes demoralizing and sad and full of trouble.

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WHEN I DON'T  
FEEL LIKE  
PRAYING

One thing I have to be careful of is believing  
a false, but often deeply held belief:

If I love, serve, and obey the Lord, I will be immune to suffering.

As a mature and focused person of prayer, I must acknowledge:  
Troubles are inevitable.

My troubles should inspire in me an even greater depth of prayer.

## 2. Invite.

When I invite God's Word into my story,  
I receive His comfort even in the midst of my  
valley of darkness.

## 3. Listen.

When was the last time I began my prayer  
time listening rather than talking?

I can't welcome God's lead if I am the  
one doing all the talking.

The Lord confides in those who fear him;  
he makes his covenant known to them.  
Psalm 25:14

The Lord confides in me when I choose  
to listen to Him.

## PASSAGES

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

1 JOHN 5:14

JOHN 14:14

PSALM 23

MATTHEW 27:46

JOHN 16:33

PSALM 3:1-6

PSALM 25:1-14

CONFIDE (HEBREW) =

INTIMATE TALK

FEAR (HEBREW) =

WORSHIP

## PRAYER

GOD, AS I AM QUIET, HELP ME  
TO HEAR YOUR VOICE AND  
TO DO WHAT YOU ASK.

# The Way to Pray

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**GOD'S WILL  
OVER  
MY WANTS**

Imagine if the Church became truly focused, intentional, and determined to pray God's will above her wants.

Imagine if I became truly prayerful to die to my wants and pursue God's will above all.

This is really a shift in the way I pray – a shift away from a list of “to-dos” and an intentional plea for God’s will to be accomplished through my life.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him.

1 John 5:14-15

What does it mean to pray God’s “will be done?”

I should pray less about what I want and more about what God wills.

The Way to Pray: God's Will Over My Wants

1. Ask.

"God, show me your will."

A church led by God will be inspired by a pastor desiring to be led by God.



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**GOD'S WILL  
OVER  
MY WANTS**

### 2. Give.

When I am ungrateful, when I complain, and when I speak negatively,  
I am not in God's will!

... give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in  
Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18



**IN WHAT WAYS CAN I BETTER GIVE  
THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES?**

### 3. Follow.

Do I follow the Word?

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Psalms 119:105

To follow God's Word is to discover God's will.

Consistency in the Word will produce clarity in God's will.

If I am asking God to show me His will,  
and if I am thankful in the circumstances of my life,  
and if I am actively following the pattern of Scripture in my life,  
I will know the will of God for my life.

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OVER  
MY WANTS**

### 4. Obey.

A huge part of living obediently is in coming clean when I don't live obediently.

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Psalms 66:16

And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 6:12-13

## PASSAGES

MATTHEW 26:39

MATTHEW 6:9-10

ISAIAH 55:10-11

1 PETER 3:12

JAMES 4:3-4

HEBREWS 12:14B

ISAIAH 40:31

If God only answered the prayers of sinless people, there would never be any answered prayers.

The pursuit of holiness leads to a consistent life of obedience.

I cannot consistently know God's will if I am willfully disobeying God's ways.

### 5. Wait.

**HOPE (HEBREW) = WAIT WITH EXPECTATION; WAIT WITH TRUST**

Go back to the last thing God told me to do and stay the course until I hear otherwise.

## PRAYER

TEACH ME HOW TO ASK, GIVE,  
FOLLOW, OBEY & WAIT AS I PRAY  
GOD'S WILL OVER MY WANTS.