



## How Do You Talk with God?

*“And we can be confident that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will. And if we know he is listening when we make our requests, we can be sure he will give us what we ask for.” (1 John 5:14-15, NLT)*

Imagine that your telephone rings! It is the President of your country, calling to visit with you and see if there is anything he can do for you. He also invites you to join him in a project he plans. How would you feel? Shocked? Bewildered? Honored? Excited? What would you do? After getting over the shock, wouldn't you say, “YES!”

### *The invitation to pray*

Do you know that the King of kings, the Creator of the universe, has already made that call to you? When you believed in Jesus, he gave you the privilege of a private “phone line” so that the two of you can carry on a conversation anywhere at any time (prayer). He invites you to come boldly to his throne, receive mercy (willingly forgiving someone who has done wrong) and find grace (undeserved favor) to help you when you need it (Hebrews 4:16) How will you respond to his invitation? Do you long to know and enjoy God in an intimate relationship? Do you want to give him a daily offering of praise, love and thanksgiving? Do you desire peace, power and blessings? Would you like to be part of God's plan to change people and the world? Do you want to find solutions to your problems?

### *Learning to pray*

Usually by two, a child can talk. How tragic it is if the child still speaks that way at sixteen! Why do kids speak better at sixteen? They have had years of practice! In the same way, the more you talk with God, the more natural you will be able to express your thoughts, love and desires to him. God doesn't care **how** you talk to him but **that** you talk. He is passionate about wanting a relationship with you. You can also learn to pray

- By responding to the Holy Spirit's leading,
- By praying with more experienced believers,
- By studying using the teachings on prayer in Scripture,
- By learning to pray Scripture back to God and
- By reading books on prayer.

Perhaps you are thinking, “But I feel uncomfortable talking to someone I can't see.” Think about it. You do it all the time. You talk on your cell phone. You communicate

by text messaging. You may even talk the old-fashioned way – through letters! Have you ever read a letter and someone asks, “What did she say?” Talking with God is just as simple. God has given you an imagination. Use it! If it helps, put an empty chair near you. Paul says because you are one with Christ, your position is in the throne room seated in the heavenly realm. (Read Ephesians 2:6) Visualize entering the throne room, kneeling before your heavenly Father. Awesome! Remember, Jesus never leaves you. The old hymn, “*In the Garden*” puts it plainly, “And he walks with me and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own. And the joys we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.” Jesus longs for a close relationship with you. Pray in the shower (ask him to cleanse your heart). You can pray dressing (put on his armor). Pray eating (thank him for the food).

The disciples were prayers. They prayed at 9 a.m., 3 p.m. and at sunset. However, as they watched Jesus, they noticed that he and his Father seemed to be in constant communication. Talking to his Father seemed to bring great joy to his heart. In fact, he would rather pray than eat! He arose early in the morning to pray and sometimes spent entire nights in prayer! He kept his phone “on” so that he could continually talk and receive his Father’s instructions. The disciples longed to pray like Jesus. One day they asked him, “Teach us to pray.” You may be familiar with this prayer as it is often included in worship services. It is a pattern that consists of seven topical sentences that cover every aspect of prayer. Please read carefully Matthew 6:9 -13 and the article, “Prayer Was Modeled for Us by Christ.” In this prayer, Jesus teaches you how to approach God and what to say. If you do not know what to say, the Holy Spirit will help you. (Hebrews 7:25) Amazing!

*And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed. (Romans 8:26, NLT)*

### ***A time of quiet***

Jesus said, “*When you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Then your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you.*” (Matthew 6:6 NLT) Some call this special time with the Lord a “Quiet Time.” How do you begin a “Quiet Time”? Choose a place where you can be alone. Choose a time, either early in the morning, during the day or in the evening. Morning is a great way to start your day! Decide how long you want to meet with God – fifteen, thirty minutes or even an hour. (When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane before his arrest, he asked his disciples to pray an hour. They went to sleep!) If you want a consistent and quality prayer life, make it a habit to meet God there each day. God will be waiting for you at your special place. He does not condemn you if you miss, but you will miss precious moments of enjoying intimacy with God by getting to know him and finding answers to your problems.

What do you do in your quiet time? The psalmist said, “*Be still, and know that I am God.*” (Psalm 46:10, NIV) Focus on the Lord by reading a small passage of Scripture. Ask the Spirit to help you understand. Sing to the Lord!

God wants you to talk with him. Your natural inclination will be to come before your Father with a “shopping list.” Instead, try this prayer pattern which is easily remembered by the letters ACTS – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (Requests).

- **Adoration** – Adoration is the love, respect and honor you give to God who made you. It is telling him how wonderful he is and how much you love him. Tell him, “I love you because you are perfect, kind, good, merciful, loving, faithful, forgiving, etc.” Spend time adoring God.
- **Confession** – Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart for any act or attitude that does not please him. Talk to God about what you have done wrong. Express sorrow for your sin, and then accept his loving forgiveness. If you hold on to your sin and do not confess it, God will not hear your prayer! (Psalm 66:18)
- **Thanksgiving** – The Bible says, “*No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NLT) As you thank the Lord, be specific. Thank him for good health, for helping you in your schoolwork, for friends and parents, for birds and sunsets, etc. This one should be easy!
- **Supplication or requests** – James 4:2b says the reason you don’t have what you want is that you don’t ask God for it. Ask for the needs of your friends and family. Pray for unsaved friends, the President, world leaders, your teachers, your church and missionaries. God especially wants you to bring your personal needs and desires to him. Do you want your faith to grow? Keep a list of your requests and God’s answers! (See the devotional, “How to Pray to Get Answers.”)

### ***Prayer is a gift***

What a wonderful gift God has given you. He longs to communicate with you, his child! Remember prayer is a two-way conversation. Take time to listen. Look for God’s answers in the Word, a sermon, circumstances, impressions in your mind or comments from another believer. There is much more to learn about prayer, but this will get you started. Remember, you learn to pray by praying! Begin your day by talking to your Master and listening to him. During the day talk to God about your needs and situations as they occur. Never become too busy to pray! Do not cut yourself off from this intimate relationship with God. Make it a priority, not out of duty, but because you love him. He will reward you! (Matthew 6:6)

### **Attitude Check:**

- To pray sincerely, what attitudes are necessary toward your Father?

### **Explore:**

- Read, “Prayer Allows Us to Voice Our Requests to God.” (James 4:2-3) Begin keeping a record of prayers requests and answers in your journal.

- Read Matthew 6:5-8. Record in your journal what you learn.

**Talking with God:**

- Father, teach me to pray. May it become as natural as talking to my best friend.