

Prayer

"Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asks, receives: and he that seeks, finds: and to him that knocks, it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your Father who is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matthew 7:7-11)

What is prayer? - Prayer is the raising of the mind and heart to God to adore Him, to thank Him for His benefits, to ask His forgiveness, and to beg of Him all the graces we need whether for soul or body. Prayer is another means of obtaining God's grace.

Why should you pray? - You should pray--

1. To adore God, to tell Him that He made you and that you depend upon Him for absolutely everything.
2. To thank God for the blessings He has given you.
"What has thou not received? And if thou has received, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7)
3. To ask God pardon for your sins.
"O God, be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13)
4. To ask God's help in all things.
"Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7).

When should you pray? - Every day, especially--

1. In the morning -- to offer the day to God and to ask for His help in the temptations of the day
2. During the day, especially during temptations.
3. At night -- to thank God for the blessings of the day and to ask Him to forgive you for the sins committed that day.
4. Before and after meals.

To whom should you pray? -

1. To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.
2. You may also pray to the Blessed Virgin, the Angels and the Saints.
"And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel." (Apocalypse 8:4).

Why may you pray to the Blessed Virgin (Mary, Mother of God), the Angels and the Saints? Because they are God's best friends; God will listen to them more than to us who are still sinners. "Go to my servant Job, and offer yourselves a holocaust: and my servant Job shall pray for you: his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you: for you have not spoken right things before me, as my servant Job hath." (Job 42:8)

For whom should you pray?

1. For everyone still on earth, even your enemies.

"But I say to you, love your enemies: do good to them who hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." (Matthew 5:44)

2. For the souls in Purgatory (See Lesson 12).

What should you pray for?

Everyday pray to get into Heaven; when praying for anything else, always say, "Grant this request, Lord, if it is Your will." "For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knows that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:32-33).

Does God always hear your prayers?

Yes, but He does not always give what we ask for, because we sometimes ask for things that are self centered, not focused on the salvation of our soul, or could do us great harm. He is a loving Father and therefore would never give something that He knows is not truly good for us. Further, we are reminded that many times we do not think at the Father in heaven thinks. We think in earthly terms, He thinks in heavenly terms. That's why the quote from Mat 6:32-33 is so important to pay heed.

Does God hear or answer the prayers of sinners who are living in mortal sin (someone who has committed one or more bad sins, such as taking birth control or rejecting God's Church, without confessing them, thus becoming an enemy of God)?

He hears their prayers for the grace of true repentance (the grace to feel sorry for your sins and confess them to a priest), but He does not hear their prayers for other favors, unless they are willing to give up their sins and do penance. "Now we know that God doth not hear sinners: but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He hear." (John 9:31)

Should only good people pray?

No, everyone should pray. Especially should mortal sinners pray to be delivered from their sins.

"I desire not the [eternal] death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." (Ezekiel 33:11).

"For every one that asketh, receiveth." (Matthew 7:8)

How should we pray?

1. With attention, keeping your mind on your prayer.
2. With humility, realizing that you are powerless without God.
3. With confidence, realizing that God can do all things.
4. With perseverance, without giving up hope.

"And this is the confidence which we have Towards Him: That, whatsoever we shall ask according to His will, He heareth us." (I John 5:14).

Why is public prayer necessary?

Because, as members of human society, we owe God public recognition of Him as Supreme Master of society.

How does public prayer help the world?

1. We thereby call down God's mercy upon our country and world.
2. We also obtain the divine help which is necessary for virtue and peace in society.

Why should a family pray together?

1. To obtain the graces they need, especially the grace to keep the Catholic Faith.
2. To ask God to bless them as a family.
3. To imitate the Holy Family (Jesus, Mary, and Joseph).
4. To give good example to the children.
5. To keep the family together.

"For where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20).

How often should a family pray together?

At least once a day, preferably after the evening meal, when all the members of the family are together. "A family that prays together stays together." (Father Peyton).

Why do Catholics have statues and pictures of Our Lord (Jesus), the Blessed Virgin (Mary) and the Saints?

1. Because they wish to honor them, just as we honor public heroes.
2. Because it is easier to pray to them when looking at a picture or a statue of them.
3. Because it helps Catholics raise their minds frequently to God during the day.

How can we make a meditation? We can make a meditation:

1. By remembering that we are in the presence of God;
2. By asking the Holy Ghost to give us grace to benefit by the meditation;
3. By reflecting seriously on some sacred truth regarding our salvation;
4. By drawing some good resolution from the thoughts we have had; and
5. By thanking God for the knowledge and grace bestowed on us through the meditation.

Where may we find subjects or points for meditation?

We may find the subjects or points for meditation in the words of the Our Father, Hail Mary or Apostles' Creed; also in the questions and answers of our Catechism, in the Holy Bible, and in books of meditation.

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. There are two main kinds of prayer, vocal and mental. Vocal prayer uses specific words, such as the Our Father and the Hail Mary. Mental prayer is praying without words, which is also called meditation.

2. It is good to pray during the day with short prayers, such as, "Jesus, I love You"; "My God, I offer this hour of work for my sins"; "My Jesus, mercy."

3. It is not necessary to kneel while praying, but it certainly is much easier to pray when you are on your knees, except for the old and physically unable.