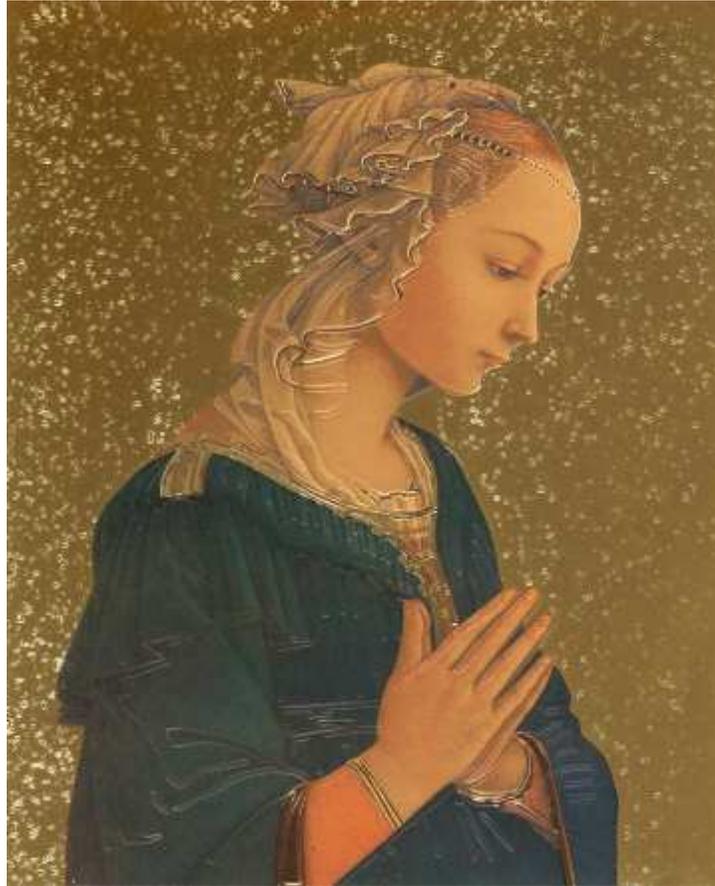


Prayer



More things are wrought by prayer
than the world dreams of.
(Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

Kinds of Prayer

The word “prayer” is applied to at least four distinct procedures - petition, intercession, adoration, contemplation. Petition is the asking of something for ourselves. Intercession is the asking of something for other people. Adoration is the use of intellect, feeling, will and imagination in making acts of devotion directed towards God in his personal aspect or as incarnated in human form. Contemplation is that condition of alert passivity, in which the soul lays itself open to the Divine Ground within and without, the immanent and transcendent Godhead. (Aldoux Huxley)

Prayer in the sense of petition, asking for things, is a small part of it; confession and penitence are its threshold, adoration its sanctuary, the presence and vision and enjoyment of God its bread and wine.
(C. S. Lewis)

Prayer is a cry of distress, a demand for help, a hymn of love.
(Dr. Alexis Carrel)

Prayer for Others

He who prays for his neighbors will be heard for himself. (Talmud)

When you pray for anyone, you tend to modify your personal attitude toward him. (Norman Vincent Peale)

There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him.
(William Law)

Since all souls are of the same essence as of God and are correlated with each other, one may as well pray for the benefit of others. High souls always pray for the good of the entire humanity...Telepathy has now conclusively proved how heartstrings between individuals play in unison, irrespective of distance between the two. There is a tremendous power in thought vibrations and their range is unlimited. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

Metta Prayer

(Buddhist)

May all beings be happy, content, and fulfilled.

May all beings be healed and whole.

May all have whatever they want and need.

May all be protected from harm, and free from fear.

May all beings enjoy inner peace and ease.

May all be awakened, liberated, and free.

May there be peace in this world, and throughout the entire universe.

Importance of Prayer

Prayers should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.

(English proverb)

In the life of the Indian there is only one inevitable duty - the duty of prayer - the daily recognition of the Unseen and Eternal. (Ohiyesa)

Prayer is the most perfect and most divine action that a rational soul is capable of. It is of all actions and duties the most indispensably necessary.

(Augustine Baker)

He who has learned to pray has learned the greatest secret of a holy and a happy life. (William Law)

Prayer is an all-efficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine which is never exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a heaven unruffled by the storm. It is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings.

(Saint John Chrysostom)

Even if no command to pray had existed, our very weakness would have suggested it. (Francois de Fenelon)

Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action. (Mohandas Gandhi)

However great may be the temptation, if we know how to use the weapon of prayer well we shall come off conquerors at last, for prayer is more powerful than all the devils. He who is attacked by the spirits of darkness needs only to apply himself vigorously to prayer and he will beat them back with great success. (Saint Bernard of Clairvaux)



The entire day receives order and discipline when it acquires unity. This unity must be sought and found in morning prayer. The morning prayer determines the day. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Prayer does not mean simply to pour out one's heart. It means rather to find the way to God and to speak with Him, whether the heart is full or empty. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Benefits of Prayer

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (Jesus Christ)

Prayer does not change God, but changes him who prays.
(Soren Kierkegaard)

If you ask of God, He gives you what you ask, but if you dare to live Him, God gives Himself and all that you would have asked for. (Sri Aurobindo)

The exercise of prayer, in those who habitually exert it, must be regarded by us doctors as the most adequate and normal of all the pacifiers of the mind and calmers of the nerves. (William James)

The influence of prayer on the human mind and body can be measured in terms of increased physical buoyancy, greater intellectual vigor, moral stamina, and a deeper understanding of the realities underlying human relationships. (Dr. Alexis Carrel)

Prayer is the master-key that unlocks the Kingdom of Heaven.
(Sant Kirpal Singh)

Prayer, if not the very gate of heaven, is the key to let us into its holiness and joys. (John Wesley)

Prayer and gratitude grant inner peace and harmony to withstand the hazards of physical life, which is a passing phase of the soul in its long journey back to the True Home of the Father. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

Prayer has in it a great dynamic force. It strengthens and prepares a person to face and fight the battle of life fearlessly and successfully. It is in fact the only panacea for all types of ill. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

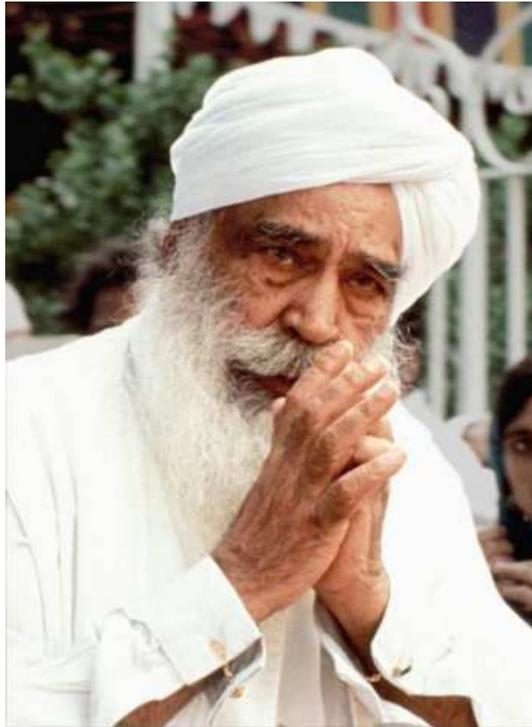
The fundamental religious point is that in prayer, spiritual energy, which otherwise would slumber, does become active, and spiritual work of some kind is effected really. (William James)

Thus at all stages of the prayerful life we find the persuasion that in the process of communion energy from on high flows in to meet demand, and becomes operative within the phenomenal world. (William James)

The most powerful form of energy one can generate is prayer. Prayer, like radium, is a luminous and self-generating form of energy. (Dr. Alexis Carrel)

Attaching attention to anything is prayer to that thing. And prayer is good, for in prayer, mind contracts, and if done regularly with interest and for long periods, mind comes in concentration, and by concentration, mind becomes pure. The purity of mind expresses itself first in clear thinking, then in inspiration and in intuition. (Baba Sawan Singh)

With a life of prayer a person eventually rises into cosmic awareness and sees the hidden hand of God working out His will and His purpose which otherwise remain a sealed book too subtle for the average man to pierce through and peep into. (Sant Kirpal Singh)



Sant Kirpal Singh

Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of Himself. (Mother Teresa)

Prayer should be the means by which I, at all times, receive all that I need, and, for this reason, be my daily refuge, my daily consolation, my daily joy, my source of rich and inexhaustible joy in life. (Saint John Chrysostom)

Constant prayer quickly straightens out our thoughts. (the Desert Fathers)

Every time you pray, if your prayer is sincere, there will be new feeling and new meaning in it which will give you fresh courage, and you will understand that prayer is an education. (Fyodor Dostoyevsky)

Let him never cease from prayer who has once begun it, be his life ever so wicked, for prayer is the way to amend it, and without prayer such amendment will be much more difficult. (Saint Teresa of Avila)

Granting that we are always in the presence of God, yet it seems to me that those who pray are in His presence in a very different sense; for they, as it were, see that He is looking upon them, while others may go for days on end without even once recollecting that God sees them. (Saint Teresa of Avila)



Cry of the Soul

Usually prayer is a question of groaning rather than speaking, tears rather than words. (Saint Augustine)

The best prayers have often more groans than words. (John Bunyan)

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Prayer can be defined as an anguished cry of the soul in distress or helplessness, to a Power, fuller and greater than itself, for relief and comfort. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

A prayer being the cry of the soul in agony is most beautiful and most natural when it gushes forth spontaneously like a spring of cool water from the bowels of the Earth. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

Prayer must arise from the depths of the soul. It should not be a vain repetition of empty words with little meaning in them. What we pray for we must really wish for, not only intellectually but from the very core of our being. It must churn the very soul to its depths and the music of prayer should come out and tingle from the very nerves, tissues and fibers of the entire frame making us unmindful and oblivious of everything else beside the sweet music of the soul. (Sant Kirpal Singh)



Prayer is not verbal. It is from the heart. (Ramana Maharshi)

The most natural form for a fruitful prayer is the yearning of a soul without the agency of words, oral or mental, with the tongue of thought. A prayer like this generates and releases such a fund of spiritual energy that all the cosmic powers are attracted, and combine together, shaping out things as well as possible. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

A heart-felt prayer is not recitation with the lips. It is a yearning from within which expresses itself in every word, every act, nay every thought of man. (Mahatma Gandhi)

To pray is to desire; but it is to desire what God would have us desire. He who desires not from the bottom of his heart, offers a deceitful prayer. (Francois Fenelon)

Our prayers should be burning words coming forth from the furnace of a heart filled with love. (Mother Teresa)

I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere to go. (Abraham Lincoln)



Prayer and Effort

Effort and prayer must go together if we want success in all our ventures. One of them by itself can achieve nothing....A mere prayer without endeavor seldom bears fruit. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

To have a ruling passion for an objective and to work hard for achieving the same is the right type of prayer in the truest sense of the word. Effort should be combined with prayer, for mere lip service to reach the goal will not help much. In all sincerity one should pray and indeed the very striving for a thing with heart and soul is the greatest prayer and is bound to fructify. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

Do what you can and pray for what you cannot yet do. (Saint Augustine)

Prayer indeed is good, but while calling on the gods, a man should himself lend a hand. (Hippocrates)

It is vain to expect our prayers to be heard if we do not strive as well as pray. (Aesop)

He who labors as he prays lifts his heart to God with his hands. (Bernard of Clairvaux)

God helps those who help themselves. (German proverb)

Trust in Allah, but tie your camel first. (Arabic proverb)

It is vain to ask of the gods what man is capable of supplying for himself. (Epicurus)

Many people are praying for mountains to be moved when all they need to do is climb them. (Anonymous)

Prayer, among sane people, has never superseded practical efforts to secure the desired end. (George Santayana)



Heaven ne'er helps the men who will not act. (Sophocles)

Pray as if it all depends on God, but work as if it all depends upon you.
(George Washington Carver)

Work as if you were to live one hundred years; pray as if you were to die tomorrow. (Benjamin Franklin)



What to Pray For

Our prayers should be for blessings in general, for God knows best what is good for us. (Socrates)

If you pray with a motive to do good to someone, your prayer may actually bring about good both to him and to yourself. Some people pray for the spiritual benefit of those who have done them some wrong. There also, they are helping others spiritually. But all prayers with a motive fall short of the ideal prayer which is without motive. In the entire spiritual panorama of the universe nothing is more sublime than a spontaneous prayer. It gushes out of the human heart, filled with appreciative joy. It is self expression of the freed spirit without any actuation of a motive. In its highest form, prayer leaves no room for the illusory diarchy of the lover and the Beloved. It is a return to one's own being. (Meher Baba)

When you pray to God, pray from your heart. Say what you really feel, not what you think He wants you to say or feel. Be completely sincere with Him. He knows anyway what you are thinking! But heartfelt prayer lends power to your thoughts. It focuses them, and centers them in Him. Without sincerity, that focus will be lacking. If you feel no devotion, then pray to Him, "Lord, help me to love You." If your heart is restless with desires, pray to Him, "Lord, I have these desires, but I want You more than anything else. Help me to dissolve every limitation in Your great ocean of peace." It is all right to pray to God for things. It is better still, however, to ask that His will be done in your life. He knows what you need, and will do much more for you than the best that you can imagine for yourself. Above all, seek Him for Himself, for His love. Pray to Him, "Father, reveal Thyself!" If you call to Him in that way, sincerely, He will be with you always. (Yogananda)

You should sit in a humble manner and pray, "O God, help us, O Master help us – I am at your door, please raise me up." To sit at the door, wait and repose all hopes in Him, this sort of prayer will help you. You will have a boost. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

"Sir, can you give us an example of a good prayer?" the Muslim gentleman asked. In reply the Great Master (Hazur Baba Sawan Singh) said, "If I were to pray, I would pray as follows: My Lord! I am ignorant, I do not know what to ask of you. Give me that which you think best for me. And give me the strength and wisdom to be happy about what you deem fit to give me and about how and where you keep me. I have no virtues, no devotion. My actions are all dark and sinful. I possess no merits and my mind has thoroughly crushed me. For a sinner like me, O Lord, there is no refuge but Thy Blessed Feet. Please take me under Thy shelter. I want nothing more. Make me Thy slave, that I may be Thine and Thou mayest be mine." (Baba Sawan Singh)

Beg from the Lord and the Guru their Divine Vision, complete self-surrender and the gift of Naam. Pray also to be saved from the evil tendencies of the mind and the senses. Being omnipotent, He is capable of granting us all these boons. Besides this, the seekers may pray for the gift of happily resigning to His sweet Will. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

O Lord, I, a beggar, ask of Thee more than a thousand kings may ask of Thee. Each one has something he needs to ask of Thee; I have come to ask Thee to give me Thyself. (Ansari of Herat)

Lord, I know not what to ask of Thee. Thou only know what I need. Thou loves me better than I know how to love myself. Father, give to Thy child that which he himself knows not how to ask. Smite or heal, depress me or raise me up: I adore all Thy purposes without knowing them. I am silent; I offer myself up in a sacrifice; I yield myself to Thee; I would have no other desire than to accomplish Thy will. Teach me to pray. Pray Thyself in me. (Fenelon)

O Lord, You know what is best for me. Let this or that be done, as You please. Give what You will, how much You will, and when You will. (Thomas a Kempis)

A simple prayer for the soul's journey is: "I will to will Thy will." Such a simple form of prayer is proper, it seems, on almost any occasion. (Ralph Blum)

Direct all your prayers to one thing only, that is, to conform your will perfectly to the Divine Will. (Saint Teresa of Avila)



We should never pray to God that He may grant what we desire, but that His will may be accomplished in us. (Saint Nilus)

Pray to be humble so that God does not have to appear to be so stingy. O pray to be honest, strong, kind, and pure, so that the Beloved is never miscast as a cruel great miser. I know you have a hundred complex cases against God in court, but never mind, wayfarer, let's just get out of this mess and pray to be loving and humble so that the Friend will be forced to reveal Himself so near. (Hafiz)

Let us not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless in facing them. Let us not beg for the stilling of the pain but for the heart to conquer it. (Tagore)



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We do pray for mercy, and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy. (William Shakespeare)

The first petition that we are to make to Almighty God is for a good conscience, the next for health of mind, and then of body. (Seneca)

The wise man in the storm prays God not for safety from danger, but for deliverance from fear. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

We, ignorant of ourselves, beg often our own harms, which the wise powers deny us for our good. (William Shakespeare)

More tears are shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones.
(Saint Teresa of Avila)

God punishes us mildly by ignoring our prayers and severely by answering them. (Richard J. Needham)

One night I was sitting with my Master (Sawan Singh), and Dr Julian Johnson was also there. It was about 10 o'clock on a winter day. Johnson put a question to the Master. He asked, "Is it necessary to pray?" The Master replied, from our own level. He said, "The disciple's work is to pray, but for higher things, not for the worldly things." If a disciple is not perfect, he demands, he wants something from the Master. When we sit for our prayer, we simply sit like a wrestler, like a gymnastic, and think that we are to go up under our own strength. That is not the way. You should sit in a humble manner and pray, "O God, help us, O Master help us--I am at your door, please raise me up". To sit at the door, wait and repose all hopes in Him, this sort of prayer will help you. He is your Father and you are His child. The God in the Master is also your Father. You should go straight to Him, without any reservations, just like a child. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

Pray thus to God: "My Infinite Beloved, I know that Thou art nearer than these words with which I pray; nearer even than my nearest thoughts. Behind my every restless feeling, may I feel Thy concern for me, and Thy love. Behind my awareness, may I feel sustained and guided by Thy consciousness. Behind my love for Thee, may I become ever more deeply conscious of Thy love." If you continuously pray to Him in this way, and if you pray with all sincerity, you will feel His presence suddenly as a great joy in your heart. In that bursting joy you will know that He is with you, and that He is your very own. (Yogananda)

Essentials of Successful Prayer

The greatest prayer is patience. (Buddha)

The way you learn how to pray is to simply start praying. (Shantidasa)

Prayer is an impossibility without a living faith in the presence of God within. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is. (Old Testament)

Prayer needs no speech. It is in itself independent of any sensuous effort. But it must be combined with the utmost humility. (Mahatma Gandhi)

No prayers can be heard which do not come from a forgiving heart. (J. C. Ryle)

If we are holding anyone in condemnation as a human being, good or bad, just or unjust, we have not made peace with our brother and we are not ready for the prayer of communion with the Infinite. (Joel Goldsmith)

Prayer is a state of continual gratitude. (John of Kronstadt)

If the only prayer you say in your entire life is “Thank you”, that will suffice. (Meister Eckhart)

True prayer is not begging or beseeching, it is right knowing. It is not a matter of trying to make something happen, but of becoming aware of that which already is. It is not a time to say “Please” but to say “Thank you.” (Elinor MacDonald)

You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance. (Kahlil Gibran)

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God. (Saint Paul)

When you pray do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the temples and street corners for people to see them... They have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your own private room and pray to your Father in secret and you will be rewarded. (Jesus Christ)



What sort of prayer will succeed? First, you should ask your heart what it wants. It does not consist only of what you speak through your mouth or what you think in your brain. Sometimes you want something and think that it will be good for you, but your heart wants something else. There is no unity. There should be unison between the heart, the tongue and the brain. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

We often want one thing and pray for another, not telling the truth even to the gods. (Seneca)

In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart. (John Bunyan)

When I pray, my heart is in my prayer. (Henry W. Longfellow)

Prayer is nothing but a rising desire of the heart unto God by withdrawing of the heart from all earthly things. (Walter Hilton)

The most important part of prayer is what we feel, not what we say. (Peace Pilgrim)

There are two main pitfalls on the road to mastery of the art of prayer. If a person gets what he asks for, his humility is in danger. If he fails to get what he asks for, he is apt to lose confidence. Indeed, no matter whether prayer seems to be succeeding or failing, humility and confidence are two virtues which are absolutely essential. (a Trappist Monk)

Disciple: Does God listen to our prayer for devotion? Ramakrishna: Surely. I can assure you of that a hundred times. But the prayer must be genuine and earnest. Do worldly-minded people weep for God as they do for wife and children? At Kamarpukur the wife of a certain man fell ill. The man thought she would not recover; he began to tremble and was about to faint. Who feels that way for God? You will feel restless for God when your heart becomes pure and your mind free from attachment to the things of the world. Then alone will your prayer reach God. A telegraph wire cannot carry messages if it has a break or some other defect. (Sri Ramakrishna)



God answers all prayers, but restless prayers He answers only a little bit. If you try to give someone something that doesn't belong to you, your gift won't mean much to him, will it? However touching the gesture, it will be lacking in substance! So is it when your mind is not your own. You may want to give it to God, but you can't. Your prayers, then, are hardly more than a gesture. Get control over your mind. When you can pray with concentration, the Lord will know that you mean what you are saying. He will answer you, then, in wonderful ways. (Yogananda)

Never pray with the attitude of a beggar. You are God's child. As His child, you have a right to the treasure from His storehouse of infinity. Pray with utter confidence that He is listening. For indeed, so He will, if you pray to Him with love. Pray from your heart, with deep intensity. Demand of Him lovingly; never beg. By demand I don't mean you should try to force your will on Him, as though anticipating His reluctance to accede to your wishes. I mean, pray with the firm conviction that He wants to give you everything you need, and that He will give it. Jesus put it this way: "pray believing." (And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive). Utter faith, and love: these are the most important elements in prayer. (Yogananda)

So if we have got full conviction, full faith in the Master and in His competency, and pray to Him from our heart, our prayer must be heard. Masters who came in the past said that if you would offer such a prayer, God would catch you by the hand and say, "All right child, tell me what you want." Do you follow me, what I say? God will listen to such a prayer because He sees that your heart, mouth and brain are in accord, and that you have full conviction in His competency to grant it. (Sant Kirpal Singh)

Unanswered Prayers

The great tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer. (F. B. Meyer)

Never think that God's delays are God's denials. True prayer always receives what it asks, or something better. (Tryon Edwards)

In the past you may have been disappointed that your prayers were not answered. But do not lose faith. God is not a mute unfeeling Being. He is love itself. If you know how to meditate to make contact with Him, He will respond to your loving demands. (Yogananda)

When God does not respond to your prayers, it is because you are not in earnest. If you offer Him dry imitation prayers, you cannot expect to claim the Heavenly Father's attention. The only way to reach God through prayer is by persistence, regularity, and depth of earnestness. (Yogananda)

Though God hears all our prayers He doesn't always respond. Our situation is like that of a child who calls for his mother, but the mother doesn't think it necessary to come. She sends him a plaything to keep him quiet. But when the child refuses to be comforted by anything except the mother's presence, she comes. If you want to know God, you must be like the naughty baby who cries till the mother comes. (Yogananda)



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