

Prayer

What is prayer? It is simply talking to God. C.A.R.M. (Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry) defines prayer on their web site as “a privilege and an obligation of the Christian where we communicate with God. It is how we convey our confession (1 John 1:9), requests (1 Tim. 2:1-3), intercessions (James 5:15), thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6), etc., to our holy God.”

The Bible has a lot to say about prayer both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. One of the earliest references to prayer in the Old Testament is found in the Book of Genesis. In Genesis 4:26 we read, “And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD.” My favorite book in the Old Testament that talks about prayer is the Book of Psalms. The Psalms is the “hymnbook” and the “prayer book” of God’s people. The Psalms was mostly written by David, “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14). The Psalms contain many prayers of David when he is in all kinds of circumstances like depression, discouragement, joy, and hope. In Psalm 55:16-17 David says, “As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.” Daniel was a man of prayer. It says in Daniel 6:10, “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”

Our Lord Jesus, taught us how to pray in the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. The first principle we learn is to address God as “Our Father.” This is a privilege of which only Christians can enjoy. When a person becomes a Christian, he becomes a child of God. Galatians 4:6 says, “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts,

crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” The Lord’s Prayer contains the basic elements of what our prayers ought to be. It ought to consist of adoration (“Hallowed be Your name” – Matt. 6:9); confession (“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” – Matt. 6:12); and supplication (“Give us this day our daily bread” – Matt. 6:11). The Epistles have a lot to say about prayer. Paul says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7). Peter says in 1 Peter 4:7, “But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.” James says, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).