

QUESTION: "HOW TO PRAY? WHAT IS THE PROPER WAY TO PRAY?"

Answer: Is it best to pray standing up, sitting down, kneeling, or bowing down? Should our hands be open, closed, or lifted up to God? Do our eyes need to be closed when we pray? Is it better to pray in a church building or out in nature? Should we pray in the morning when we get up or at night before we go to bed? Are there certain words we need to say in our prayers? How do we begin our prayers? What is the proper way to close a prayer? These questions, and others, are common questions asked about prayer. What is the proper way to pray? Do any of the above things even matter?

Far too often, prayer is viewed as a "magic formula." Some believe that if we do not say exactly the right things, or pray in the right position, God will not hear and answer our prayer. This is completely unbiblical. God does not answer our prayers based on when we pray, where we are, what position our body is in, or in what order we word our prayers. We are told in 1 John 5:14-15 to have confidence when we come to God in prayer, knowing He hears us and will grant whatever we ask as long as it is in His will. Similarly, John 14:13-14 declares, "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." According to these and many other Scriptures, God answers prayer requests based on whether they are asked according to His will and in the name of Jesus (to bring glory to Jesus).

So, what is the proper way to pray? Philippians 4:6-7 tells us to pray without being anxious, to pray about everything, and to pray with thankful hearts. God will answer all such prayers with the gift of His peace in our hearts. The proper way to pray is to pour out our hearts to God, being honest and open with God, as He already knows us better than we know ourselves. We are to present our requests to God, keeping in mind that God knows what is best and will not grant a request that is not His will for us. We are to express our love, gratitude, and worship to God in prayer without worrying about having just the right words to say. God is more interested in the content of our hearts than the eloquence of our words.

The closest the Bible comes to giving a "pattern" for prayer is the [Lord's Prayer](#) in Matthew 6:9-13. Please understand that the Lord's Prayer is not a prayer we are to memorize and recite to God. It is an example of the things that should go into a prayer—worship, trust in God, requests, confession, and submission. We are to pray for the things the Lord's Prayer talks about, using our own words and "customizing" it to our own journey with God. The proper way to pray is to express our hearts to God. Sitting, standing, or kneeling; hands open or closed; eyes opened or closed; in a church, at home, or outside; in the morning or at night—these are all side issues, subject to personal preference, conviction, and appropriateness. God's desire is for prayer to be a real and personal connection between Himself and us.