



Family MATTERS

A Christ-center resource for families and teachers

Prayer

The parents were very excited! Their young son had spoken his first word. After having his older sister read many books to him, after much conversation directed his way by his parents, and other adults, he finally spoke!

His first word was not what his parents expected, but it was somewhat prophetic. In a firm, strong voice, he said, "ball." He was indicating his desire to have a nearby soft foam soccer ball to play with. His first word was not "Mommy" or "Daddy," as perhaps his parents had hoped. It was "ball."

He is now a strapping young man playing college baseball, and throughout his life that first word would describe his consuming interest in team sports. He is OK with playing an occasional round of golf, but it has been basketball and baseball that filled much of those next 18 years after his first spoken word.

As the years go by, it is easy for parents to ignore the words of their children, to even dismiss them. It's easy to get tired of hearing the same thing over and over again from our kids—but not God. He is an interested and eager listener. He is all ears! He is excited to hear what we have to say from our lips as they voice the feelings of our heart. He never grows weary of our words. In fact, He desires for us to speak to Him often, for we are told in Scripture to "pray without ceasing."

Prayer is communication with our Father in heaven, who is always available. No busy circuits, no disconnected calls with Him. He is always present to hear our concerns, our cries, and our cares. He supports us as we unburden ourselves on Him. Prayer is a time for us to find comfort in our heavenly Father's arms, to find peace of mind, to rest, and to be encouraged as we cast our cares on Him for we know that He cares for us.

As much as prayer is a blessing, it also can be frustrating. Sometimes it is hard to be patient and await God's response. Our time frame is not always His time frame. God has no constraints of time, but He does have a great sense of timing when it comes to answering prayer. It is easy to think that God might not care when we don't see our requests answered quickly. Be assured however, that God does hear us, He does care, and He will answer us in such a way that is in accord with those words we utter in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

When we pray, we can't expect that all our desires will always be met by God as we would want. Prayer is not a time to be greedy. When we pray, we can expect that God will hear us, and that He will shape and mold us for the future in ways we cannot yet imagine. God sees what is ahead and is preparing us for that future. Prayer is a means by which we are supported through His grace for the present and strengthened for what is yet to come.

Does prayer really change things? Yes, it does! Sometimes it changes us.



Family Links

Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Family Bible Time

As a family, sit down with a Bible (NIV); look for and read each of the verses referenced below. Then, fill in the blanks.

Psalm 6:9 tells us that the Lord _____ our prayer.

Matthew 5:44 directs us to love our enemies and to pray for those who _____ you.

Philippians 4:6 says that we should present our requests to _____.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says to pray _____.

Family Prayer Time

Sit down as a family and make some *Prayer Posters* that use the letters of the word **PRAY** to help you outline a way to use prayer as a family.

P **eople:**
Make a poster and list all the people in your life: friends, family members, neighbors, leaders in our country, or those who need your prayers.

R **equests:**
Make a poster that will have your family list the wants and needs that you want to bring before God.

A **ctions:**
Make a poster on which you will list the things you feel you want to do in response to God's love in your life. How is God calling you to serve others?

Y **es:**
On this poster, list all the ways God has answered prayer in your life as a family and in the lives of your friends and other believers.



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Writer: Dr. Steve Christopher. **Editors:** Judith Christian/Karen Eggemeyer. **Designer:** Karen Eggemeyer

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