



The Doctrine of Prayer

What Is the Godhead's Involvement in Prayer?

I. GOD THE FATHER

A. We Pray to God the Father:

1. God the Father is who receives our prayers and, thus, to whom we are to address our prayers.
 - a. All throughout the Old Testament people prayed unto God. This was not something that somehow changed in the New Testament with Jesus.
 - b. The Lord Jesus set the precedent in the New Testament that men are to pray to God the Father.
 - (1) He first gave instruction to “**pray to thy Father** which is in secret” (Matthew 6:6).
 - (2) Then he gave an example prayer for them to learn from, and this prayer was addressed to “**Our Father**” (Matthew 6:9, Luke 11:2).
 - (3) Jesus instructed his disciples to make requests of their needs directly to God the Father and not to himself, “whatsoever ye shall **ask of the Father**” (John 15:16). It is not that Jesus was not capable of hearing and knowing their prayers, but that is not the Son's role.
 - c. Jesus, who himself is God, also prayed to God the Father when he had personal times of prayer. When Jesus had a need or request, he did not confer within himself since he was God, but rather he brought that request to God the Father. Jesus had/has all the same power as the Father, but they have separate roles.
 - (1) There are several instances recorded in the scripture where Jesus separated himself for a time of prayer. One such instance is recorded “he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in **prayer to God**” (Luke 6:12).
 - (2) In John 14:16, Jesus says he “will **pray the Father**, and he shall give you another Comforter”.
 - d. The truth that we are to pray to God the Father is confirmed time and time again throughout the New Testament.
 - (1) “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and **pray to God**,” (Acts 8:22).
 - (2) “Brethren, my heart's desire and **prayer to God** for Israel is,” (Romans 10:1).



- (3) “that ye strive together with me in your **prayers to God** for me;” (Romans 15:30).
- (4) “is it comely that a woman **pray unto God** uncovered?” (1 Corinthians 11:13).
- (5) “Now I **pray to God**” (2 Corinthians 13:7).
- (6) “I **pray God** that it may not be laid to their charge” (2 Timothy 4:16).
- (7) “and I **pray God** your whole spirit and soul and body” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

2. God the Father is who answers our prayers which is another reason we address our prayers to him.
 - a. According to the scriptures, it is God the Father who answers our prayers and gives us what we ask for.
 - b. Thus, we should be communicating with and make request of this person of the Godhead.
 - c. The scripture tells us, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him **ask of God, that giveth** to all men liberally” (James 1:5). This passage tells us that it is the same individual of the Godhead that receives and answers our prayer. It is God that we are to ask, and it is God that provides.
 - d. Further support of this can be found in James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down **from the Father of lights**,”. So, it is God the Father who receives our prayers, and it is God the Father who answers our prayers and gives us what we need.

B. God the Father Hears Our Prayers:

1. Another aspect of the Father’s involvement in prayer is that he hears the righteous when we pray to him. This may seem obvious, but God has no obligation to be attentive to our prayers. However, the beauty of the fact that God hears our prayers is more abundant when we consider the truth of Psalm 8:3-4 “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”
2. God’s faithfulness caused people to trust in the fact that he listens to prayer.
 - a. Eliphaz the Temanite knew this truth when he told Job, “Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, **and he shall hear thee**” (Job 22:27).
 - b. The psalmist also understood that the Lord heard the righteous, “But verily **God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer**” (Psalm 66:19).



- c. Solomon's confidence in God hearing our prayers is attested to when he said, "**he heareth the prayer** of the righteous" (Proverbs 15:29).
 - (1) Note: The scripture is clear that God listens to the prayer of the righteous and not to all men in general. God does not hear the wicked unless the wicked is seeking God (Acts 10:2, 31, Romans 10:13). Proverbs 15:29 says, "**The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.**" Also, Proverbs 28:9 says, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."
- 3. The foundation of God hearing our prayers is his mercy and that he is faithful and righteous. God's mercy, faithfulness and righteousness is the foundation of our trust for salvation and so too is this the basis by which we can be assured that God hears our prayers.
 - a. When David was overwhelmed and felt as though the floods were overflowing him, he cried out to God. His prayer invoked God's mercy to hear his prayer, "But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, **in the multitude of thy mercy hear me**, in the truth of thy salvation." (Psalm 69:13)
 - b. David called upon the Lord's faithfulness and righteousness as he pleaded with God to hear his prayer, "Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: **in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.**" (Psalm 143:1)
 - c. The Lord is faithful and righteous and this knowledge assured the psalmist that God would listen unto his prayers and answer him.
 - d. It is God's faithfulness that is on the line and God has never failed nor been unfaithful so we can have full assurance that he hears us when we pray!

C. God the Father is Nigh Them That Call Upon Him:

- 1. A comforting and encouraging truth from the scripture is that God the Father is nigh unto them that call upon him. Those that are in Christ Jesus have the assurance that the Almighty God is near them and attentive when they pray unto him.
 - a. David, through the Holy Ghost, boldly proclaimed this truth, "**The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him**, to all that call upon him in truth." (Psalm 145:18).
 - b. God himself assured the Israelites that if they would cast off their wickedness and approach him with a pure heart that "Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, **Here I am.**" (Isaiah 58:9). In other words, God was at the ready, close-by, to hear their call.



- c. When the prophet Jeremiah was in despair and desolation, he called upon the LORD and was comforted and helped because the LORD drew near unto him. Lamentations 3:57 says “**Thou drewest near** in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.”
2. It is an incredible and humbling truth to consider, that the God of heaven draws nigh to those that call upon him out of a pure heart. Truly, there is no one that can aid us more, bring us more comfort, and help us in our need and we have direct access to the Almighty!
3. The New Testament further assures us that we can never be separated from God the Father. That we can never be parted from his great love (Romans 8:38-39). Though our sin distances us from God, he is ready to forgive and draw nigh us again when we call out to him for forgiveness.

II. GOD THE SON

A. We Pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus:

1. At salvation we were placed in Christ: “For as many of you as have been baptized **into Christ** have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27) and “**In whom** we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” (Ephesians 1:7).
2. Furthermore, by being in Christ we receive spiritual blessings. Ephesians 1:3 says “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us **with all spiritual blessings** in heavenly places in Christ:”.
3. One of these spiritual blessings is that we have a mediator between us and God the Father. “For there is one God, and one **mediator** between God and men, the man **Christ Jesus;**” (1 Timothy 2:5).
4. Jesus is also identified as our “faithful high priest in things pertaining to God” (Hebrews 2:17). Jesus Christ has become our advocate (1 John 2:1) to God.
5. Therefore, we bring our prayers to God in the name of Jesus Christ, our mediator, high priest, and advocate.
 - a. The apostle Paul tells believers to be “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father **in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;**” (Ephesians 5:20).
 - b. We are also commanded “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all **in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God and the Father **by him.**” (Colossians 3:17).
 - c. Even the Lord Jesus told his disciples to ask God for what they needed by asking in the name of Jesus. “At that day ye shall ask **in my name:**” (John 16:26).



6. Oftentimes, a name in scripture represents the very essence of a person. A name represents a person's character, personality, authority, and reputation.
 - a. The Bible says in Philippians 2:9 that God has given Jesus "a name which is above every name". So, when we pray in Jesus' name, we are praying in the name greater than all other names.
 - b. We present our prayers to God based on the authority of Jesus and we act in his name.
 - (1) We are not coming on our own authority but because Jesus authorized us to present our prayers to God (consider Esther 8:8). So as Esther and Mordecai were authorized to write in the king's name, we are able to come before God in Jesus's name.
 - (2) Consider when David fought Goliath. David came unto Goliath "in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Samuel 17:45). In other words, David came and acted in the authority of the name of God.
 - c. Because we pray in Jesus' name and in his authority then we can approach God with all boldness and reverence (Hebrews 4:16).
 - d. God accepts us in the beloved, which is Christ, which means that God accepts us because we are in his Son (Ephesians 1:5-6).
 - e. So, praying in Jesus' name is not just adding a little phrase at the end of our prayers. It means that we come to the Father with the knowledge that our only right in approaching him is that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and that he himself has sent us to the Father. It means that we know that we are totally unworthy of receiving anything from God and that the only reason God should grant our requests is that we come in Jesus' name. It is not a magic formula, but a heart attitude.

B. God the Son Makes Intercession for Us:

1. Another aspect of God the Son's involvement in prayer is that Jesus goes to the Father for us. He acts a go-between and takes our prayers to God for us. Romans 8:34 tells us "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, **who also maketh intercession for us.**"
2. Hebrews 7:25 makes an incredible statement referring to Jesus "seeing he ever liveth to make intercession **for them.**" Them in the context are the saved. The Son of God who bled, died, and rose again, now lives to make intercession for us!
3. Scripture also tells that Jesus appears in the presence of God for us. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear **in the presence of God for us:**" (Hebrews 9:24).



4. We are nothing before a holy and righteous God and our prayers to him are worthless, if based on our own selves. Instead, Jesus, the Son of God, abides in the presence of God for us and intercedes to God on our behalf. Because of this, there is great power in our prayers!

III. GOD THE HOLY GHOST

A. We Pray in the Holy Ghost:

1. The scripture admonishes believers that we are to be praying always and specifically in the Spirit. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication **in the Spirit**,” (Ephesians 6:18).
2. A second scripture passage that admonishes us to ensure we pray correctly in the Holy Ghost is Jude 20 “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Ghost**,”.
3. So, an involvement of God the Holy Ghost in our prayers is that our prayers are to be in him. This indicates that our prayers can be without the Holy Ghost. Consider James 4:3.
 - a. Ephesians 5:18 says, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;” teaching we can be filled with the Spirit or not.
 - b. This is not teaching that the Holy Ghost leaves us and then indwells us over and over but rather it teaches a yielding or submission to the Holy Ghost.
 - c. Similarly, our prayers can either be in the Spirit or not.

B. The Holy Ghost Makes Intercession to God for Us:

1. Not only does Jesus Christ intercede with God the Father for us but the scripture assures that the Holy Ghost also intercedes with God the Father for us. We have two persons of the Godhead that helps us in our prayers to God!
2. The truth is that we do not know how to pray as we should or what to pray for but this is where the Holy Ghost steps in and “corrects” our prayer and then presents it to God for us: “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but **the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us** with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26).
3. Romans 8:27 tells us that the Holy Ghost “maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”
4. How comforting and encouraging it is to know that Jesus and the Holy Ghost help our prayers and bring them to God for us. And it is God’s will that we would have such help in our prayers. How much more weight do our prayers have because they are in Jesus’ name and the Holy Ghost is helping us pray!