

## How long do we need to pray for God to answer?

We all like for God to immediately hear and answer our prayers. We live in an age of everything instant. Instant coffee, instant food and fast food. A complete meal can be prepared in a few minutes in a microwave. We also would like instant answers to our prayers. Who likes to wait for 2 years to have his prayers answered?

To find the answer to our question we need to open our Bibles and go to God's Word. In the book of Exodus we have examples of Moses praying before Pharaoh and God acted immediately. There are other examples of God answering Moses' prayer the next day. We need to remember that God is not bound by our time table, schedule and program. We may make plans but the determining factor still rests with God. Also we need to remember that His ways are not our ways. Yet God is a loving God and he loves you and does want to hear and answer your prayers.

### **A Basic Requirement for our prayers being answered**

The Lord Jesus tells us in John 15:7, "If you **remain** in me and my words **remain** in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." Here are two basic requirements to have our prayers answered. We must remain in Jesus Christ and His Word must remain in us! This involves a unity and oneness of you and me with Jesus Christ in daily behavior and activity.

### **Further conditions for our prayers to be answered.**

In 2 Chronicles 7:14 we read about some further conditions for God to answer our prayers, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and **pray** and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

In this passage there is no time limit but there are principles as to when God hears our prayers. First we must humble ourselves before God. Secondly we must seek His face and thirdly we must turn from our wicked ways. Then God will hear from heaven forgive our sins and bring healing to a nation.

In Job 22:27 God's Word says, "You will **pray** to him, and he will hear you, and you will fulfill your vows." Here we learn of another principle or condition for God to hear our prayers. We must fulfill our vows to God. Some months ago a soccer player brought an envelop to church with 15 million rupiahs and on the envelop was written "Vow Money." Apparently he had made a vow to God and was now fulfilling his vow. This has direct relationship with God hearing his prayers.

### **Prayers for the city.**

In Psalm 122:6 we are told to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. There is no time limit mentioned and as long as there is no peace in Jerusalem we keep praying for peace there.

In Jeremiah 29:7 the Lord said, "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. **Pray** to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

We pray for peace and prosperity for our countries and cities. Again there is no time limit to these prayers.

### **A fatal mistake asking for prayers?**

In Jeremiah 42:20 we have this warning, "Be sure of this: I warn you today that you made a fatal mistake when you sent me to the LORD your God and said, 'Pray to the LORD our God for us; tell us everything he says and we will do it.'<sup>21</sup> I have told you today, but you still have not obeyed the LORD your God in all he sent me to tell you."<sup>22</sup> So now, be sure of this: You will die by the sword, famine and plague in the place where you want to go to settle."

What was the fatal mistake? People promised that they would obey everything the Lord told them to do. So Jeremiah prayed and God spoke yet the people did not obey and God brought disaster on them instead of blessing. Disobeying the Lord will bring disaster and big troubles to you and me.

### **Life-time prayers.**

In Matthew 5:44 the Lord Jesus said, "But I tell you: Love your enemies and **pray** for those who persecute you,<sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."

So as long as there is persecution we keep praying for those who persecute us. Again there is no time limit and no promise for a quick answer. This may be a life-time prayer.

Matthew 26:41, "Watch and **pray** so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Here we have another example of a life long prayer.

Luke 6:28, "bless those who curse you, **pray** for those who mistreat you." So as long as you are mistreated you keep praying for them."

### **A promise for quick answers.**

In Luke 18:7-8 the Lord Jesus said, "And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and **quickly**. But here the principle is to cry to the Lord day and night. This is certainly not a 5 minute prayer.

### **Constant prayers for other believers and prayers for an open door.**

In Romans 1:10, Paul says, "God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I **pray** that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. So we must constantly pray for each other and also we may pray that God will open a door. This could be an open door for sharing the Gospel or an open door for employment. It is God who opens and closes doors and our prayers can move the hands of God to act in our favor.

### **The Holy Spirit helps in our prayer life and even prays for us.**

How do we pray? What do we say in our prayers? The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit will assist us in our prayer life. In Romans 8:26 we read, “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to **pray** for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.<sup>27</sup> And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.”

We also need to remember that we must pray for God's will to be done and not our own will or our own desires.

### **We can pray for all situations and with all kinds of prayers.**

Ephesians 6:18, “And **pray** in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

Never stop praying. There is no one format or pattern for prayer. God's Word refers to “all kind of prayers”. Long prayers and short prayers. Prayers on our knees and prayers while running. Prayers in our homes and prayers at the job. A sentence prayer or a one word prayer. An all night prayer, a quiet prayer, a public prayer or a prayer in our heart.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, “**pray** continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” We must thank God in all circumstances. Whatever happens to you, it is God's will to say “Thank you Lord”. We may not understand the reason why but we still say “Thank You Lord”.

### **More conditions for having our prayers answered.**

James 5:13-16, “Is any one of you in trouble? He should **pray**. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.<sup>14</sup> Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to **pray** over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.<sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.<sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and **pray** for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

#### **What we have to do?**

Pray when you are in trouble.

Pray when you feel happy

Sing songs of praise.

Involve the elders of the church.

Anoint with oil.

Confess your sins to one another.

#### **What God will do?**

God will heal the sick person.

Raise him up to health and strength.

Forgive his sin.

These are but a few lessons from the Word of God about prayer. There is much more in the Bible regarding prayer. There is power in prayer and prayer changes things. When does God hear your prayers? God is all powerful. He is in charge. He makes the final decisions. We can ask but He decides when to answer and how to answer your prayers. Praise the mighty Name of the Lord our God.