

How to pray & How to communicate

A lot of similarities between these two things...

How to pray

Matthew 6

Looking at v5-13...

- What is the difference between the prayer of the hypocrites/Gentiles/pagans and the sort of prayer that the Father loves to hear?
 - Which of these is more like the prayer that we have witnessed and practiced? What things are we challenged by here?
1. Prayer is speaking – not silence, not listening
 2. Prayer is speaking to our Father
 - a. Speaking to a *person*
 - b. The Most High (v9), the Most Loving (v26, 32)
 - c. Caught up in the Trinity – in the Son, praying to the Father, by the Spirit of Sonship
 3. Prayer is asking – not so much praising or thanking, not hoping
 4. Prayer is asking for specific things – not “We pray for Kenya. We pray for the President.”
 - a. Name seen as holy¹ – Numbers 20:2-13
 - b. Kingdom Come – future focus
 - c. Will be done – not mine – “pray against ourselves” (Luther)²
 - d. Daily bread – need as creatures and pilgrims
 - e. Forgiveness – need as continually sinful pilgrims
 - f. Lead not into temptation but deliver from evil – need as weak pilgrims
- How is this different from how we think about prayer? / how we pray? / what we pray for?

Resources:

- [Enjoy your Prayer Life \(Michael Reeves\)](#)
- [Sermons on Luke 11:1-13 \(Ken Mbugua\)](#)
- [A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers \(D. A. Carson\)](#)
- [Prayer and the Voice of God \(Philip Jensen & Tony Payne\) – first chapter PDF](#)
- [Praying: Finding our way from duty to delight \(J. I. Packer & Carolyn Nystrom\)](#)
- [Our Father: Enjoying God in Prayer \(Richard Coekin\)](#)

¹ I.e. That God’s name/character/being (Exodus 34:6-7) would be seen as holy – blazing devotion and dazzling grace. That this holy name would be known and feared and believed in and called on and loved and proclaimed (Genesis 4:26; 1 Kings 8; Psalm 5:11; Nehemiah 1:11).

² <https://watumishivaneno.wordpress.com/2014/10/07/suckling-at-the-lords-prayer/>.

How to communicate

- Not “empty phrases” – clarity, not hiding in ambiguity, thinking first
 - Not “many words” – brevity, to the point, don’t waste people’s time or love your own voice
 - Speaking to a *person*
1. Love – Love one another; Love neighbour; Love enemies
 - a. In verbal communication – not rude or irritable (1 Cor. 13:4)
 - b. In email and social media – pause before sending/posting - Is it true, is it kind, is it necessary?³
 - c. Cultivate a relationship – especially important in partnership development
 - d. Ask how people are doing, genuinely, remember something about their life
 - e. Every communication – how can I love, build them up, give them grace? (Eph. 4:29)
 2. Structure – e.g. Matt. 6 – v1 (subject), v2-4 (giving), v5-15 (prayer), v16-18 (fasting)
 - a. Introduce yourself clearly at the beginning (phone) or end (email or sms)
 - b. Number your points if it is a complex / multi-part communication
 - c. Sign out well with clarity on conclusion and next step
- Oral
 - Advantages:
 - Fellowship - 3 John 13-14
 - Easier to communicate tone
 - Instant feedback, clarification, development, negotiation – but no excuse for lack of clarity or many words or carelessness
 - Requires active listening – don’t interrupt, seek to understand, repeat back
 - Be aware of body language and facial expression – your own and other person’s
 - Written
 - Advantages:⁴
 - Gives stability, consistency and longevity to a communication (e.g. law, policy, fixed truth of God’s Word⁵)
 - Takes responsibility, accepts accountability – owning your words
 - Indicates the seriousness and trustworthiness of a warning or a promise (e.g. last will and testament) or a sentiment
 - Gives time to think, structure, craft and REVISE
 - Develops clear, focussed thinking & communication
 - Can be re-read multiple times later (2 Tim. 2:7)
 - Gives opportunity to develop complex arguments and accurately cite sources
 - Requires particular care with communication of tone – how could this be read?

³ <http://deformed.co.za/gossip-and-the-triple-filter-test/>.

⁴ See <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140820203810-21570578-the-dullest-most-vital-skill-you-need-to-become-a-successful-manager>.

⁵ Compared to most ancient narratives, God’s Word was written down very early, often by the eye witnesses themselves (Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:24; John 5:46) and it is very important that every word is persevered precisely, unaltered (Matt. 5:18; Rev. 22:18-19).

- To – addressing directly, wanting feedback from, fully part of conversation
- Carbon Copy (cc) – not requiring response but included for accountability, main addressee knows these others are being included
- Blind Carbon Copy (bcc) – for lists – do not want to give everyone one another's addresses or open people to address harvesting and scamming

Conclusion:

Remember you are speaking to a person, be clear and loving