

Continuous answers to prayer

God teaches us in Scripture that there are certain things that are of utmost importance for intercession. We could call them preconditions for prayer. Now, what are the preconditions and basic Biblical principle we have to adhere to in order to have continuous answers to prayer? What are the preconditions and principles for effective prayer?

The following guidelines will be helpful:

Break with sin completely. Confess all forms of known, unconfessed sin in your life and break with it. Be sure that your heart is pure before God by allowing the Holy Spirit to show you any unconfessed sin.

Be united with Christ and never leave this position. "If we have been united with Him in his death, we will certainly also be united with Him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin..." (Rm.6:5-6).

Abide in the risen Christ (Jn.15:7; Rm.6:11). "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Ga.2:20).

His words must be in you as food for the inner self. Feed on the Word of God. Read substantial portions of Scripture every day. Life in the Word and from the Word.

Requests to God must not merely come from your emotions, but rather from the will and according to the will of God. Ask the Lord what His will is for the matter you are praying for. Remember, prayers can have four sources of origin: a) self, b) the desires of other people, c) from Satan, or d) the Holy Spirit. Consider yourself dead to your own imagination and your own prayer burdens. Be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit lays on your heart to pray for. "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Php.2:13).

Faith in God and obedience to God are absolutely necessary. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb.11:6). "If you remain in Me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you" (Jn.15:7).

Self interest should not be present in your prayers. "You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" (Jas.4:2-3).

Pray in and through the Spirit, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit when you are doing the work of intercession. We do not know how to pray, but God gave us the Holy Spirit as our Helper in prayer. Admit to God that you do not know how to

pray and rely on the Holy Spirit. "And pray in the Holy Spirit" (Jud.20). "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions" (Eph.6:18). "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 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" (Rm.8:26-27).

Satan will try to prevent you from praying or hinder the answers to your prayers. When this happens, the principles of spiritual warfare should be applied, namely to resist the devil and to address the Evil One from your position of authority in Christ. Dispose of the enemy aggressively. Resist him in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and with the "Sword of the Spirit" which is the Word of God.

Use God's promises in Scripture when praying. There are different promises for different situations in Scripture. Stand on the promises of God, plead them, pray them. "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. An so through Him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God" (2 Cor.1:20).

Wait on the Lord for an answer. Do not be in a hurry. He who believes, will not be in a hurry. Wait in the full assurance that God will answer you.

Gather as much information as possible on a specific matter when you pray for it. Use the information when you pray and rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to reveal to you things unknown (Jer.33:3).

It is often helpful to pray in a group and share the burdens that the Lord lays on your hearts. In this way we can protect each other against error, but it also helps to know that we have heard the Lord correctly when we see that He gives confirmation through two or three others. "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Mt.18:19-20).

Learn from the prayer life of Jesus, Moses, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Elijah, Paul and other believers in the Bible. Study their lives and apply some of the principles to your own life.

When we pray we should go to the throne of God with boldness and faith, because faith and boldness please God. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb.11:6). "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb.4:16).

Some people find it very helpful to write their prayers down and when the answers come, to record that also. This will help you to remember: a) to thank Him for the answers, b) what you prayed for, and to persevere in intercession, and c) it will strengthen your faith when we see the written answers to your prayer.

Be willing to act if God gives you an order or expects obedience.

Pray for each prayer item in detail and don't go on to the next subject before you have prayed through a specific item.

Always have your Bible ready in case God wants to guide you or give confirmation.

When you sense that the Holy Spirit is not giving you any new prayer burdens and you sense no prompting by the Spirit to continue in prayer, close by praising Him and thanking Him for who He is.

The accomplished work at Calvary provides the assurance that God will answer our prayers. It is not the intensity with which we pray or our sincerity or how much we pray. It is not the right words or who we are. It is all about what Jesus did on the cross. It is about His death and the atonement, His victory over the Evil One and His victory over death. It is important that you should remember that nothing that you say or do will cause God to listen to your prayers. God listens to us if and because we come to Him in the Name of Jesus Christ, because only the Name of Jesus has merit before God the Father.

The life of the intercessor is a crucified life and a life of intense fellowship with Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Lord and Saviour.

The Lord sets the following preconditions for prayers to be answered:

- If you have faith and do not doubt... (Mt.21:21-22).
- "If you remain in Me and my words remain in you..." (Jn.15:7).
- If we ask anything according to His will... (1 Jn.5:14-15).
- If two of you on earth agree... (Mt.18:19-20).
- "And I will do whatever you ask in my name..." (Jn.14:13-14).
- Because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him... (1 Jn.3:22).