

QUIET TIME

Theme: Prayer is a dialogue

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understand.

Day 1^{BS} Psalm 34:1-22

God responds to our prayer

Day 2 Genesis 28:10-22

God spoke to Jacob about his covenant and Jacob responded to God

Day 3 Exodus 33:12-17

God spoke to Moses about leadership and Moses responded to God

Day 4 Psalm 40:1-3

David cried to God about his oppression and God responded to him

Day 5 Isaiah 38:1-8

Hezekiah spoke to God about his mortal sickness and God responded to him

Day 6 Luke 1:26-38

God spoke through his angel to Mary about giving birth to Jesus and Mary responded to God

Day 7 John 12:23-33

Jesus spoke to God the Father about his death and God responded to him

Day 8 Acts 12:1-19

The congregation prayed to God about their imprisoned leader and God acted immediately

Day 9 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Paul prayed to God about the thorn in his flesh and God responded to him

Day 10 Matthew 21:28-32

The father in this parable spoke to his sons about work, but only one of them responded to him

- Think about James 4:2-3.
Not praying means not receiving
- Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: Prayer is responding to God's Word

Read study 40 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: Prayer is a conversation (between God and man)

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **Psalm 34:1-22**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

PRAYER IS A CONVERSATION

Matthew 7:7

Ask and it will be given to you:
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7 (NIV)

3. Review and back-review

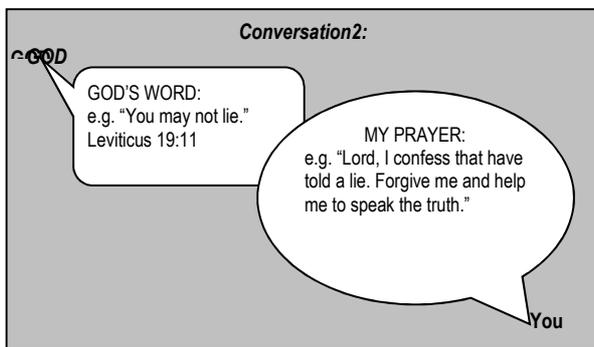
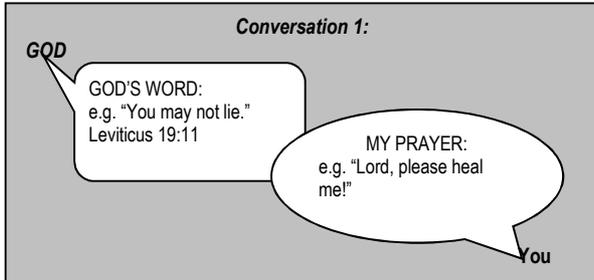
Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

40. Prayer is responding to God's Word

A. WHAT IS PRAYER?

1. Prayer is a conversation

What is the difference between the following two conversations?



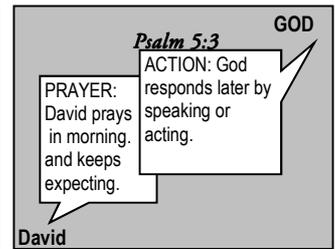
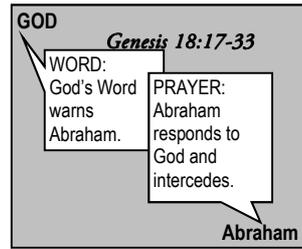
Conversation 1 is a one-direction communication! God says to you that you may not tell a lie, but you do not respond to what God says in your prayer to him!

Conversation 2 is a two-direction communication! You respond to what God says to you in the Bible!

Prayer is a two-way communication. *Read* Genesis 18:17-33 and count how many times God and Abraham take turns to say something to one another. In this one conversation, God says something 7 times and Abraham responds 6 times. This example in the Bible shows that prayer in the Bible is a conversation between God and man. God and man take turns to speak. God speaks to man and man listens. Then man speaks and God listens.

In Genesis 18:17,20-26 God is the first to speak and the Bible teaches that God will also have the last word (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2)!

But in Psalm 5:3 David is the first to speak to God. And David kept expecting how God would respond to him! David did not simply hope, but expected that God would respond to his prayer! He knew that God was not a dead idol or an invented god as in other religions, but the Living God!



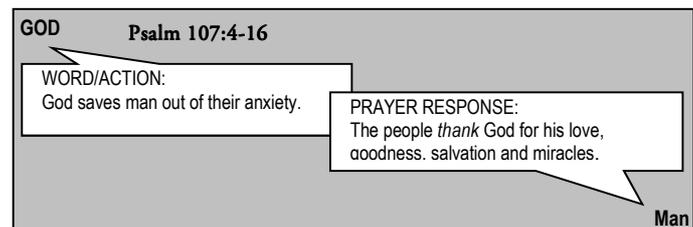
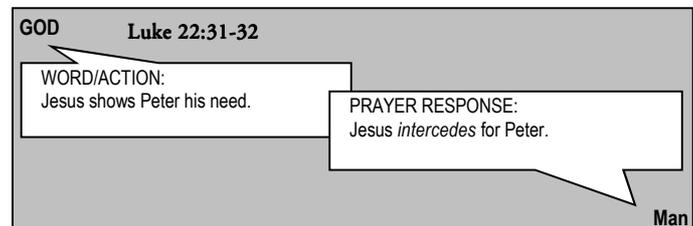
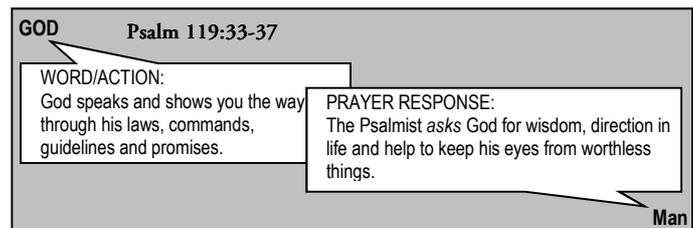
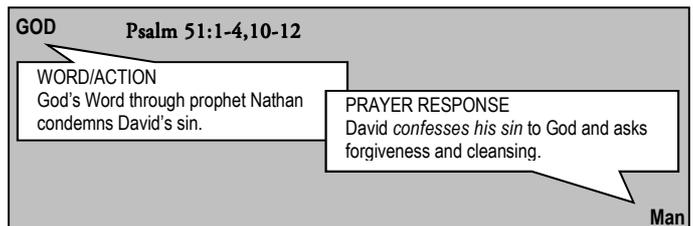
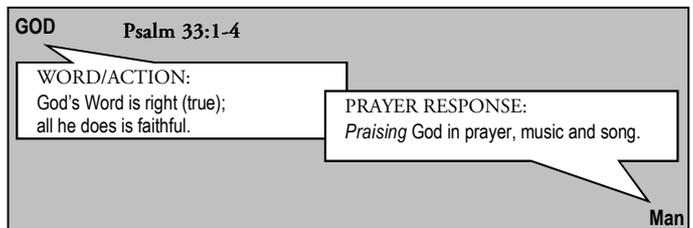
Summary. Prayer is a two-way communication between God and man, in which they speak in turns. Either God or man may take the initiative.

2. Prayer is an inner response expressed in words

Read Psalm 33:1-4; Psalm 51:1-4,10-12, Psalm 119:33-37, Luke 22:31-32 and Psalm 107:4-16

From these Bible passages we may learn how to respond to what God says or does.

What does God say or do in each of the following Bible passages? And how do people respond to that?



Summary. Prayer is responding to God whenever he speaks to you or does something in your life. Your response may consist of praising God, confessing your sin to God, asking God personal requests, interceding for others or thanking God.

3. Prayer may focus on God himself, on the needs of others or on personal needs

Read these Bible passages and discover the main focus in these prayers.

Psalm 77:6-15	This prayer focuses on GOD, his character words and deeds.
Colossians 1:9-12	This prayer focuses on the needs and interests of OTHERS.
Psalm 31:1-5	This prayer focuses on PERSONAL needs and interests.

B. WHEN TO RESPOND TO GOD IN PRAYER

1. Prayer as a response to God's Word during your quiet times

Cf. lesson 31: 'the chosen Bible verse' or 'the favourite truth' method of having a quiet time. After God has spoken to you by means of a chosen Bible verse or a chosen Bible truth or a favourite truth), you may respond by praying your chosen Bible verse or chosen Bible truth back to God for yourself, for a family member, for someone nearby (in your congregation, at your work, in your neighbourhood) and for someone far away (in another city or country).

2. Prayer as a response to God's Word after Bible study

After God has spoken to you by means of the 5 step Bible study method (or any other method), you may respond by praying something that you have learned during the Bible study back to God. Pray especially about how God would like you to apply what you have learned during the Bible study.

3. Prayer as a response to God's Word when reading the Bible

When God speaks to you as you are reading through the Bible, you may respond by praying the Bible passage verse by verse back to God. Use the words in the Bible passage as the content of your prayer. God promises to respond to your prayer. Often the same things may happen as happened in the Bible.

C. IMPORTANT ATTITUDES OF THE HEART WITH RESPECT TO PRAYER

Read the following Bible passages and discover which attitudes are important with respect to prayer.

1. Humility

Read Proverbs 3:5-6; 1 John 5:14

These Bible passages teach us that we need to subject our own thoughts (motives and attitudes) to God, to his perfect will and to his way of thinking and his way of doing things in life. God turns against the person who thinks that he knows better (1 Peter 5:5).

2. Forgiving spirit

Read Mark 11:25

This Bible passage teach us that we must forgive people who have done us wrong. If we do not forgive them, God will also not forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15; Psalm 66:18).

3. Sincerity

Read Matthew 6:5-8

This Bible passage teach us that we must resist the temptation to impress other people with our beautiful prayers. If you would like people to hear your prayers, then you have already received your reward from God.

But if you are humble, forgiving and sincere, God will gladly answer your prayers.

D. PROMISES WITH RESPECT TO PRAYER

Read the following Bible passages and discover what God promises with respect to prayer.

1. God knows our needs and struggles

Read Matthew 6:8-9. "Your Father knows what you need *before* you ask him." And yet God wants us to ask him, because prayer is the pleasant manner with which God as Father has fellowship with his children and the necessary means for the children to realise that they are completely dependent on their heavenly Father.

2. God shows compassion and helps

Read Hebrews 4:15-16. "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. 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." Jesus Christ is our High Priest because he can empathise with us in everything except sin. Christians may approach him with confidence. He will help!

3. God keeps his promises

Read Jeremiah 33:3. "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." You know God's promises (in the Bible). But what you do not know is the time and the way in which God will fulfil his wonderful promises (Read 1 Peter

1:9-12)! So, trust God that he will fulfil his promises and wait patiently until his appointed time to fulfil his promises.

4. God Spirit works when Christians pray

Read Luke 11:9-13. “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” When we fulfil the conditions, namely: ask, seek and knock, then God will fulfil his promises, because the Holy Spirit (who lives in us) is the Source of all God’s good gifts.

In Acts 4 the Holy Spirit gave the disciples boldness to speak the Word of God. In Acts 6 the Holy Spirit gave Stephen wisdom which no one could stand up against. In Acts 10 the Holy Spirit gave Peter a vision that God was going to continue and enlarge his Old Testament people by adding many Gentile believers! In Acts 12 the Holy Spirit set Peter free from prison in a miraculous way. In Acts 13 the Holy Spirit gave the church leaders insight in his plan of evangelising the world by setting their best workers free to carry out this plan.

E. HINDRANCES WITH RESPECT TO PRAYER

Read the following Bible passages and discover the reasons why God does not listen to certain prayers.

1. Not praying

Read James 4:2. “You do not have, because you do not ask!” Probably the most serious reason why God does not respond to prayer or act is that Christians do not pray.

2. Praying with wrong motives

Read James 4:3. “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

3. Being disobedient to the Bible

Read Proverbs 28:9. “If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law (the Bible), even his prayers are detestable.” Disobedience to the Bible results in unanswered prayers!

4. Sinning

Read Isaiah 59:1-2. “Your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear” (cf. Psalm 66:18). “The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him” (Proverbs 15:8). “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

5. Practising an outward religion

Practising an outward religion with formal prayers (one, three or five times a day) is absolutely useless (Isaiah 1:3-15; 29:13; Mark 7:7)!

6. Doubting

Read James 1:6-8. “He who doubts (whether God is faithful and will keep his Word), is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.”

7. Being unmerciful

Read Proverbs 21:13. “If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.”

8. Being unforgiving

Read Mark 11:25. “When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”