



LifeSpot ... In conversation with God

Including God

Prayer is the way in which we include God in our conversation. Imagine standing in a group with Jesus, talking with everyone except him! Yet how often that's life, and that's church. Busy with our own projects and our God projects, too busy for God himself. But there's good news. When Jesus' disciples failed in prayer, he understood—"The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Later, the disciples came into total prayer conversation with God—and when they did, a church was born. "A person who can pray is the mightiest instrument Christ has in this world. A praying church is stronger than all the gates of hell" (E M Bounds).

Like friendship and marriage

Prayer is the way in which we include God in our conversation. Like a close friendship or a good marriage, times of intimate sharing are interspersed with times of spontaneous back-and-forth. When conversation dies, friendships fade, marriages dissolve, spiritual life withers. Conversely, positive conversation builds great relationships. No wonder God advises, "Pray without ceasing." Andrew Murray expressed it well: "Prayer is not merely coming to God to ask something from Him. It is above all fellowship with God and being brought under the power of His holiness and love." Prayer as conversation and fellowship. Let's have that today.

Great conversation

Prayer is the way in which we include God in our conversation. Consider any great conversation. It's intimate, trusting, self-disclosing, affirming, "all over the world," bantering, laughing, loving, crying. With God, it's also worshipful. Good conversations unite hearts and minds in a symphony of friendship. The Bible teaches that when we pray, God enters our minds, and *our minds enter God's mind*. Spirit with spirit. Friend with friend. Read Romans 8:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 1:9-16. "How true," concluded C S Lewis, "that our prayers are really His prayers. He speaks to Himself through us." Let God speak to himself through you today.

Cry of the heart

Prayer is the way in which we include God in our conversation. True praying is not ritual; it is conversation. Look at the psalms, and at Jesus' prayer in John 17. See hearts poured out with natural expression. True prayer is the simple statement of our desires, needs, thankfulness, and wants. When we talk with an intimate friend, we don't try to make up words. Rather, we express things just as we see them. We know that our friend will listen respectfully and respond with kindness and sometimes with challenge—whatever's needed. That's how it is with God. He doesn't want our ceremonial compliments, but he does want our broken hearts poured out with their sin and weakness, finding peace in him.