

# Saying Prayers or Praying to God?

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Saying prayers and praying to God is it the same thing? Is this a matter of linguistic semantics or uniquely distinct separate although particularly important spiritual activities? What distinguishes one from the other? Are there “lines” that are easily crossed perhaps prayers and praying are synonymous? Does one’s intent distinguish whether one is praying or merely reciting a prayer? Does one bring us closer to our Heavenly Father while the other produces or promotes the illusion of closeness? How often have any of us given the subject any serious thought or is this part of our daily devotional time and something we do simply because? The Dutch philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard, put the purpose of prayer and prayers this way:

“The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays. Prayer becomes a way of life, not just for emergencies, but as a habit that shapes our hearts and souls.”

The 20<sup>th</sup> century evangelist, Billy Graham put the importance of prayers and praying into focus this way:

**“Prayer is more than a wish; it is the voice of faith directed to God.”**

“We are to pray in times of adversity, lest we become faithless and unbelieving. We are to pray in times of prosperity, lest we become boastful and proud. We are to pray in times of danger, lest we become fearful and doubting. We are to pray in times of security, lest we become self-sufficient.”

“In the morning, prayer is the key that opens to us the treasures of God’s mercies and blessings; in the evening, it is the key that shuts us up under His protection and safeguard.”

Here are some interesting statistics which emphasize the importance of prayer and praying from the Bible itself:

- The Bible contains 650 listed prayers.
- There are approximately 450 recorded answers to these prayers. (Prayers and praying do produce tangible results.)
- Christ Jesus is recorded praying 25 times during his earthly ministry.
- The Apostle Paul mentions prayer 41 times in his writings.
- The Bible lists 5 specific postures for prayer and prayers:
  - Sitting,
  - Standing,
  - Kneeling,
  - With one’s face to the ground,
  - With one’s hands lifted up.

What can one reasonably ascertain when considering the “Proper Posture” for prayer? Is there truly a single posture we must conform to when we are praying; does it depend upon the particular circumstance and location? Does one’s posture count more than one’s attitude? Personally, I am convinced that the attitude we hold when we come to prayer and praying is of far greater importance. Allow me to explain what I mean before you brand me a heretic; I believe that you will arrive at the same epiphany... one’s attitude towards prayer is by far of greater importance than one’s physical posture.

To begin, our attitude towards God the Father, Christ Jesus the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, yes, the Holy Trinity: truly sets the foundation on how we approach prayer and praying. This is a generalized summary of the prevailing thoughts in Modern Contemporary Society today. Should one view the Holy Trinity as modern conventual wisdom encourages, then; we, each and every man, woman and child will tend to approach God the Father as either a doting elder who overlooks everything and grants our request whenever we ask (the name it claim it approach). Or, as an aloof disinterested totalitarian who is rigid, unyielding and unsympathetic towards our wants and needs and therefore unworthy of your adoration and devotion, let alone our reverence. From this stance God is out of touch with the concerns of modern contemporary society and thus is obsolete. We will tend to approach Christ

Jesus as either the “metaphorical cool big brother” who is easy going, laid back, passive, accepting of everything we do because he loves us as we are without terms, conditions nor expectations from us. Or he is a myth and never existed; he is not the Son of God, rather a revered prophet from Almighty God but not the final prophet and therefore is not Divine; or he is a crutch for nonprogressive individuals to lean upon. As for the Holy Spirit, he is either seen as the butler or facilitator of God’s Will, the provider of divine blessings, the fulfiller of God’s wishes once one is “born again”. Or worse, not even thought about or considered at all. None of this is actually Biblical, at best it is a gross misunderstanding of just Who God the Almighty is and exactly where we, each and every individual on the face of the earth actually stand in relationship to God the Father, Christ Jesus the Son of God and the Holy Spirit. About now you probably are asking yourself if this is not the correct understanding upon which to set our foundation for prayer, how do I establish the proper foundation? This is a great question and one that should not be answered in haste. The answer has to be derived based upon what we are shown and taught throughout Holy Writ, both the Old and New Testament together. Let us take a few minutes to look at a few passages from Scripture in order to begin formulating our insight and understanding of why one’s attitude is of far greater importance than the physical posture taken when resighting prayer or praying to God. Time must be taken to consider closely and honestly, truly absorb, and sincerely ponder what is found throughout the Scriptures. It is only through this exercise of examination and contemplation that one is able to determine how best to lay their unique and personal foundation of faith, dedication, adoration and yes, their indomitable attitude for and about God Almighty, Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

There are 9 Main Types of Prayer in which we engage in:

- **Prayer of Faith** - James 5:15
- **Prayer of Agreement (AKA Corporate Prayer)** – Acts 2:42
- **Prayer of Request (AKA Petition or Supplication)** – Philippians 4:6
- **Prayer of Thanksgiving** – Psalm 95:2-3
- **Prayer of Worship** – Acts 13:2-3
- **Prayer of Consecration (AKA Dedication)** Matthew 23:39
- **Prayer of Intercession** – 1 Timothy 2:1
- **Prayer of Imprecation** – Psalms 69
- **Praying in the Spirit** – 1 Corinthians 14:14-15)

As we can clearly see there are differing circumstances which determine how and what we are pray. What is not specified in any of these kinds of prayer is a specific posture. Denominational Tradition and Dogma may “dictate” how one is to approach the respective prayer in order to exhibit the correct appearance of reverence. However, I have not found any reference to one’s posture. What I have found repeatedly is guidance about our attitude in prayer. Just a couple of passages from Scripture which express how one’s attitude directly effects how one’s prayer are received by God the Father, by Christ Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit:

Psalm 37:4

“Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

Proverbs 15:8-9

“The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.  
The LORD detests the way of the wicked, but he loves those who pursue righteousness.”

Isaiah 40:31, 65:24

“But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

“Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.”

Philippians 4:13

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

Notice that how we are to approach prayer and praying is stressed. It is the sincere attitude of reverence that is focused upon, the desire to draw closer to God the Father, Christ Jesus the Son of God – Our Savior and Salvation, and the Holy Spirit. What should be abundantly clear is that regardless of whether we are reciting prayers or are

praying to God it is our inner attitude, the sincere desire to bring our will in alignment with that of the Holy Trinity that produces results. As we draw closer to God the Father, to Christ Jesus and to the Holy Spirit we will know how to pray, we will know how to ask in prayer, we will know how to ask how to pray when we do not know what is needed and we are assured that our prayer(s) are heard and are answered.

Remember this, that sincere prayer of a righteous individual can and does accomplish much...