

GOD CARES HOW WE PRAY

David Halbrook

Possibly the most ancient and common way that man has worshipped God is by prayer. Prayer reminds us who has given what we have and who to ask for what we need (James 1:17; Matt. 7:11). Unthankful people often think they are taking care of themselves and need no one's help. This is the first of many lies they believe (Rom. 1:21-25). By teaching us to pray, God is looking out for our own good.

God permits His people to offer requests to Him (Philip. 4:6). God gave us no permission to pray to nature, ancestors, Mary, or dead saints—these are lawless acts (Matt. 7:23).

God does not accept all prayers. Only a faithful Christian can pray with confidence that his prayers are accepted (1 Pet. 3:12; Heb. 4:16). Doubt, hypocrisy, neglect in marriage, or any form of unrighteousness will make your prayers void (Jam. 1:6-7; Lk. 18:9ff; 1 Pet. 3:7, 12).

We also must be active in what we ask from God. If we ask for food but refuse to work, God will not accept our request. If we pray for salvation but do not leave sin, will not confess Jesus, or have not accepted the Lord's baptism, God will not accept our request. God cares how we pray.

-- *Editor's Note:* The subject of prayer finds its way into the news and general conversations from time to time. If this article helps you, maybe it will help someone else. Find and make use of our article in *Arkansas Weekly*.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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FAMILIES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH (2)

Chris Reeves (http://thegoodteacher.com/?page_id=13)

What Can Godly Families Do Together in the Local Church?

Godly families can worship God together (Heb. 13:15) and attend a church service together (Heb. 10:25). They can sing, pray and study the Bible together. They can prepare their Bible class lessons together (1 Tim. 4:13). Parents, make sure all of your children - who are old enough and able to - open their songbooks and sing out, open their Bibles and read along, take notes, and bow in prayer when it is time to do so. Like Abraham's family (Gen. 18:19), families today can make sure that each family member learns God's word. Like Cornelius' family (Ac. 10:24), families today can assemble together to hear God's word proclaimed.

Families can contribute together to do the work of the local church (Eph. 4:16). They can volunteer together for work in and around the church building (Tit. 2:14; 3:1,8,14). They can come together to encourage brethren (1 Thess. 5:12-14). They can respond together to those who visit our assemblies (1 Cor. 14:23). They can be benevolent together toward needy saints (Ac. 11:29). Parents, there is plenty to do in the Lord's kingdom. Do it together with the whole family! Pick one day a week and do one activity together in the Lord's work. Like Joshua's family (Josh. 24:15), families today can serve the Lord together.

Godly families can visit the needy together (Jas. 1:27). Parents, do you want your children to practice "pure and undefiled religion" also? If so, include them in your visitation. Take them with you. Teach them to help others, and speak to others. Don't leave them at home in front of the T.V., on the computer, or on the phone. It will do your children more good to get out and visit the needy. Families can offer hospitality together (Ac. 2:46; Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9). Hospitality teaches kindness (Lk. 10:33-37), and it teaches sharing (Heb. 13:16). Parents, include your children in your hospitality. Tell them to do some things around the house to get ready for company,

or go to the home of a shut-in together and serve them. They will grow up to be giving people, not selfish, self-centered people.

Families can do evangelism together (Ac. 8:4). They can all sit in together on a home Bible study or host a Bible study together. They can pass out flyers together around the church building before a gospel meeting. They can work together to invite their neighbors to hear a lesson.

Finally, godly families can work together to qualify men for godly leadership and service. The Lord's church greatly needs elders and deacons today (Ac. 14:23; Phil. 1:1). A part of the requirement for a godly elder and a deacon involves the family (1 Tim. 3:2,4-5,11-12; Tit. 1:6). Fathers, make becoming an elder or a deacon a goal in your life and work toward it. Bring your family together and talk with them about this important place in the local church, and then work together with your family to qualify yourself to fill this role. Read the verses above and see what you have to do to with your family so that your family requirement is met. Then you will be on our way to being qualified for this great work.

One educational slogan that I hear often today is "No Child Left Behind." We need to apply this slogan to the Lord's church. As a spouse and parent of four children, I want my wife and children to be a part of serving the Lord together with me. I don't want my spouse and children to be left behind. Do you? We can certainly have godly families in the local church who get involved together. But, you have to make it happen. If you really love your spouse (Eph. 5:25,28,33; Tit. 2:4), and you really love your children (Tit. 2:4), and you really love your Lord (Mt. 22:37), you will make it happen.

POSTSCRIPT: On the very day that the author composed this article, he witnessed what he had been writing about. That evening, during the Wednesday evening mid-week service of the local church, he noticed one of the members missing who was a father. His wife and children were present, but he was gone. He could have been there, but chose not to be. The sad thing is, the night before, the author saw this same family all together at the movies and spoke with them afterward. This father had taken his family together to the movies on Tuesday night, but wouldn't come together with them to worship the Lord on Wednesday night. Clearly, this father had his priorities in the wrong place. Brethren like this can and should do better before they lose their families.

WHY DID DAVID USE INSTRUMENTS?

Steven Deaton (www.thetfordcountry.com/files/Articles/Why_Did_David_Use_Instruments.htm)

In discussions with denominational folks about instrumental music, they will sometimes claim that David's use of them justifies their use today. Is this true?

First, let us establish that David is not our Savior. He is not the authority in Christianity, Jesus is (Col. 3:17; Matt. 28:18). David was a prophet; he was the sweet psalmist of Israel, guided by the Spirit of God. Still, the New Testament reveals that we are not to follow and heed the Law or prophets, but the Son of God (Matt. 17:1-5).

Second, David used the instruments because God commanded him to (2 Chron. 29:25). It is not as though David presumptuously changed the worship of God. Many today believe they can. Without a commandment from God, they alter what the New Testament says about worship. They add instrumental music, social activities, even outright entertainment. All such activities are without divine authority and render the worship vain (Matt. 15:7-9).

Third, there are many things David did that we cannot do. David offered and commended animal sacrifices (Psa. 51:19). He had many wives (2 Sam. 3:2-5; 5:13; 12:8). Who will argue that we should offer bulls and goats or that a man can practice polygamy because David did? Honesty demands that none of these things are permissible because of David's practices; not sacrifices, not polygamy, not instrumental music in worship.

The bottom line is, David used instruments because that is what God commanded him to do. In our worship we must sing, because this is what God commands us to do (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Let us be like David, people after God's own heart, by submitting to the Lord's will, not living by ours.

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. (Acts 16:25)

...speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, (Ephesians 5:19)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Colossians 3:16)

What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. (1 Corinthians 14:15)

Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. (James 5:13)