

What if His People Prayed

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(Video Clip by [Casting Crowns](#) “What if His People Prayed” played earlier in service)

Today’s service has been all about Prayer. It was designed to get you thinking about prayer and involve you in prayer. It is built around the A-C-T-S of prayer: **Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication** (or asking for things.), which is a good outline of things that our prayers should include.

- Adoration – telling God you know how great He is, praising Him for His greatness
- Confession – where you admit your sinfulness, telling God you know what you have done wrong, and ask to be forgiven for the sake of Jesus
- Thanksgiving – a time to reflect on all that you have received from God and express your gratitude to Him for the blessings you have received.
- Supplication – which means to ask for things. Most of us have little trouble coming up with that list.

When you think of prayer, what comes to mind? For many it is bedtime prayers, maybe something like this: [**“Untouchables” Clip with little girl saying bedtime prayer**]. That was a sweet scene, wasn’t it. And maybe conjures up some fond memories. It reminds me of saying prayers with my parents and what I did with my daughters. But not everyone has the same understanding of bedtime prayers. [**Tim Hawkins Clip on “Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep.”**]

Or maybe when you think of prayer, you think about meal time. Perhaps you’ve seen this painting called **“Grace”** by Robert Enstrom. I’ve had a copy of that for years. I’ve always appreciated the simplicity of it, a man thanking God even though the meal may look a bit meager to us. He recognizes God as the provider and thanks Him for it. But others have a different understanding of meal prayers. A little boy at was staying at Grandma’s house. When she called him for supper, he ran to the table, jumped in his seat and started eating immediately. Grandma knew that was not the way she raised her daughter, and wondered why the little boy was acting this way, so she asked him, “Don’t you say prayers at your house before you eat?” The little boy replied, “Well sure we do, Grandma. But I don’t have to pray here before I eat.” Grandma was kind of shocked by that answer, so she said, “And why not?” To which her grandson replied, “You’re a much better cook than my mom is!”

So what is prayer all about? What is prayer? It is just talking to God. That's it. It is actually pretty simple. We talk. He listens. And yet it is also pretty awesome when you consider that you get to talk to the one who is in control of everything. You are invited to speak to the one in charge with the promise that He will listen. The one who sent His Son into this world to pay for your sins, the one who wants nothing but the best for you, the one who reaches out to claim you as His dearly loved child – that is the same one who invites you to pray to Him. Jesus said,

...the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. John 15:16

Jesus also said

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24

Think of the power of those promises, how tremendous they are. Do you believe them? There is a story being circulated these days about a small town in East Texas where a Bar began construction on a new building to increase their business. Almost immediately, the local Baptist church started a campaign to block the bar from opening with petitions and prayers. Work progressed right up until the week before opening when lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground. The parishioners were rather smug, kind of pleased with themselves. But that changed when the bar owner sued the church on the grounds that it was ultimately responsible for the demise of his building, either through direct or indirect actions or means. The church vehemently denied all responsibility or involvement in the building's demise in its reply to the court. As the case made its way to trial, the judge reviewed the briefs submitted by both sides. At the preliminary hearing, he commented, "I don't know how I'm going to decide this, but as it appears from the paperwork, **we have a bar owner who believes in the power of prayer and an entire church congregation that does not...**"

Now, I doubt that is a true story. I first heard it about twenty years ago, and it has been floating around ever since. But true or not, it does make a point. How often do we pray and not expect results? Like asking the preacher to pray for rain but leaving your umbrellas at home? Or asking God to heal Grandma telling everyone you meet that "it doesn't look good."

I played that music video during the offering today called "What if His people Prayed" by the group Casting Crowns. It reflects the thought of 2 Chronicles 7:14.

2 Chronicles 7:14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

God wants you to pray to him. Not for His sake, but for yours. What if His people prayed? What if those who have been led to faith in Jesus, those who know that they have been washed clean by the blood of the Lamb and have the certainty of eternal life, those who know that the death of Jesus has paid for all their sins – what would happen if they would join together in prayer?

Imagine those “armies of the Lord” lifting up our leaders in prayer. Imagine God’s children being in constant contact with Him, an ongoing conversation. Our prayers are not supposed to be mindless recitations at meal time and bed time and church time. You have the opportunity to go to God with anything and everything that is on your heart. It doesn’t have to be in flowery or flowing language. Just talk to Him. It is to be an ongoing, constant thing. That is what Paul was referring to when he wrote to the Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 5:17 pray continually;

That doesn’t mean you never do anything else, but it is an awareness of God’s presence with you at all times and in all places. He is there with you no matter what else you are doing or what else is going on. Talking to Him should be as easy and as natural as talking to a friend. And didn’t we just sing about that: **What a Friend we have in Jesus...**

God promises to hear and forgive. We know we need that forgiveness, because we know who we are. We know we have that forgiveness, because we also know who Jesus is. We live in that assurance and confidence. That is what should inspire and motivate us to take everything to Him in prayer.