

Greg Laurie: 4 Principles to Keep You Praying No Matter What

In troubling circumstances, some may sneer at prayer. When tragedy hits, some contend that prayer is a useless response when we could be taking action.

In actuality, prayer is a powerful thing. Sure, we may take other actions and do what we can, but through prayer we call on our all-powerful God.

Someone wisely said, “When your knees are knocking, kneel on them.” That’s good advice.

Yet in the midst of trials we might worry, Will God answer my prayer? Is this going to work?

In Acts 12, we find a story about how powerful prayer can be. Things looked bleak, but prayer turned the entire situation around.

This story not only encourages us with a wonderful example of answered prayer, but also provides us with four principles we can apply in our own lives to help us keep praying in overwhelming conditions.

- 1. We need to offer our prayers to God.** “So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed to God without ceasing for him” (Acts 12:5).

Did you know that not all prayer is offered to God? A number of studies in recent years have found that people who pray seem to have fewer problems in life, less stress and lower blood pressure. It was even found in hospital situations that a person who was being prayed for seemed to have a more rapid recovery than people who had not been the recipients of

prayer.

The question I have is, "Who were these people praying to?" Prayer itself is not the answer. God is the answer. Prayer is the vehicle by which we reach God.

We don't need to be looking to prayer. We need to be looking to God through prayer. Offer your prayers to God; He hears them.

2. **We need to pray with passion.** The phrase "constant prayer" could be translated as "earnest prayer or stretched outwardly."

Have you ever dropped your car keys in that little spot between the seat and the center console? They are just beyond your reach, and you strain to try and get them. This is the idea here. They reached out to God. They put everything into it.

Another way to translate this phrase is, "they prayed with agony." This was not a flippant kind of prayer. This was a storm-the-throne-of-God kind of prayer. There's a place for emotion in prayer. There's a place for cries and sighs.

God promises that we will find Him when we search for Him with all of our heart (see Jer. 29:13). That is how we need to pray.

3. **We need to pray with persistence.** Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9). A better way to translate that would be, "Keep asking, keep seeking and keep knocking."

Is Jesus saying here that God is really busy, so we had better bug Him until He answers our prayers? Nothing could be further from the truth. Sometimes, when God doesn't give us what we want, we say that God didn't answer our prayer. I would say

that He did, because “no” is as much an answer to prayer as “yes” is.

Sometimes God says, “Go.” Sometimes God says, “Slow.” Sometimes God says, “Grow.”

So, we need to keep praying and not give up.

4. **We need to pray together.** Remember, “The church prayed to God without ceasing for [Peter]” (Acts 12:5). There is power in united prayer. Jesus said, “If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 18:19).

Does this mean if two people agree on something—like a Rolls-Royce, for example—that God will just give it? Not necessarily. The idea here is of two people praying with the same, God-given burden, sure of His will, and in agreement with the Spirit of God and with each other.

In short, don’t go it alone. Find other believers at your church who can pray with you. We need each other.

God Answers Prayer

God answered the church’s prayer in a big way. In fact, He completely reversed the situation.

Acts 12 opens with James dead, Peter in prison and Herod triumphing. It closes with Herod dead, Peter free and the Word of God triumphing. You see, it is not over until it’s over.

So what situation are you facing? Is it a personal crisis? Do you have a loved one who isn’t a believer? Are you facing an urgent financial need?

Now is not the time to give up. As the early church recognized, this was the time to double-down.

The psalmist said, “From the end of the earth I will cry to

You; when my heart faints, lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Ps. 61:2).

Are you overwhelmed? Though all other doors may remain closed, one door is always open: prayer. {eo}

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