

Why should I pray if God already knows everything?

Thinking About the Bible

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The easy answer—because God said to. Surely, He wouldn't ask us to do something unnecessary and useless. So, let's do some thinking...

One Scripture passage tell us “You do not have, because you do not ask.”¹ This means that God knew of a need (he's omniscient) but didn't provide the need because He wasn't asked (in prayer). How is that possible if God is loving, generous, and willing to provide for His children?

This is another *paradox* related to God.² Somehow, even though He *could* work without us, and He *could* give us what we need before we ask, He doesn't always. In His wisdom, God amazingly and graciously allows our “input” into His actions. What a privilege! (And responsibility.)

Some have also suggested that prayer grows our relationship with God. Just as your parents will probably take care of your needs without your asking, isn't it better to sit down together and talk it over? In praying for our needs, we learn to agree with God about them. Often, I get a clearer picture of what I need as I pray.

It's interesting that Jesus Himself prayed often. The 2nd Person of the Trinity prayed to God the Father. This was more than simply an example for us. The prayers of the *man* Jesus were significant in the outcome of God's plans, as are ours. In the hours before His crucifixion, Jesus agonized in prayer and even asked the Father to prevent His suffering if there were any another way to pay for human sin. This was a real, honest prayer originating from the sinless human nature of Jesus.

As mentioned, some prayers are “amiss,” or counterfeit, and will not result in the outcome desired by the one praying. A counterfeit can only

¹ James 4:2-3

² A paradox is something known to be true, yet we can't see how.

be such if there is a genuine article for it to mimic. The misuse of prayer should never eclipse the true gift God has given to believers. Volumes have been written about prayer, but the simple truth is offered by Pascal: “God instituted prayer in order to lend His creatures the dignity causality.” I would add that this gift is ultimately for God’s glory.

In a sense, prayer is the most imminent supernatural power possessed by believers. Without relinquishing his sovereignty, God has given us the ability to cooperate with him in altering the physical realm...

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much
(James 5:16, KJV).

Within God’s will, the praying Christian can do that which the sorcerer can only dream. Could anything be as amazing?