

How Do You Pray? (2)

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Introduction: Prayer is an expression of our thoughts and motives to God.

A. If we have been growing closer to be like God then we have properly learned how to worship God. **(Jn 4:23-24)**

1. When you examine prayer it is much more than just a place to make requests of God. We should be pouring out our very soul to Him!
2. So far we have seen that prayer can be broken down into four components: **Praise, Confession, Petition and Intercession.**

B. We have learned how praise is a confession to God of what we have learned about Him!

1. We do this in our singing but this should be a major element in our prayers!
2. How uplifting it is to get out of yourself and see the mighty works and love of God. **(Psa 22:22; 25-26; Psa 73:25-28)**

I. What is confession?

A. **Confession** - ὁμολογέω - from a basic meaning *say the same thing*; (1) as binding a speaker to his word (*solemnly*) *promise, assure* (MT 14.7); (2) as confessing that something is true *admit, agree* (HE 11.13), opposite ἀρνέομαι (*deny*); of an acknowledgment of sins *confess* (1J 1.9); (3) in judicial matters *make a binding statement, confess, bear witness* (AC 24.14); as making a public acknowledgment of allegiance *confess, declare, acknowledge* (JN 9.22); (4) in a religious and moral sense, as making a public statement of what one believes *profess, confess, acknowledge* (RO 10.9, 10); (5) as acknowledging what is due to God *praise* (HE 13.15)

B. We are going to specifically look in this study at the confession of sin.

1. Confession is simply acknowledging what God says about what we have done. When included in prayer there is necessarily implied that he has repented.
2. Confession shows a kind of mind that is humble and seeking God.
Without confession we have crossed into a realm where we no longer want God's light and thus cannot have His fellowship.

C. How can man and God have fellowship?

1. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. **(1 Jn 1:5)**
2. Do you want to have fellowship with God? Then you must walk in the light!
3. Jesus proclaimed this truth about all who followed His life.
(Jn 1:4-5; 8:12)

D. Confession is a natural daily product of walking in the light!

1. God provides forgiveness through His conditional promises. **(1 Jn 1:7-10)**

2. What conditions are indicated in this passage and others for a Christian to find forgiveness? (**Acts 8:22; Rev 2:5, 16, 21**)
3. Does God automatically forgive our sins?
4. What is the basis of our assurance of a right standing with God? We have confidence in the character of God and in the conditional promises He has given us. (**2 Pt 1:3-4; Rom 8:15-17**)

II. How should we confess our sins?

- A. We should tell God what He already knows! (**Heb 4:13**)
 1. This is humbling and thus very good for us.
 2. Without this knowledge we can become something very bad. (**Mt 23:26; Jn 9:40-41**)
- B. Be specific because God wants us to come clean.
 1. There is a big difference in what and when I am to confess to God and what and when I am to confess sin to a man or men.
 2. What is the purpose of a general confession?
 3. Does this communicate anything that we did not already know? Ex. "If I have offended anyone" or "I was wrong, I have sinned." What have you actually done?
 4. If I am to pray for you in a struggle with sin, what should I pray about for you? (**James 5:16**)
- C. Confession should be both painful and cleansing.
 1. We should never fear the response of our God to a genuine confession.
 2. David poured out a broken heart to God from which God restored his heart to one of joy. (**Psa 51:2-4, 12**)

III. Consider these Bible examples of confession in prayer.

- A. Personal confession made only to God.
 1. A Confession of David (**Psa 32:1-7**)
 2. The confession of the Publican. (**Luke 18:13**)
- B. Corporate confession, one individual on the behalf of the group.
 1. The prayer of Ezra. (**Ezra 9:6-7, 9-10, 13-15**)
 - a. Rather than just say "the preacher stepped on our toes" try praying for the church. This could be done publicly as well!
 - b. Would Ezra be welcomed here to lead prayer?
 2. The prayer of Nehemiah. (**Neh 9:1, 32-37**)
 - a. Watch out when you see one about to lead prayer in sackcloth!
 - b. I believe some of my brethren would be embarrassed at this prayer. "We are not that bad! He is too emotional! Sure we have sinned, but..."
 3. The prayer of Daniel (**Dan 9:3-11**)

Conclusion: It is crucial that Christians understand confession!

- a. In many churches there is a lack of openness and honesty because we have failed to deal with sin as God would have us.
- b. Warning: Do not use prayer as a weapon.