

## Praying in God's Will

### Introduction.

- A. Prayer is conversation with God.
- B. Components of prayer.
  - 1. Response to God's self-revelation.
  - 2. Request.
- C. Today we will focus on prayers of request.

(from David Mains)

### I. Think before praying.

- A. What do I want?
  - 1. Concrete (we would never approach a benefactor without being specific).
  - 2. Not vague generalities.
    - a. Bless.
    - b. Be with.
    - c. Remember.
- B. Can God grant my request?
  - 1. God cannot do the impossible.
    - a. Square circles.
    - b. Cause himself not to exist.
    - c. Change a past event.
  - 2. God has chosen to limit himself.
    - a. Won't over-rule free will (praying for someone's salvation).
    - b. Won't randomly change the laws of nature.
- C. Have I done my part?
  - 1. God uses us to answer our own prayers and the prayers of others.
  - 2. Our part may be limited or extensive.
  - 3. "This is the job I have for you."
  - 4. "Send someone." "I'm sending you."
- D. What is our present relationship?
  - 1. Sometimes confession is the first order of business (Ps. 66:16-20).
  - 2. We should search our hearts before prayer.
- E. Have I considered his interests?
  - 1. We often ask in greed (Jas. 4:3) (Tevye: Would it spoil some vast, eternal plan, if I were a wealthy man? -- Yes!)
  - 2. God is not a genie who grants requests without regard to his honor.
  - 3. Our purpose is to glorify God.

#### 4. Guidelines.

- a. If this prayer is granted, will God receive praise?
- b. If this prayer is granted, what will I say to others?
- c. Is it “Thy will be done” or “My will be done?”

#### F. Do I expect an answer?

1. Timidity is not faith.
2. “God is not deaf.” “I know, but Grandpa is.”

### II. Characteristics.

#### A. We want God's will to be done.

1. Sometimes the phrase is tacked on as fine print.
2. We often can know God's will before we pray.
3. Examples:
  - a. Sickness: that God will fulfill his purpose (Ralph Olson).
  - b. Employment: not this job or that job, but the right job.

#### B. Prayer of relinquishment (putting the matter in God's hands).

1. We can't make demands of God.
2. We can't make bargains with God.
  - a. We have no hold on him.
  - b. A lifetime of obedience is no more that is expected (Lk.17:7-10).

#### C. Prayer of commitment.

1. We open ourselves up to the one who is vitally concerned with us.
2. It puts our will in line with his will.
3. We must understand that his will is not necessarily a pleasant, healthy, long life (Acts. 9:16; Col. 1:24).

### III. Why do some prayers go unanswered?

#### A. Our request may be unprepared (Nonsense remains nonsense even if we put “God can” in front of it - Lewis).

#### B. Our requests may be bad for us.

(Alec Motyer: If whatever we ask, God was pledged to give, then I for one would never pray again, because I would not have sufficient confidence in my own wisdom to ask God for anything.)

#### C. Our requests are based on our greeds.

#### D. God has a different plan (2 Co. 12:7ff.).

### IV. Finally.

#### A. Think before we pray.

#### B. Remember that disciplined prayer is effective prayer.

#### C. Don't be discouraged.