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FROM

DATE

For the eyes of the Lord are on the
righteous and His ears are attentive
to their prayer. 1 Peter 3:12

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Teens
Pray

with God

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS

BY EDWARD GRUBE

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**Teens
Pray**



Preface

A survey of students revealed this about their prayer practices:

- * Most students pray for themselves, their family, and friends.
- * The four times when students pray most often are when they go to bed, at mealtime, when they're in trouble, and when they're confused.
- * The majority of students made up their own prayers or used a traditional prayer like the Lord's Prayer or Come, Lord, Jesus.

Does God listen to young believers as they pray? How can we imperfect humans dare to approach our holy God? Conversations with Him would be impossible were it not for Jesus, sent by God to redeem sinners. Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection took away our sins and made it possible to approach God in full confidence of His loving attention.

God not only invites us to pray, He commands it. Here are some things God tells us in the Bible about prayer:

*Seek the LORD while He may be found;
call on Him while He is near.*

Isaiah 55:6

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7

*Do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*
Philippians 4:6

God's Word makes it quite clear. He wants us to pray. But what does He want us to pray about? God's people are free to talk to Him about anything. In praying about spiritual matters, we are bold. As we pray for stronger faith or to give God glory through our words and deeds, we're confident that His will and ours are one. When we pray for material or physical matters, we should always conclude with the phrase, ". . . if it is Your will." Sometimes what we want isn't what God wants for us. He knows that some of our desires will hurt us or damage our faith. He would never give anything bad to us, even if we plead for such things.

In what way should prayers be offered? Many people fold or cross their hands. Some people pray privately, while others are comfortable speaking aloud. Others offer prayers by speaking them in their minds; people around them would never guess they are praying.

The Bible has described praying as a lifting up, pouring out, crying, and shouting. Your prayers may be offered however you want to speak to God. This book's subtitle is *Conversations with God*. The phrase suggests that because Jesus has given you direct access to God, you are free to speak with Him as you speak to people.

What about answers to prayer? God always answers prayer. Sometimes it's a "yes," sometimes a "no." Sometimes it's a "wait awhile." Regardless of the answer, God hears you and cares about what you have to say. This is what the Bible says about the subject:

*Before they call I will answer;
while they are still speaking
I will hear. Isaiah 65:24*

Be aware that God may answer prayers in unexpected ways. For example, suppose you pray often for a loved one who is sick. Your prayers are sincere. You're confident that God hears your prayers and that He loves your loved one too. But then your loved one dies. Does that mean God didn't answer your prayers? Not at all. God does whatever He wants and whatever is best regardless of what we think. You prayed that your loved one would be healed. And that's what God did. He took your loved one—who had faith in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior—to be with Him in heaven. In heaven, there is no illness or suffering. Only perfect health and happiness. Is there any better healing? You may indeed pray that your loved one gets

well here on earth. But this is one of those cases where we must leave it entirely in God's hands—according to His will.

Do you sometimes wonder to whom you should address your prayers? Should you be talking to God the Father, Jesus His Son, or the Holy Spirit? God has a great system for routing prayers. Since He is the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—your prayers always go to the right Person of the Trinity! Don't worry about the address. Your prayers get through! By the way, you may have heard some people praying to saints or the Virgin Mary. Don't do it! You see, sometimes people pray to others because they fear that God will not listen to sinners like themselves. How sad! We know that Jesus took away our sins and gives us free and personal access to God.

For whom should we pray? We're free to pray for ourselves and all other people, even those who don't believe. It is important that you pray for those whose faith is weak or who refuse to believe that Jesus is their Savior while they are living. Among all those for whom you pray, this group is most in need of your conversations with God!

I encourage you to use this book for yourself and for those times when you might be called upon to lead a prayer. Many of the prayers contain

blanks where you may fill in the name of an individual for whom you are praying. Other prayers include blanks for specific situations for which you may be praying.

I also encourage you to make up your own prayers. Don't worry about word selection, proper grammar, or making mistakes. You see, the Holy Spirit prays with us and for us. In fact, the Holy Spirit is a most thoughtful and generous prayer partner. Take a look at this:

... the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. Romans 8:26

Wow! What a privilege it is to pray. Thank God you are free to exercise that privilege. Pray often. Pray confidently. Pray for yourself, your family, your friends, your enemies, and even those you don't know. God loves you. You can speak freely to Him.

Edward Grube

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Sickness

GENERAL

I never appreciate my health so much as when I'm sick, Lord. Oh, I don't feel like I'm going to die, and even if I did, I know You would be there. Right now, I'd just like to feel better. As you restore my health, make me a better person too—one who will serve You happily and healthily. I pray in the name of Him who cares for all needs, great and small. Amen.

MINOR ■ ■

Lord Jesus, I don't know if I should bother You—after all, hospitals are full of people who need Your healing more than I do. But since You love me enough to suffer pain and die for me, I'm certain You do care. Restore my health so I can serve You and others again. I pray in the name of the One who directed healing for lepers and mobility to the lame. Amen.

MAJOR ■ ■

I'm afraid, dear Jesus. You already know just how serious it is, but I have to tell You anyway. I'm afraid of the pain. I'm afraid of the uncertainty about my future. Yes, Jesus, I'm afraid even though You are here for me now and You will be there for me when I go to heaven. I'm afraid of dying. Or maybe it's just that I hope for so much in life that I don't want to miss any of it. You know all about pain and death. You went through it for me. You know about life too; You lived it fully. Now take me through it, heal me, if it is Your will, and comfort me. My hope is in You, Great Physician. Amen.

OTHERS

Insert the name of the one for whom you're praying in the blank.

Heavenly Healer, _____
needs Your care and comfort. Give the doctors
skill and make the medications effective. Give me
whatever I need to help in _____'s
healing and comfort. And while You restore
_____ 's health, bring Your healing
to all who suffer, if it is Your will, and lead them
to know that You are their loving Savior. I pray
in the name of the Powerful Servant who healed
thousands on His way to the cross. Amen.



School Matters

PROTECTION IN MY SCHOOL ■

Father, just about the time I forget about school violence, it's in the news again. Will it ever be in my classrooms or hallways or cafeteria? I know Lord, that violence is never Your will. Protect us from those who would harm us. Bring Your love to my school and rule in our hearts. I pray in the name of the Lord of peace.

Amen.

AFTER VIOLENCE ELSEWHERE

I'm so sad, dear Jesus, about what happened at _____ school. Help those who are hurt, and comfort their families. Send faithful Christian witnesses to let them know that Your love is stronger than the worst hate and horror. Keep us safe at our school, and send Your Holy Spirit to help us trust You for safety. I pray in the name of the Lord of peace. Amen.

STARTING A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Lord Jesus, it seems like such a long time—now through the end of the school year. I know that Your will for me is to succeed and be happy. I also know that to be happy and to succeed mean that I need to live the kind of life You expect from Your people. Help me do that, Jesus. Help me to learn that I may serve You and the people You give me to know. Give me old friends and new—all of them who will let me be me—all of them who will respect me for being Yours.

Strengthen me with the desire and self-discipline that I'll need to learn from my teachers, experiences, and books. Make all that I do become one more piece of that person You want me to be.