

## Sessions – Prayer – myfishbites.com

### Prayer Session Introduction

This is a session looking at some of the elements of prayer. For much of the content, I'm indebted to a Derek Prince series on prayer, 'Getting Prayers Answered' which can be found on YouTube. Recommended reading would also be Joyce Meyer's book, 'Power of Simple Prayer' and Derek Prince's book, 'Secrets of a Prayer Warrior'.

### Movie Clip - School of Rock

This really fun and uplifting movie is well worth a watch just generally if you haven't already! So However, the clip details you'll need are:

Chapter 17. Timing: 01:27:46 - 01:29:34 (or carry on to the end of the chapter)

**NB.** Please be aware that Jack Black does say, "kick a\*\*" on timing 01:28:47. Additionally, the 'prayer' is addressed to 'the god of rock'.

However, as with the clip below, this does give the chance to later on ask what prayer is and isn't!

### Questions to think about

1. What is prayer?
2. Why does God answer prayer?
3. Will God answer if we don't ask?
4. Do you think all our prayers are answered?
5. How does God answer prayer?
6. Can anything we say or do stop God answering prayer?
7. When we've prayed once, is that it, or do we need to keep asking?

### Movie clip - Talledega Nights

Talledega Nights 'Baby Jesus Prayer' -  
[https://youtu.be/i1Nh\\_3JCFj8](https://youtu.be/i1Nh_3JCFj8) (link checked April 2019)

**NB.** Be aware that it does have some 'interesting theology' and uses the phrase about his wife 'if I had to rate her a\*\*' in it.

**Secondly,** if not using the linked clip, stop the clip at 3.00mins or so when they say, "let's dig in" before the son speaks.

If you do feel comfortable using it (or editing) then this will raise some issues around what prayer is and is not. If you don't want to use, the scenario is a winning race car family sitting around the dinner table praying, or at least saying grace before food.

## **Questions from the movie clips**

The two movie clips address lots of questions:

1. When we pray to God, who are we praying to? Ricky Bobby prays to, 'dear tiny infant Jesus' even when his wife interrupts him to say that Jesus did grow up.
2. Lucy Bobby in Talladega Nights says to her husband, "I want you to do this grace good, so that God will let us win tomorrow." Does God answer our prayers as a result of our performance or because of his goodness?
3. The family disagree during the prayer. Does God have anything to say about prayer and disagreement?
4. Ricky Bobby also thanks God for everything 'God has done' for him. What kind of attitude should we have when thanking God.

## **What does the Bible say? Parts 1-5**

Just note, these are prayer principles. You don't have to follow these all religiously!!

### **1. ASK GOD**

[Matthew 7.7-8](#) - Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

If we don't ask God, then although God can and still does work, it won't be the same. We need to ask God about everything, talk to him first and ask his will to be done and for his guidance. If you need something, ask God. At a recent Bible study, we asked God for 2 things. One was for a new boss for someone because the boss was really bad. The next week, the boss was suddenly moved on and a new great boss came in. Another person needed to move flat. We prayed a few times, it took around a year but he'll soon be moving to a new flat! Ask God!

### **2. BELIEVE**

[Matthew 21.22](#) - If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

Jesus was talking to his disciples about a fig tree that didn't have any fruit when it should have done. Jesus cursed the tree (*he wasn't being harsh but one thing this was - was a picture reference of the Pharisees who looked good but didn't have any fruit, no good in their lives. Let's make sure we're not like that!*) Then Jesus told his disciples if they had faith they could even tell a mountain to jump in the sea and it would! Don't go trying this at home... Your 'mountain' won't always be a mountain physically! Let's also be clear that Jesus said, "if you have God's kind of faith" and was also talking about special times when God gives you really deep belief that something will happen - and it does!

While Jesus was saying all this, he ended by telling the disciples that they had to believe, before they received whatever they asked for in prayer. So we have to believe God for what we ask for. So we say to God, "I'm asking for (whatever) and I believe that you hear me and will answer my prayer." If God is God (and he is!) we can believe that he knows what's best and will answer us in his way and time.

### **3. RECEIVE IT**

[Mark 11.24 - Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.](#)

As well as believing God, we are also encouraged to believe that we have received it. This is what faith is. Faith is simply believing God! Abraham was an old man, his wife was an old woman and yet God had made them a promise and they believed him. Our prayer should be, "God I've prayed this thing, I believe you and I receive your answer" (even when it doesn't look like it!)

[Romans 4.21, "... being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised."](#)

### **4. ASK IN THE NAME OF JESUS**

[John 14.13-14 - And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.](#)

Everything we have is because of Jesus. He died for us, created us, gifted us, helped us know him, provides for us, holds creation in his hands. Jesus is King of kings, Lord of lords and will one day judge and rule the earth. If it wasn't for Jesus, we wouldn't be able to be made right with God. If we have said yes to Jesus in our lives, when God looks at you, he sees Jesus who is perfect. So when we pray to God, we come before God in the name of Jesus. So we pray in the name of Jesus, not because it's a magic formula like we're wizards or something, but because the name of Jesus is the most powerful force in the world and

because he's the one who makes us right with God. So we come to God in that name and that power!!

## **5. STAY CONNECTED**

John 15.7 - If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

John 16.23-24 - In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

One of the principles of prayer is that we stay connected to Jesus, that we keep his words (The Bible) in our hearts and keep Jesus number one. This isn't some religious exercise, it's just about putting God first. Then, Jesus says we can ask for anything. If we're really close to Jesus we'll pray things that are close to his heart and he will always answer those kinds of prayers - for justice, compassion, making things right, provision, healing, change in our friends and communities. Just know he doesn't always do it in our time or our way as his ways are much higher! We pray and leave it to God. This will make our joy complete, God wants to give you joy! :)

### **Any stories of answered prayer?**

This is a time to go round and ask people for answers to prayer that they have seen in their own lives, or ones they have heard about or seen in others.

Make sure you have some stories about prayer you can share to kick things off, keep things going or to cover any silence from your group!

### **Video of answered prayer**

This is from Derek Prince and is a bit dated. Have a listen and use if you like, or find a more up to date alternative!

Derek Prince – 'Getting Your Prayers Answered' – <https://youtu.be/hdudgLxh0tI> (link checked April 2019).

## **What does the Bible say? Parts 6-10**

### **6. GOD'S WILL**

1 John 5.14-15 - This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

[True story from BBC website](#) - In March 2011, a man got a free day pass to a horse racing event in Exeter. He got a free bus to the racecourse. He didn't have much money and so he put £2 on a bet where he tried to predict 6 horses winning a race. He correctly guessed the first 5 races and it came down to the last race with a horse that hadn't won in 23 races and a rider who'd never won a race. Guess what - that horse, Lupita, won the race and the man won a whopping £1.45million.

Now here's the lesson - God may well not answer your prayers for something like that, but he may. Brian Houston, the pastor of Hillsong Sydney told of a story how one Aussie soccer player leaving London gave his car to a man in the church who volunteered at the church! But the important thing when coming to God in prayer is that we ask according to God's will. How do we know his will? Well, the Bible gives us answers and principles, and if we stay close to God we'll know his heart.

## **7. GOD WANTS TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS**

[Romans 8.32 - He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?](#)

Some people think of God sitting on a fluffy cloud. Others think God is some kind of horrible bitter old man. Neither is true. God is good, pure good. Romans 8 tells us that God will graciously give us all things. Matthew 7.11 confirms this saying that God will give good gifts to those who ask him! God wants to hear and answer your prayers. He loves it when you hang out with him and pray and loves to bring great answers to prayer, often turning impossible things around!

## **8. PRAY AND THANK GOD**

[Philippians 4.4-5 - Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.](#)

[Psalm 100.4 - Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.](#)

God deserves to be thanked, deserves our praise. That is what worship is - our response to who God is and what he's done for us. That's why people who've been delivered out of the biggest mess are often the most thankful and the best evangelists! Keep thanking God - thank him for who he is, for hearing your prayers, for working on your behalf and when you see answers or not!

## **9. CHECK YOUR HEART AND MOTIVES**

Psalm 66.18-19 - If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer.

James 4.3 - When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

## **10. GOD IS FAITHFUL AND DOES MORE THAN WE CAN IMAGINE!**

2 Cor 1.20 - For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Luke 1.37-38 - For nothing is impossible with God. (OR "no word from God will ever fail") "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said.

God wants to do more than we can ask, think, imagine, dream or anything! His word does not fail and contains the power within it to do exactly what God says - "no word from God will ever fail" is how the 2011 version of the NIV more accurately translates Luke 1.38. All God's promises are "yes" in Jesus. So when we pray, pray according to God's Word and expect great answers and yes, miracles too!!

### **Finally**

Here's your chance to put these things into practice. Go round the room and find out something to pray for from anyone who is up for sharing something to be prayed about. Then expect God to act and be ready to come back and shout about how God has answered!!