



a study on
PRAYER



Yes, No & Maybe

1. Most people say the same prayer over and over again.
2. Prayer is more listening than talking.
3. Christians should not meditate. It gives evil spirits an open door to come in.
4. I struggle to hear the voice of God.
5. God already knows what we need, so we shouldn't bore Him with the details when we pray.

Dig Deeper

◊ How were you taught to pray?

➤ **READ Matthew 6:5-8 (NIV)**

5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

» **5 hypocrites** - [hypocrites - ὑποκριτής] This comes from the Greek theater where one actor would switch between masks to signify what character he was playing at the time.

- When is a prayer not a prayer? When it is a matter of public performance.

» **6 go into your room, close the door** - Prayer is a very private and solitary experience.

- What is your greatest challenge when you pray by yourself?

➤ **READ Mark 1:35 (NIV)**

35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

« Why do you think "solitary" is an important aspect to your prayer time?

» **7 babbling like pagans/many words** - [battalogēō - βατταλογέω] The Greek verb battalogēō is unique not only in biblical literature but elsewhere as well; no other use of the word is known beyond quotations of this verse. So nobody knows for certain either its derivation or its meaning. Some (like Erasmus & Herodotus) suppose the word to be derived from Battus, a king of Cyrene, who is said to have stuttered. Most regard it as an onomatopoeic expression, the sound of the word indicating its meaning. Thus battarizō meant to stammer; and any foreigner whose speech sounded to Greek ears like the interminable repetition of the syllable 'bar' was called barbaros, a barbarian. William Tyndale was the first translator to choose 'babble' as an equivalent English onomatopoeia.

» **8 your Father knows what you need** - How much does God already know?

« If God already knows what you need, then what is prayer all about? Do we talk about what we need, or something else?

• Jesus' critique of such prayers is based on his view of God. Unlike the Gentiles, Jesus says, you have no need to be anxious about whether God will hear you. God is aware of your needs even before you list them (Matt. 6:32). So, it is unnecessary to bombard heaven with words to get God's attention.

» **READ Luke 6:12, 13 (NLT)**

*12 One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night.
13 At daybreak he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles.*

« When you have a big decision to make--one that will keep you up all night--God will help you, will be with you all night, and will help inspire you to make the right choices.

« What does this say about God?

« To sum up, what Jesus forbids his people is any kind of prayer with the mouth when the mind is not engaged. That is Christian meditation and prayer.

« How does God's character show itself in the methods He wants us to pray?



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My Prayer...

1. How am I babbling during my prayers?
2. What does God want me to do to hear Him better?
3. What new aspect of God's character does He want me to know?