

Prayer Builds Relationship With God

Scripture Reading — James 5:13-16

Be . . . faithful in prayer. — Romans 12:12

Joyful hope and patience in affliction go against the grain of our own natures. Despair and self-pity come much more easily. In times like that, it's important to turn to God in prayer. We pray for many reasons: to thank God for blessings, to praise God, to confess sins, to seek God's guidance.

In addition, we pray to ask God for help. Asking God for help may be the most natural prayer of all. When a Christian brother was torn from his wife and two small children and put into a detention center over immigration issues, many of us asked God to help them. The man was released and restored to his family. When my wife and I had triplets born extremely prematurely, we asked God to protect their lives and sustain them. Two of them spent four and a half months in the hospital and are doing well today. The other child died.

Sometimes God answers our requests for help exactly as we ask, but sometimes not. Either way, the Bible calls us to be faithful in prayer. Prayer—thanking, praising, confessing, asking for help—connects us with God. Prayer builds relationship. Prayer strengthens the bond between God and us. When you have a good relationship with someone, hopefulness and patience become a little easier, especially when that Someone is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

Prayer

God, help people in trouble. Help church leaders, community leaders, and national leaders. Help my friends and my enemies. God, help me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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