



HELD TOGETHER

1. What are the three reasons that Christians do not pray? What are the three ways that God answers prayers? What do you think his reasons might be for each answer?
2. Read Matthew 6:9-13. Some people believe that Jesus gave this prayer for us to memorize and then repeat over and over, do you agree with them? Why or why not? What was the purpose for Jesus giving his disciples this prayer? List the things in this passage that we are to include in our prayers.
3. What are the four purposes of prayer that Pastor Rick gave? Explain what each one means.
4. Look up the following passages and talk about the things that could cause God to not answer our prayers when we pray. James 1:5-8, 1 John 5:14, Isaiah 59:1,2; and 1 Peter 3:7.
5. If you regularly pray as a group, consider taking some extra time to pray for things you might not normally pray for. Give everyone in the group an opportunity to pray out loud if they would like.

Answers

1. *The three reasons Christians do not pray are: a. Don't know how; b. Think we don't have enough time to pray; and c. Don't think God answers. God answers prayers by saying: a. yes; b. no; and c. wait. He says yes when it is in line with His will and he knows it would be best for us; he says no when it is not in line with his will and he knows it would not be good for us; and he says wait when it would be better for us for it to happen at a later time.*
2. *Jesus was not giving them a prayer to repeat over and over again, he was responding to a request from the disciples to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). He had said in the previous verses: **Matthew 6:7-8 (NIV)** "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." Saying a lot of words over and over is not what causes God to answer the prayer. The Lord's prayer is to instruct us on what to pray for. The things he says we should include in our prayers are: a. Expressing love to God: "**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name**"; b. Commit ourselves to doing his will: "**Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**"; c. Ask God to provide our daily needs: "**Give us today our daily bread**"; d. Ask God to forgive our sins: "**Forgive our debts**"; e. Pray for other people: "As we forgive our debtors"; f. For spiritual protection: "**And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one**".*
3. *The four purposes for prayer are: A. An act of dedication. We should express our devotion, dedication to doing what God wants us to do (his will be done), and our total dependency on God. The biggest hindrance to prayer is our pride, self-sufficiency. B. An act of communication. Fellowship with God, remaining on the vine, is a relationship. God speaks to us through his word, we respond in prayer. C. An act of supplication. Asking God for our needs, our problem is many times we expect God to give us our greeds, more than we need. God's chosen method to provide for us is prayer. D. An act of cooperation. We have a co-mission from God, to partner with him through his church to accomplish his plan of this planet. We choose how much we allow God to do through us, we should always be asking God to show us what he wants to do through us and yield to the Holy Spirit to use us however God chooses. Most of us have a very small vision of what God could accomplish through us because we never ask him to do great things in and through us.*
4. *Is God saying yes to our prayers an unconditional promise? Look up the following passages and talk about the things that could cause God to not answer our prayers when we pray. James 1:5-8, 1 John 5:14, Isaiah 59:1,2; and 1 Peter 3:7. It is not an unconditional promise, there are things that we do that hinder God's ability to answer our prayers. Just like good parents, he cannot reward us for poor behavior. James 1:5-8 tells us that if we do not believe, have faith, that God can and will do something, it prevents him from saying yes. 1 John 5:14 tells us that we must ask for things that are in line with God's will. When we ask for things that are not God's will, he will say no. Isaiah 59:1,2 tells us that unconfessed sin in our lives prevents God from answering our prayers. 1 Peter 3:7 tells us that when a husband (and we can apply it to wives also) does not treat his spouse the way God says he should, it will hinder his prayers.*