

# Your Role in Prayer

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If I were to ask you if you knew how to pray, you would probably answer, "Well, sure I do! All Christians know how to pray!" However, if you were to seriously examine the track record of your answered prayers, you may not be so sure.

In **Matthew 7:7—11**, Jesus emphasizes an important lesson on prayer. Dispelling the assumption that prayer simply "comes naturally" to Christians, Jesus asserts that prayer is an intentional, learned activity for God's children. In this passage, He is quite simply showing the disciples the three basic steps for an effective prayer life: ask, seek, and knock.

Unfortunately, well-meaning Christians can miss fantastic opportunities and blessings in life because they have taken a completely passive role in their prayer lives. Too often, seeking and knocking are overlooked as the believer sits back and merely asks God for something once or twice and then forgets all about the matter.

For example, when a high school student begins to make college plans, what will happen if he simply sits on the couch and says, "Lord, please show me exactly where you want me to go to college?" Now, on the surface, this seems like the best way to start the process. But, what if the young man never gets off the couch? Instead of talking with other students, visiting campuses, ordering catalogs, reviewing school web sites, and meeting with counselors, the boy simply sits and waits for an answer from the Lord. Most likely, he would still be sitting there when classes started the next Fall!

Or, think about someone who honestly desires a deeper understanding of Scripture. If he were to set his Bible down on the table and pray, "Lord, please open up the truths of the Scriptures to me. I desperately want to understand Your Word." Well, my friend, that person can pray and pray and pray, but the only way for him to get a deeper understanding of the Word would be to not only ask, but to also seek by getting into the Word of God. And that is not enough! He would have to knock on the doors of some Scriptures, dealing with difficult passages in order to see them open in their fullness.

As we move throughout this year, it is my prayer that you will make your own prayer lives a priority. There is nothing that will revolutionize, transform, improve, and energize your walk with Christ like developing a deeper prayer life.