

Zac Poonen:

Communication with God is a two-way matter. We hear God speaking to us through His Word first. And then we speak to Him.

But prayer is not just making requests to God. A primary part of prayer should be having fellowship with God, like a bride with her bridegroom.

There are no rules on how a bride should speak to her bridegroom.

But as a discipline, it's good for our prayers to consist of: (i) praise to our Father for Who He is; (ii) confession of sin and failure; (iii) petitions concerning the kingdom of God; (iv) petitions concerning our own needs; (v) intercession for the needs of others; (vi) thanksgiving for what God has done; and (vii) thanksgiving for what God will do.

Jesus told us to "pray at all times" (Lk. 18:1).

A good habit to develop is to learn to speak to God about the little things of daily life - and thus to be in a spirit of prayer throughout the day. Thus, speaking to God will become a joy for us and not a ritual. We'll also find that God speaks to us in our hearts in surprising ways.

But these are just the kindergarten-lessons in the school of prayer. We can progress further if we are faithful.

In any case, prayer should never be allowed to degenerate into a dry, empty ritual. Prayer is like breathing. When our breathing becomes difficult for us, then we know that something is wrong! Prayer was never meant by God to be dry or boring.

But as we progress, we will find that prayer becomes hard work. If we are faithful with the little burdens God lays on our heart to pray about, we'll find that God gives us more and more of His burdens. Thus we can become co-workers with God, in His work of blessing others.

Jesus prayed `with loud crying and tears' (Heb. 5:7). Once when He prayed in Gethsemane, His sweat became like great drops of blood (Lk. 22:44). His praying was so intense.

Once He spent a whole night in prayer (Lk. 6:12). He had a habit of slipping off frequently into the wilderness to pray (Lk. 5:16). As someone has said "Like tourists look for sights to see, whenever they come to a new place, Jesus always looked for a quiet place to pray wherever He went."

Jesus' example shows us how important prayer is. If He needed to pray so much, how much more you and I need to.

Fight the battle against laziness then, and determine to be a man/woman of prayer at any cost.