Learning to Pray



Fellowship with the Father

Pastor Dr. Emmanuel Mukisa, D.D.

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Introduction

You have access to the Father. Christ has established it, and by the Spirit you live in the fellowship that belongs to His children (Ephesians 2:18). This is where prayer begins. The believer speaks from the place he has received in Christ, with the confidence of a son who knows his Father hears him.

Many difficulties in prayer begin with a failure to understand that relationship. A person can know the language of prayer and still speak as though God were far away. He may labour over the length of his words while giving little attention to what Christ has accomplished. The answer is in the Word. As you understand your standing, the Father's love and the authority of the Name of the Lord Jesus, you learn to pray with settled confidence.

Prayer includes asking, thanksgiving, worship and intercession. Through it we express our fellowship with the Father, receive according to His Word and participate in His purposes for others. His Spirit helps us, and His truth gives substance to what we say. Read the passages in this book with that expectation. Let what the Father has said govern your praying, and exercise the access that is already yours.

CHAPTER ONE

The Father Who Hears Us

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 (KJV)

Read Hebrews 4:14–16; Ephesians 2:13–18; Ephesians 3:14–21

The Father hears His children. Our confidence in prayer rests upon what Jesus Christ has accomplished and the standing we have in Him. When Hebrews speaks of boldness at the throne of grace, we read it from that settled position. The believer exercises an access already granted in Christ. Prayer flows from his place in the family of God.

Hebrews 4:14 names Jesus, the Son of God, as our great High Priest and calls us to hold fast our confession. Verse 15 tells us that He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. The One through whom we pray understands the need we speak about. His sympathy and His victory belong together, and the passage directs our confidence to Him.

Then the writer speaks of boldness at the throne of grace, where mercy and timely help are found (Hebrews 4:16). This is the exercise of standing access from within sonship. The Greek word *parrēsia*, used in the phrase translated “boldly”, speaks here of confidence and openness. We speak freely before the Father because of Christ. The access is His provision; boldness is how we exercise it.

Ephesians 2 makes the ground of this access clear. Those who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. He is our peace, and through Him both Jew and Gentile have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Ephesians 2:13–18). Paul describes what Christ has done. The believer's nearness rests in His blood, and his access stands through Him. Prayer proceeds from this reality.

You can therefore speak about a real need without allowing that need to define your relationship with God. You are His child before you make the request. The Father's love is already towards you, and the Spirit already dwells in you (John 16:27; Romans 8:15–16). Give attention to these truths. They establish the heart in confidence and give prayer its proper direction.

Paul himself prays from this knowledge in Ephesians 3:14–21. He bows his knees to the Father and asks that believers be strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith, and that they may comprehend His love. His prayer is concerned with the working and understanding of what God has provided. He wants the saints rooted and grounded in love, knowing the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

Let that be the ground of your own fellowship. Speak honestly to the Father. Ask for the help you need, give thanks for His provision and hold fast what He has said. Your confidence has a foundation: Jesus Christ is your High Priest, and through Him your access to the Father stands.