

Annex 2
Questions and Answers

Prayer

a. What is the difference between prayer and meditation?

Short Answer: Meditation is thinking about God, His glory, and the nature of God. Prayer is a dialogue with God. It is more interactive. We ask God, we address God and He responds to us.

More: When we mediate about God, we consider his nature, His beauty, His sufferings, and His acts. We remember what God has done in the past. Some verses on meditation are found in Article XXIX of the Prayer Outline. Meditation has some of the characteristics of both prayer and worship.

b. Will I hear the audible voice of God?

Short Answer: You should not limit how God speaks to you. Some people have heard the audible voice of God. However, the most likely way that you will hear the voice of God is that He will speak to you in your heart or through Scripture; however God is not limited in how He communicates with you.

More: God spoke directly to Adam telling him to name the animals and not to eat of the Fruit of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. (Gen. 2:15-17, 3:9, 11, 16, 17). He spoke to the oldest son of Adam, Cain. (Gen. 4:6, 9-16.) God told Noah to build an ark (Gen. 6:13-21; 7:1-4; 8:15; 9:1-17). God spoke to Abraham on numerous occasions (Gen. 12:1-3; Gen. 17:1-24; Gen. 22:1-3, 11-18). Jacob encountered God and wrestled with him (Gen. 32:22-30). Moses heard the voice of God and communicated with God on numerous occasions (Ex. 3:1-4:17; 4:19-23; 5:22-6:8; 7:1-6 and numerous other references). God spoke to Gideon (Judges 6:17), to Samuel (1 Sam.3:1-14) and to Elijah (1 Kings 17:2; 1 Kings 19:9-18), and to Isaiah (Is.6:1-13). God spoke to Paul on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1-16).

Sometimes we expect God to speak to us loudly and clearly. However, it is just as likely that God may speak to us in a still, small voice. 1 Kings 19:12.

On a personal note, I once asked a relative of mine who had been one of the first missionaries to the Amazon area in Brazil whether he had ever had heard the audible voice of God. He stated that he had heard God speak to him on one occasion audibly and had said "Go to Brazil." Based upon that experience, he went to Brazil as a missionary along with his wife and lived and raised his family there for the next twenty years until massive heart problems forced their return to the U.S. Most of his ministry he had heard God through his heart and through Scriptures but on one occasion God spoke audibly.

So let your ears be listening. Whether God speaks to us directly to the ear or to the heart, it does not matter. Be open and be obedient to the voice of God.

c. Can dreams be an answer to prayer?

Short Answer: Dreams can be an answer to prayer but not all dreams come from God. Dreams can also come from our flesh or be sent to us by the Enemy. For that reason it is good to test dreams and consider the nature of the dream. God has used some dreams as prophecies. If a dream is from God it will not contradict Scripture.

More: God has sent dreams to various rulers and used God's people to interpret the dreams. For instance, God sent dreams to Nebuchadnezzar and used Daniel to interpret the dreams. See Dan. 2:6; 4:5; 7:1. God sent dreams to Joseph, one of the sons of Israel. Gen 37:9. He also used Joseph to interpret dreams which came to Pharaoh. Gen. 40:9; 41:15.

Gideon was guided by dreams in Judges 7:13-15.

In Joel 2:28, it says that *"I will pour out my spirit upon all peoples and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions..."* This scripture was later quoted at Acts 2:17.

In the New Testament God guided Joseph the husband of Mary on a couple of occasions by using dreams. See Matt. 1:20; 2:19. The wise men were warned about Herod's plot to find the baby Jesus through dreams. Matt. 2:12.

Pilate's wife was warned about the danger of judging Jesus through a dream at Matt. 27:19.

Paul encountered various manifestations of Christ either through dreams or visions. See Acts 16:9; 18:9.

In short, God has used dreams and the interpretation of dreams as part of his plan.

I would not suggest praying that God send you dreams; however, if God does choose to send you a dream, I would evaluate it just as I would evaluate a prophecy. Test it against Scripture. Consult others who walk closely to God and get their advice and thoughts.

d. Should I pray "in Jesus name."

Short Answer: Yes.

More: Prayer is not magic formulas or being a slave to a legalistic formula or procedure. However, there is power in the name of Jesus. God placed his seal of approval upon Jesus through his resurrection. God loves the son and the son loves the father. The reason for praying "in the name of Jesus" is found by Jesus' words in John 14:13 and 14 which says: *"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it."*

e. What does "Amen" mean?

Answer: "Amen" comes from the Hebrew and simply means "so be it." This word is used in the Hebrew, Christian and Muslim faiths. It is used as a congregational response to prayers. We often find

it at the end of the prayer and is a congregational affirmation to the prayer and the requests made by the prayer.

f. Is it better if I pray in a group?

Answer: God will hear your prayers regardless of whether you pray alone or in a group. Jesus often prayed alone at night. I believe he also prayed as a group when he attended synagogue and when he prayed with his disciples. Sometimes it is helpful to pray in a group. Matt. 18:19 says, *“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven”*. Matt. 18:20 says *“Where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be with them.”* If a number of people come into agreement on a subject, it helps to strengthen our faith just as a group of coals burn more brightly than a single coal. Therefore sometimes a group is helpful so that at least two of us on earth can come to an agreement in prayer and ask for the same thing.

g. How do I pray over my house?

Answer: When the children of Israel were getting ready to leave Israel, the people were instructed to go into their houses and place the blood over the threshold and over the lentils of the house where they might find safety. Today we seek protection for ourselves and our families through the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ which is sprinkled over us and our house. Our “house” is the family gathering. There is a family (the family of God) for each of us whether we are single, married, orphans or feel that we are alone. We belong to the family of God. God has purchased a family for himself, a nation of priests and kings. Acts 16:31 says that we are to “believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and that we and our house are to be saved”. Many people pray for their families, for the family of God, for the residence where they live and for their cities, states, nations and even the world. Sometimes we pray over our house and over our children we may even anoint them with oil just as elders of the church are instructed to anoint with oil. Pray over your house. Pray over those who have requested your prayers; Pray over those entrusted to your care and for those who are a part of a group that you are a member of. Sometimes, like the Good Samaritan, you may find that God has added some unexpected members to “your family.”

h. What is a “prayer group” or a “prayer circle”?

Answer: A “prayer group” or a “prayer circle” is a group of people that come together to pray.

i. How can I free up time for prayer?

Answer: You can rise early, take a prayer break, go on a prayer walk or run, pray before meals or pray before the kids get up. We make time for what is really important to us. Seeking God should come first in our lives. “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these things will be added to you.” Matt. 6:33.

j. Is prayer for both men and women? Most of the people who I know are women.

Answer: Of course, prayer is both for men and women. God is not a discriminator of people. Gal. 3:28 says: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”. When the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost, Peter reminded the people of the quotation from Joel 2:28-32 which says “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people; your sons and

daughters will prophesy....” (Acts 2:15). So when the Holy Spirit came it came upon both men and women all who gathered together in the upper room.

God hears the prayers of both men and women. He does not discriminate or prefer the prayers of one sex over the other. He heard the prayers of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others. He also heard and answered the prayers of their wives: Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachael. God heard the prayers of the women of the Bible as well as the men. Jesus had men who followed him but also women as well.

God looks at the heart. He hears the prayers of women such as Hannah the mother of Samuel as well as Daniel praying regularly for the restoration of Jerusalem.

k. Does God hear the prayer of people who are not Christian?

Answer: The first prayer of every person is a prayer from a Non-Christian. We pray and ask to be saved. Also remember all of the prayers given by the fathers of our faith, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Also perhaps the best book on prayer in the world is Psalms written by King David.”

l. What is praying in tongues and should I do it?

Various Christians have different beliefs regarding praying in tongues. Some Christians feel that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by tongues or a prayer language; others believe it is evidenced by such things as evangelism, love and the fruits of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2 when the Spirit fell on the church; others heard the Christians praising God in the language of their birth. For instance, a person visiting Jerusalem from Rome might have heard the disciples praising God in Latin the native language of the Roman. In essence God was reversing the Tower of Babel experience and at Pentecost people heard God’s praise in their original or a common language. Some of the praise may have been ecstatic or unintelligible in nature since Peter said *“these men are not drunken as you suppose.”*

When the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles at the House of Cornelius the language was commented by Peter to be the same as that which fell upon the apostles in Jerusalem.

Some Christians pray in tongues or an unintelligible speech. Others do not. Paul said it was better to speak in an intelligible language in church meetings but also said *“I speak in tongues more than you all.”*

I would not worry too much as whether you speak in tongues or do not speak in tongues. Love God; follow God; the tongues will take care of themselves.

m. What is a prayer language?

Answer: A prayer language is simply praying in tongues. Sometimes we don’t know what the Spirit wants us to pray for. Sometimes God helps us to pray even if we do not always understand what we are saying. Some also have the gift of speaking in tongues and others have the gift of interpreting tongues. See 1 Cor. 12. There are differing interpretations as to whether a prayer language is a different thing from praying in tongues as a gift of the Spirit and whether praying in tongues is the primary evidence of the Baptism by the Holy Spirit.

We Christians have a multitude of different beliefs regarding speaking in tongues and whether it is the sole manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Although Christians differ, I believe that speaking in tongues can be a very good thing. That being said, I would be much more concerned about someone who spoke in tongues and never showed love, than I would about a Christian who showed love and never spoke in tongues. Paul said in 1 Cor. 13:1: *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not love, I am only a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal.”*

n. Should I pray with my eyes open or closed?

Answer: There is nothing in Scripture that mandates that our eyes be closed. Many people close their eyes because it limits distractions from sight.

o. What is prayer-walking? (Claiming a neighborhood or street for God). (Walking around Jericho).

Answer: These terms are used when people walk around an area while praying for the area or the people in the area. It comes to some degree from the children of Israel marching around Jericho before it fell and verses saying “everywhere you shall set your foot I shall give to you . Joshua 6:2-17. Also see Josh. 1:3; Deut. 1:36 and Deut. 11:24.

p. What does it mean to pull down strongholds?

Answer: Pulling down strongholds means to break down barriers that are erected by Satan, a person or a person’s flesh that keep the individual from reaching the fullness that God has for him or her. Sometimes these can be such things as lies, sins, occult, demonic forces, bad attitudes, unforgiveness and unhealthy thoughts and habits. This is done through spiritual warfare using the name of Jesus and binding and loosing in Jesus’ name. See 2 Cor. 10:3-5 which says: *“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*

q. What is binding and loosing?

Answer: This concept comes from Matt. 16:19 which says: *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

So an example might be: “In Jesus name I bind up Satan and his demons from blinding the eyes of Bill from the truth of God’s word and the path of salvation.” I loose Bill’s eyes to see and his heart to accept the love of Christ.”

r. What is pray-reading the word or praying the word of God?

Answer: This is simply using Scripture to help us in our prayers. Some examples can be seen in Annex 8 entitled “Praying the Word for Your Family.” You can also use similar prayers praying for yourself or for others.

s. What is a faith declaration?

Answer: A faith declaration is declaring to yourself, to Satan and to the world, the truth that God says about you. For instance, God says that he made you both a king and a priest. (1 Pet. 2:9 says :*"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."* A faith declaration might be: "I thank you O God that You have chosen me; You have made me a royal priest to declare your praises." Instead of believing Satan's lies that you are dirty and worthless, you confess and declare what God says about in Scripture. In faith, you confess with your mouth the word of God about yourself and others.

t. Why do we remind God of His word? Does He forget?

Answer: God does not forget. We remind God of His word as a way of reminding ourselves of God's word and like God we join into creating by faith something out of nothing. We put ourselves into a position of agreeing with God's word on a topic. We confess the word of God to ourselves and to all of those around us.

u. How do I begin to pray?

Answer: It is simple. Just talk to God as you would to your best friend. Tell him your needs and ask Him to meet your needs. After you have prayed for yourself, pray for others. Pray to God that he will give you wisdom, ears to hear his word and commands and a heart that will obey what he tells you to do. Another way to pray is to memorize the Lord's Prayer and pray it. Put it in your own words if you can.

If you have a heart to pray, God will help you to pray. If you do not think you have a heart to pray, then ask God to give you a heart to pray.

Necessity breeds prayer. If a bear is chasing you, most people do not have to think about what they need to say. They simply shout "Help!" Prayer is as simple as shouting "Help!" Some of the great prayers are simple prayers such as "God, have mercy upon me, a sinner!"

Prayer is learned just by doing it. So do it.

v. What does Agreement in prayer mean?

Answer: Matt. 18:18-20 says: *"Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

Agreement in prayer simply means that two Christians have agreed to pray for the same thing and believe that their Father will answer their prayer. Find a person who will agree with you to pray for a situation or an outcome. It is helpful to your faith to have others agree with you.

This is not a magic formula. God will not answer prayers that are unscriptural. Like all Scripture we take the word of God in its entirety.

w. What does “laying out the fleece” mean and should I do it?

Answer: Gideon did it. Judges 6:36-40. Also the servant of Abraham did it by praying to God. He asked that when he asked for water, the right girl would give the water but would also offer to water his ten camels as well. Gen. 24:15. Sometimes people have asked God for signs and sometimes he has given them signs.

Gideon laid out the fleece twice before God to make sure he was hearing right. One time he asked that the fleece be dry and the ground wet. The other time he asked that the fleece be wet and the ground dry. By this Gideon knew that he was not acting foolishly or on his own thoughts in taking up the sword against the Midianites.

Although we may from time to time seek signs, God expects us to use our common sense. He also expects us to read and know his word. He expects us to use the ears of our heart to hear the Holy Spirit speak to us. Sometimes we want a clear and obvious answer and God is gracious to hear our requests.

x. Because someone is sick does it mean that they have done something wrong?

Short Answer: It definitely does not.

Long Answer: For example Job was tested and many terrible things happened to him including illness, disease, poverty, and the loss of his children. But Job had done nothing wrong. Job was later completely exonerated by God and his losses were restored.

In Luke 13:1-5 it says, *“Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”* Jesus took the view that it rained equally upon the good and the evil. Sometimes evil and bad things come our way. Whether it rains or shines we are to look to God and his mercy and goodness.

Another instance where people questioned whether someone had done evil related to a man who was blind. In John 9:1-5 it says:

“As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

y. What happens if I pray for someone to be healed and they are not healed?”

Answer: We are commanded to pray. We are not commanded to be responsible for the answer. The answer is up to God and involves a multitude of factors and considerations that we do not understand. In addition some prayers are answered one way and others another. We are not God, but only the servants of God who carry out his commands and His word. Part of our faith in prayer is that we look to God to answer our prayers in His way and in His time. We do not second guess God but rely upon his grace, mercy and timing.

z. What is the connection between prayer and miracles?”

Answer: Both prayer and miracles are to be done in faith. Faith is the soil in which both blossom. A spirit of unbelief throws a wet blanket on both prayer and miracles. *“He could not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.”* Mark 6:5. Prayer is communicating with God. Miracles are things , including answers to prayer, that we do not understand and which often seem to go contrary to natural law as we understand it. Walking on water is a miracle, multiplying food is a miracle, creation from nothing is a miracle. We are surrounded by miracles every day if we have eyes and the heart to comprehend them. In addition, prayer is done by us and miracles are done by God.

A1. Why do some people anoint the people they are praying for with oil.

Answer: Oil in Biblical times was an instrument of healing and also an instrument of being set apart by God. It is often associated with the Holy Spirit.

James 5:14-16 says:

Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

We anoint with oil because of this scripture in James. The oil is not magic. It does represent healing and is a symbol of both healing and the Holy Spirit. It does not matter what type of oil is used. Often people use olive oil but they also use cooking oil. The important thing is that if you have sinned, you should confess it to God and to your brother or sister. This will help your healing. Also the faith of those who pray for you can provide remarkable power to your healing.

Jesus often talked about faith and even his own ability to heal was enhanced by the faith of those seeking healing to the extent that Jesus sometimes said *“Your faith has healed thee.”* (James 5:34). In other instances, Jesus did not do many miracles because of the unbelief of the people around him. See Matt. 15:38.

A2. What should we do if someone does not experience immediate healing?

Answer: Sometimes people come to God and do not appear to be healed. It is a sin in my opinion to judge them and say it is because of their weak faith. Instead it may have nothing to do with your faith. Those who are sick and hurt are to be helped by the intercessors so it could be that we have not prayed enough for them or that it is OUR faith that is weak.

The responsibility of the sick is carried by the community of believers. We are to pray for one another and love one another. We should be like the friends who took their sick friend and ripped off the tiles of the roof and lowered him to Jesus. (Luke 5:18-20) It is interesting *but "When Jesus saw their faith he said, "Friend your sins are forgiven.""* Jesus looked to the faith of the friends of the sick man. Jesus also forgave the sins of the sick man reinforcing the fact that the sick should confess their sins as a way to aid healing.

A3. Should I pray with my hands folded?

Answer: People often clasp or fold their hands when they pray. It is simply a way to minimize disruptions when you pray. Some people do other things such as lift their hands when they pray.