

It's Okay To Just Pray

challies.com/articles/its-okay-to-just-pray/



I have yet to meet the Christian who has mastered prayer. In fact, I have yet to meet the Christian who feels like much more than a beginner in the school of prayer. Though I know many who pray, I know few who are convinced they really understand prayer. In a strange way, I find it heartening to learn that even one of my most trusted and respected theologians has declined to write a book on the subject and wondered, “Who can write or speak at any length easily on the mystery of prayer?”

I am thankful that we do not need to understand prayer in order to pray. At least, we do not need to exhaustively understand prayer in order to pray. We do not need to have an answer to every question or a resolution to every mystery. The biblical command is not to figure out prayer or iron out every dilemma of prayer, but simply to pray.

I take that to mean that we should not allow our lack of understanding to lead to a lack of prayer. We should not allow our confusion to excuse hesitation. Instead, we should press on in obedience and faith—obedience to God’s clear command and faith that prayers are meaningful to God. We should press on in earnest prayer, in confident prayer, in constant prayer, and in all kinds of prayer, trusting that God loves to hear them and act upon them.

It has been my experience that the path to a deepening understanding of prayer does not lead through

| You can learn about prayer in a sermon, but it's in a prayer meeting that you really learn to pray.

libraries as much as through closets, and not through reading as much as simply through praying. You can learn about prayer in a sermon, but it's in a prayer meeting that you really learn to pray. Books and sermons have their value, of course, in teaching us to pray. God's book has the greatest value of all. But we learn the most about prayer as we actually pray. Prayer is its own guide, its own instructor. Or, perhaps better said, the Spirit teaches us not so much through our questioning or searching but through our praying. He guides us and instructs us as we pray.

And so the task of the Christian is not first to understand prayer, though may be a very good thing, and not first to solve prayer, which I suspect is an impossible thing. Rather, the Christian is to pray, knowing that part of the beauty of prayer is that even if we aren't confident in how prayer works, we can have confidence in the one who tells us to pray. Even if we haven't resolved the dilemmas and solved the mysteries, we can trust the one who issues the command and who insists that he hears and responds to our prayers. Our task, our calling, and our joyful duty is to pray.