

## Becoming a Friend of God

The world expects more from us today than ever before. Mom, the miracle worker, has to sew a costume for the school pageant, bake 12 dozen cookies, and drive her child's class to the zoo on short notice. She does this, while writing an annual report, preparing a presentation for a new client, training a new secretary, and studying for her third-grade Sunday school class. If you're a parent and you're not praying, you should be.

Prayer is not a Band-Aid for a busy day, aspirin for the spirit, or antacid one takes after over-indulging in the world. It's powerful, exciting, refreshing, and brings vitality to any life willing to commit to pray.

As we understand prayer, and pray regularly, we think about God more. Joy becomes second nature and other relationships improve.

Prayer is man's acknowledgement of a higher being. When we pray we address God, the Creator of the universe; a mere mortal has a personal audience with the King of Kings. It is simply spiritual communion with God.

A young man visited his brother, a student at a large seminary. He was unfamiliar with the sprawling campus so he asked the first person who passed by, "Is this Davidson Hall?" The seminary student asked his brother if he had realized that he had been talking to a world-famous theologian. He had the opportunity to ask any question--and he asked about a building. Christians are like that. We have the opportunity to ask anything we want.

Nevertheless, how many of us really do?

&nbsp;Like anything else, our prayer life improves with practice and experience. Any new endeavor, takes time and commitment. It's like learning to type in high school. A teacher teaches the keystrokes, how to hold our hands and where to put our fingers. We can only become a good typist by practicing enough that we don't need a chart. Eventually, with enough experience, our fingers move quickly across the keyboard, often correcting mistakes without effecting our speed or accuracy. Quality comes with practice and experience.

At first, prayer may be nothing more than a child's sweet words, "Jesus, I love You." God's hears every cry of the human heart. Our prayers are so important to Him that He calls them incense, as a "sweet smelling fragrance" going up before His throne" (Rev. 5:8 KJV).

In this article we will examine five types of prayer. We won't pray each one every time we pray. However, with an active prayer life, we will regularly use them all, thus assuring us of a well-rounded healthy relationship with God.

The first type of prayer is Praise. To praise God is to glorify Him. Glorifying simply signifies an opinion, estimate, and consequently the honor resulting from a good opinion.

As we praise God, we focus on Him and on the splendor of His character and nature. We tell Him how much we love and appreciate Him just because He is God. We draw attention to His holiness, His mercy, and His grace, telling Him what these attributes mean to us.

We don't praise God because He needs to hear it (Heb. 13:15). We praise Him because praise reminds us of His attributes. Starting prayer with praise breaks our minds loose from the cares of our day. As we speak, our minds begin to focus, our random thoughts slow down and positive images begin to form in our thinking. Doubts, worry, and fear loosen their grip as words of hope and encouragement fill our minds with faith.

&nbsp;Praise prepares our minds, opening the door of communication between our spirit and God's Spirit. With the door open, we are ready for the second type of prayer, Confession. This is simply recognizing that we cannot measure up to God's holy standard. Scripture promises, "If we confess our sins He is just and faithful to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9 KJV). No one can reach God's holiness. We rely on His mercy and Christ's blood to cleanse us from a defiled conscience. With a tender conscience, we can walk in holiness, acceptable to God.

Several years ago, my husband and I went to New York. Our second night there, we rode the Staten Island ferry. I was shocked at the filth. Paper, cigarettes, empty cups, and puddles of spilled coke, coffee, and sticky drinks littered the stairs and walkways. We passed right by the Statue of Liberty. It was a beautifully clear cold night. We tried to see Lady Liberty from the warmth inside, but the windows were so dirty from years of grease, smoke, and filth that we couldn't make out her image. We had to go outside just to get a clear view.

Like the Staten Island ferry, if we allow sin to dirty the windows of our conscience it will block our communication with God. Our conscience is the hinge on the door between our spirit and God's Spirit. When we confess our sin and repent, we remove anything blocking our view of God, keeping the door closed between us.

Praising God and confessing our sins leads us to freely Worship Him, the third type of prayer. Worship is reverent honor given to God. After He forgives our sins, we want to fall on our faces, in worship. In worshipping God, we adore His majestic power and nature. With the door of communication wide open between us, our spirits share uninhibited communion.

Worship is different from praise. In praise, we verbally acknowledge and speak positively of God's attributes. In worship we lay prostrate [if only in spirit] before God, in awe of Him, as we profess His might and recognize our fragileness. We may weep or sit quietly basking in His presence.

Following closely behind worship is Thanksgiving. In Thanksgiving we simply appreciate Him for who He is and for all He's done. You can't praise Him, confess your sins, and worship Him without true gratitude. When we've seen ourselves through His eyes in confession, and received His love through worship, thankfulness floods our being. We want to express our appreciation and thank Him for His goodness. We call this an Attitude of Gratitude.

We can only successfully pray the fifth type of prayer after investing time in praise, confession, worship, and thanksgiving. This gives us power for Petition. When we've been in God's holy presence, we have confidence to ask for our needs. Our petitions match His will for us and for those we bring before Him. Our desires line up with God's will.

If we go to God with our petitions first, we actually limit our effectiveness. We receive answers to our petitions because we are His children and we

want to please our Father. Praise, confession, worship, and thanksgiving prepare our hearts and minds to know what to ask. We will know God's mind on many matters and will not ask selfishly or fruitlessly. He will drop things into our spirits that He wants to see happen in the lives of others. This level of communication comes through Spirit to spirit unity, reached through praise, confession, worship, and thanksgiving.

We can compare praying to children learning to color. Children learning to color have two problems. They often chose inappropriate colors and they have a hard time staying in the lines. As they mature, they learn to do both, thus creating a nice picture.

Our prayer life is that way. We don't always know what to pray for and we don't always stay in the guidelines of God's will. As we learn to pray, utilizing praise, confession, worship, thanksgiving, and petition we will learn to pray for the right things and stay within His will, thus creating a good prayer life, and an intimate friendship with God.

Source: [Miron Ministries](#)

#### About the Author

Normal 0 false false false MicrosoftInternetExplorer4 Dr. Sharon Schuetz is an ordained minister and holds a BA in Religious Education and a Phd in Clinical Counseling Psychology. She and her husband, Michael, have been married for 33 years. They have three children and seven grandchildren. Like most writers, she has loved writing since she was a child. &nbsp;