

**“When I pray,
all I feel is emptiness.
How do I know
my
prayers
are being heard?”**

Heavenly Father hears and answers all sincere prayers. It can be a challenge, however, to recognize His answers. Maybe they don't come when or how you expect them. Or maybe they come as a quiet prompting of the Spirit. Here are three things you can do to know that Heavenly Father is listening to your prayers:

Look for answers. When you pray, give thanks for blessings. Thinking of how Heavenly Father has blessed you will help you see His goodness. Then pray sincerely for His help in your life. As you see evidence of Heavenly Father's hand in your life, your faith will grow. You might want to write down answers to your prayers as a way of remembering them.

Study the scriptures. Scripture study can help you draw closer to God and feel His Spirit. You can often find answers to your questions and problems in the scriptures.

Listen to the Spirit. Prayer invites the Holy Ghost. When you feel the Spirit, you can know that Heavenly Father is listening to your prayers. When you pray, try to avoid distractions such as loud music or wandering thoughts. After you pray, ponder the impressions you receive. Finally, never feel that you are unworthy to pray (see 2 Nephi 32:8). Heavenly Father always wants to hear from you. And with practice, you can learn to hear from Him. **NE**

He Is Listening



I believe that God always hears my prayers. He is always listening, and He will always answer. This is a simple answer to your question, but I know that it is the truth. If you pray with “a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ” (Moroni 10:4), you can feel the Spirit of the Lord. Make sure you do not fall into the habit of repeating a prayer over and over again. Show God that you really want His Spirit to be with you. If you are faithful, you will have His Spirit with you, and you will know Heavenly Father is listening.

Ethan T., 16, Arizona

Answers Will Come



Most of the time when I pray I do not feel anything extraordinary—even when I am praying earnestly—but I know Heavenly Father is listening. Recently I prayed about something but didn't receive the immediate answer I was hoping for. A while later my answer came during a father's blessing and then again from a scripture I read. Even though the answer didn't come quickly, Heavenly Father truly answered my prayers. He will always be listening; we just need to trust in him (see Proverbs 3:5–6).

Amber L., 18, Utah

Do Your Part



When you pray, you can feel the Holy Ghost warming your spirit. But sometimes when you feel emptiness, you may not be praying from your heart. You need to make sure you are praying sincerely. You also need to say what you are grateful for, not only what you need. And you need to show that you are willing to work for what you need. If you need help on a test, you need to work hard and study. You can't just ask, “Please help me ace the test” and then not study.

Jake T., 13, Virginia

Pray with Real Intent



When you pray, you need to make sure you're not just going through the motions. In Moroni 7:9, it says that if you don't pray with real

intent, it will not profit you. When you pray to Heavenly Father, you are really talking to Him, so try to make it sincere. If you don't feel anything when you pray, try writing down what you want to pray about before you start your prayer. It will get you thinking about Heavenly Father and the blessings He has given you. After you pray, try just sitting there, meditating a bit. Think about what you just prayed for. These things have helped me, so I'm sure they'll help you too.

Anna S., 16, Arizona

Answers Come in God's Way

We must have faith that God truly does hear and answer our prayers. Matthew 7:7-8 is one scripture that has helped me gain this faith. We also need to realize that the answer will come in God's time and way, not our own.

Lethi G., 18, Utah

Meaningful Prayer



Heavenly Father listens to all prayers. He wants our prayers to be sincere and for us to share the things we are thankful for as well as the trials we need help with. When I say my prayers, I imagine that Heavenly Father and I are talking. When I say my prayers with this image, my prayers become more meaningful because they are more specific.

Caitrin S., 18, California

No Doubt



I have asked myself the same question many times before. I have found that if you are striving to find answers and are praying fervently and

consistently, there will be times in your life when you will feel the Spirit so strongly that you have no doubt that Heavenly Father listens to your prayers. Study the scriptures and share your testimony, weak or strong, and you'll find that praying to your Heavenly Father will strengthen you through your trials. By doing these things faithfully, you won't have the feeling that you're talking with yourself in your prayers, but you'll feel a great bond with the Lord. He will listen.

Leah V., 15, Colorado

Humility and Focus

When I feel as if my prayers aren't being answered, I go to my Father in Heaven with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. I humble myself in His presence, and I try to let everything around me disappear so I can focus. When I finish with my prayers, I know in my heart that they will be answered.

Hannah W., 15, Idaho

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NEXT QUESTION

"A friend in my ward isn't 16 yet, but she's dating and trying to keep it a secret. How I can help her see that dating so early isn't a good thing to do?"



CONFIDENCE THAT HE IS NEAR

Should you ever feel distanced from our Father, it could be for many reasons.

Whatever the cause, as you continue to plead for help, He will guide you to do that which will restore your confidence that He is near. Pray even when you have no desire to pray. Sometimes, like a child, you may misbehave and feel you cannot approach your Father with a problem. That is when you most need to pray. Never feel you are too unworthy to pray. . . .

"He will always hear your prayers and will invariably answer them. However, His answers will seldom come while you are on your knees praying, even when you may plead for an immediate response. Rather, He will prompt you in quiet moments when the Spirit can most effectively touch your mind and heart. Hence, you should find periods of quiet time to recognize when you are being instructed and strengthened."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 2007, 8, 9.

Send your answer and photo by August 15, 2010.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Material," and then select "Questions and Answers."

You can also send your response to newera@ldschurch.org

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Responses may be edited for length or clarity.