



# Praying to Our Heavenly Father

## Chapter 8

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### **What Is Prayer?**

Jesus taught, “Ye must always pray unto the Father in my name” (3 Nephi 18:19).

Prayer is one of the greatest blessings we have while we are here on earth. Through prayer we can communicate with our Heavenly Father and seek His guidance daily.

Prayer is a sincere, heartfelt talk with our Heavenly Father. We should pray to God and to no one else. We do not pray to any other being or to anything made by man or God (see Exodus 20:3–5).

### **Why Do We Pray?**

Prayer has been an important part of the gospel from the beginning of the world. An angel of the Lord commanded Adam and Eve to repent and call upon God in the name of the Son (see Moses 5:8). This commandment has never been taken away. Prayer will help us draw closer to God. All of our thoughts, our words, and our actions are influenced by our prayers.

We should pray for strength to resist the temptations of Satan and his followers (see 3 Nephi 18:15; D&C 10:5). We should pray to confess our sins to God and ask Him to forgive us (see Alma 38:14).

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**For teachers:** This chapter is organized under five section headings. Each heading is a question about prayer. You could use these questions as a guide for your lesson. If the classroom setting allows for small group discussion, consider dividing class members into groups of two to four. Assign each group one of the sections in the chapter. Have each group read and discuss their assigned section and share personal experiences that relate to it. Then discuss the five sections as a class, focusing on the questions that are of most interest to class members.

We should pray for the Lord's guidance and help in our daily lives. We need to pray for our families and friends, our neighbors, our crops and our animals, our daily work, and our other activities. We should pray for protection from our enemies. (See Alma 34:17–27.)

We should pray to express love to our Heavenly Father and to feel closer to Him. We should pray to our Father to thank Him for our welfare and comfort and for all things He gives us each day (see 1 Thessalonians 5:18). We need to pray to ask our Heavenly Father for strength to live the gospel.

We should pray so we can keep on the strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life. We must pray to God, the author of all righteousness, so we may be righteous in our thoughts, words, and actions.

- How has prayer helped you draw nearer to Heavenly Father?

### **When Should We Pray?**

We can pray whenever we feel the need to communicate with our Heavenly Father, whether silently or vocally. Sometimes we need to be alone where we can pour out our souls to Him (see Matthew 6:6). In addition, we can pray during our daily activities. We can pray while we are in a Church meeting, at home, walking down a path or street, working, preparing a meal, or wherever we may be and whatever we may be doing. We can pray any time of the day or night. We can pray when we are alone or when we are with other people. We can keep our Heavenly Father in our thoughts at all times (see Alma 34:27). We can “pray always” (D&C 10:5).

At times we may not feel like praying. We may be angry or discouraged or upset. At these times we should make a special effort to pray (see 2 Nephi 32:8–9).

We should each pray privately at least every night and every morning. The scriptures speak of praying morning, midday, and evening (see Alma 34:21).

We are commanded to have family prayers so that our families may be blessed (see 3 Nephi 18:21). Our Church leaders have counseled us to pray as families each morning and night.

We also have the privilege of praying to give thanks and ask a blessing on the food before each meal.

We open and close all of our Church meetings with prayer. We thank the Lord for His blessings and ask for His help so we may worship in a manner that pleases Him.

### **How Should We Pray?**

No matter where we are, whether we stand or kneel, whether we pray vocally or silently, whether we pray privately or in behalf of a group, we should always pray in faith, “with a sincere heart, with real intent” (Moroni 10:4).

As we pray to our Heavenly Father, we should tell Him what we really feel in our hearts, confide in Him, ask Him for forgiveness, plead with Him, thank Him, express our love for Him. We should not repeat meaningless words and phrases (see Matthew 6:7–8). We should always ask that His will be done, remembering that what we desire may not be best for us (see 3 Nephi 18:20). At the end of our prayer, we close in the name of Jesus Christ (see 3 Nephi 18:19).

### **How Are Prayers Answered?**

- Why do you think answers to prayers are not always readily apparent? Why do you think answers to prayers do not always come when we want or in the way we want?

Our sincere prayers are always answered. Sometimes the answer may be no, because what we have asked for would not be best for us. Sometimes the answer is yes, and we have a warm, comfortable feeling about what we should do (see D&C 9:8–9). Sometimes the answer is “wait a while.” Our prayers are always answered at a time and in a way that the Lord knows will help us the most.

Sometimes the Lord answers our prayers through other people. A good friend, a husband or wife, a parent or other family member, a Church leader, a missionary—any of these individuals may be inspired to perform acts that will answer our prayers. An example of this is the experience of a young mother whose baby was injured in an accident at home. She had no way to get the baby to a doctor.

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She was new in the neighborhood and did not know her neighbors. The young mother prayed for help. In a few minutes, a neighbor came to the door, saying, "I had a feeling I should come and see if you needed any help." The neighbor helped the young mother get the baby to a doctor.

Often God gives us the power to help answer our own prayers. As we pray for help, we should do all we can to bring about the things we desire.

As we live the gospel of Jesus Christ and pray always, we will have joy and happiness. "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers" (D&C 112:10).

- In what ways has Heavenly Father answered your prayers?

### **Additional Scriptures and Other Sources**

- James 1:5 (what to pray for)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Psalm 55:17; 2 Nephi 32:9 (when to pray)
- Alma 34:26 (where to pray)
- 3 Nephi 19:6, 24 (how to pray)
- D&C 88:63–65 (how prayers are answered)
- Moroni 10:3–5; Alma 37:37 (promises for prayer)
- James 5:16 (the power of a prayer from a righteous person)
- Bible Dictionary, "Prayer," 753