

# San Juan Church of Christ

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## What Does God's Word Say About... Answering Prayer

We can be assured that God does not answer the prayers of the unrepentant sinner or the disobedient. "Then they will cry out to the Lord, but He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time because they have practiced evil deeds," (Micah 3:4). The apostle John wrote, "We know that God does not hear sinners," (John 9:31). In giving instructions to fellow believers, Peter wrote, "You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way...and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your [husbands] prayers will not be hindered", (1 Peter 3:7).

The Lord does hear the prayers of the righteous: "And His ears are open to their cry. The righteous cry, and the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles," (Psm. 34:15, 17-18). The apostle John wrote, "if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears them," (John 9:31). John also wrote, "whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight," (1 John 3:22). For one who believes and is obedient to God, there can be no doubt that God hears our prayers and answers our prayers.

To believe that God answers prayer does not mean that God gives us whatever we ask! Do parents always give a child what he wants? God answers prayers in a variety of ways. Depending on our situation and what we ask for, He may answer, "Yes". He may answer, "No." He may reply, "Later," or He may give us something else rather than what we ask for. He gives us what we need; and that is quite often a different thing than what we think we need. Too many think of prayer as some kind of divine faucet that we use to obtain blessings from God.

Inherent in every prayer must be the attitude of the prayer of Jesus, "Not My will, but Yours be done," (Luke 22:42). Sometimes what we want is not what He wills; and we must acknowledge that He knows what is best for us. The best example of this is when Paul referred to an affliction in which he suffered, asking God to remove "a thorn in the flesh" on three separate occasions, "And He has said to Me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is reflected in weakness' ", (2 Cor. 12:7-9). That was not what Paul prayed for. He prayed for the affliction to be removed. But the Lord, instead, promised him strength to endure it. Paul told believers to, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God," (Phil. 4:6). So to the ones who are obedient to His word, let us trust in Him to do what is best for His people and let us learn to accept whatever answer He gives.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:  
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