

Does God hear and answer our prayers?

Overview

I am frequently asked if God hears our prayers. What the asker really means is – does He or does He not answer them? In an earlier 5-Minute Catechism we covered the basics of prayer – but let's explore this most important issue.

Does God hear our prayers?

Do you remember the old movie which proclaimed “Yes Veronica – there really is a Santa Clause”. Yes readers – God really does hear our prayers. The scriptures are filled with examples that tell us how important to God that we are. In one example the scriptures tell us that God has “counted all of our hairs”. Did God really count all of our hairs? Maybe – maybe not – but that is not the meaning of the passage. What it means is that we are so precious to God that He knows all about us.



In a Gospel passage, Jesus tells us to pray unceasingly and that we should prevail if we wish to receive. Did you ever see the popular picture of the person standing behind the door with Jesus on the other side knocking and asking to enter (our lives)? What most people miss is that there is a handle inside the door but none on the outside. The artist is trying to convey that Jesus wants our love but only if we offer it willingly and ask Him to love us and to help us in our daily lives.

In another Gospel passage, Jesus taught us how to pray to the Father. In a query from the apostles about how to pray - Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer. Clearly, this must mean that praying to God is important!

Does God answer our prayers?

This question really has three answers – (1) Yes, (2) No and (3) not now but maybe later. We often hear about a miraculous response to some needful prayers – which builds our faith in God. Just as often we speak with people who say that their constant prayers have not been answered – which sometimes challenges our faith.

Finally, there is still the response which says “not now”. Most of us see things as black and white - Yes and No. However, there is something in between - sometimes called “grey”. That is, God's calendar is not like ours. While often the response is clearly yes or no – we should not give up if things do not happen immediately.

I am inspired by the life of Saint Monica – who prayed unceasingly for many years that her son (Augustine) would merely become a good person and a Catholic. After many years not only did he do this but became a priest, Bishop and one of the most influential people of the early church. This was truly a miracle but God knew how important Augustine would be but would only help if asked – even if it took many years to do so.

What can you expect?

Someday when we come face to face with our Creator, we will understand why some prayer requests were answered and some were not. That is, God has a plan for each and everyone of us. Some of us will be gratified with a “Yes” and some may hear a No or have their prayers answered later. One thing I can guarantee for you is that - if you pray to God with your heart and submit yourself to Him – **you WILL have peace** – whether the prayer is answered or not.