Two Ways to Pray **[1]**

Submitted by Wessel on Sunday, 12 January 2020 - 21:43



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Two people, who are from different church backgrounds, are in a prayer meeting. They are busy praying for the healing of a mutual friend with an aggressive cancer diagnosis. One is from a charismatic church background, and the other from a conservative evangelic church background.

The first person prays, “Lord Jesus, You are powerful and mighty. In Your Word you promise healing and restoration. We *lay hold* of those promises for our friend. We *claim* victory and restoration in Your Name, Jesus! We give praise and thanks for the healing which you *will* give!”

The second person prays next: “Dear Lord, we pray for our friend. We lift her up to you and commit her to You. We pray that, if it is Your will, Lord, that You will heal her. Please be with her and sustain her through whatever may come her way.”

These two examples of prayers are broad generalisations, but I hope that they are familiar to the reader. The first one is emphatic about miracles. They take to heart Matthew 17:20, and place their fullest trust in God and His promises. They are confident, knowing that God cannot deny their request, because God had promised to give them what they have asked for in sure faith. The second prayer is more cautious. They understand that God does not always answer prayers in the affirmative. They have as primary concern God's sovereignty and do not want to come across as arrogant and wanting to transgress God's will and what He has ordained from before creation.

Both prayers are valuable [2] and beautiful. They lay bare before God their love for their sister in Christ, and their deep desire for her healing and undoing of suffering in the world.

Both of these people can learn from each other.

God is sovereign and holy and powerful. He brought the prophet Isaiah, the apostle John, and the Israelites of the exodus to despair by showing them His glory. His holiness is terrifying, and no person can come before God in their injustices. Even those who have been made righteous through Jesus tremble in His presence. He is to be revered. It will do a person well to live with tremendous faith, but be mindful of their language. I understand that prayers which call on God's promises are prayed sincerely, earnestly, with love and reverence. But their forcefulness can come across as arrogant to some who are listening. Perhaps even to God, who is the only One who truly knows a person's heart. People praying such a prayer need to be mindful that they are not too headstrong in their personal desires and wants that they miss the big picture of what God is (or could be) actually working out in everybody's lives.

At the same time, we need to be careful that our prayers are not timid. We should not be afraid that an “unanswered” prayer would shake our faith; that we have not become so jaded by “divine hiddenness” that we are too afraid to hope in the miraculous. If our heart's desire is, for example, for the healing of a friend, and with our limited perspective we sincerely believe that God will be most

glorified through such a miraculous healing, then it is good to pray for that healing without reservation about it being answered positively. The worst that could happen is that God answers in the negative, but the love, sincerity and faith shown by the hopeful prayer for healing will be to the credit of the person who prayed such. May their prayers and faith, regardless of the answer, be to the edification of those around them!

God has woven His church as a rich and diverse tapestry of believers. It is my belief that 1 Corinthians 12:12–31 does not only apply to individuals, but churches as well. We need to continually be examining our faith and habits—including the spiritual habit of prayer—and not become complacent and uncritical, that we become blind to our failings and shortcomings. We must not only always be instructing others, but allowing ourselves to be taught by the examples of others. Let us grow together in unity in Christ as we rely on Him in prayer.

Categories:

- Encouragements [3]

Tags:

- praying [4]
- prayer [5]
- pride [6]
- doubt [7]

Source URL: https://siyach.org/node/1221

Links
[1] https://siyach.org/node/1221
[2] https://siyach.org/node/1172
[3] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/34
[4] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/147
[5] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/146
[6] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/455
[7] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/151