

PRAYER IS NEVER ANSWERED

Some say, "Prayer is about God giving us a say in at least some of the issues facing the world. It is about God giving us a say so for that is part of living out the only thing that matters: a relationship with him."

That is nonsense. You can have a relationship with a person who cannot do anything for you or who does not give you any say in what they decide. God has to act whether we ask or agree or not. It is he who chooses to act and if we agree that is fine but does not make us in any way a co-agent. No it makes us consenters.

If God wants us to feel we have an input then he is indulging our wish to feel like we have more control than we have and are sort of Gods. He is also lying.

How does our say so work when we may not be very well informed or as informed as we think we are? What if something that seemed to be an answer to our prayer had nothing to do with our praying? The answer is that it is not piety that is in us but arrogance. Imagine if you think famine is averted in xland because you prayed!? If you don't think that, you should and the should is the problem. You are still saying you have the right to take the credit even if you have not thought of doing so! The implied arrogance is the biggest and most revolting problem.

The Bible tries to make out that all that happens in life be it good or bad is the action of God (Ecclesiastes 7:14). Is it any wonder that Christians think their prayers are answered when anything can be called an answer? One is expected to feel good that God controls all even if it is not always going to be good for us just like Job who said that even if God were to kill him he would still trust him in Job 13:15.

Prayer is communication with God. It is union with God and believers say it is two way. God unites with you when you pray and you unite with him.

Praying for something is not what it is all about. Religion says that prayer is not just asking but is asking as part of a relationship with God that means everything to you. A weak relationship means your asking is just using and trying to fool God and yourself. Prayer then is by definition consenting to let God work on you and change you into a holy child of his ready to do good. Asking without seeking a relationship with God is an insult not a prayer.

Religion says that when you get what you ask for it is evidence that God is with you and loving you. God is meant to be believed in as a person you are friends with not just as a theory. That entails prayer. A God who is a theory to you may as well not be believed in at all when you bring in spiritual considerations. So the notion of God involves a relationship.

It says that even only one answered prayer out of thousands you have made is evidence.

But if prayers are often unanswered then getting what you asked for could be a coincidence. It is hardly humble to arrogantly assume it is an answer!

Religion says that unanswered prayer is a myth. By not answering prayers God is answering them for you want the best for yourself and that is implied when you turn to God.

So unanswered prayers are a bigger proof of God than answered ones for we often are getting it wrong about what we want and need.

The believers in God are clearly trying to get you to believe by abusing evidence and by deceiving yourself that you have got the principal and essential evidence for God which would be answer to prayer. The doctrine that God is revealed in and through prayer is core doctrine and goes with belief in God thus we have just proven that belief in God is not humble and not loving but arrogant and passive aggressive. It cannot be anything else.

Would prayer be wrong if there is no reason to believe at all that it helps? Is prayer good just because it is prayer or because there at least seems to be a response or both? Religion says God alone matters so it answers that prayer matters just because it is prayer and any good results - eg a lotto win after asking for money- are not what it is about. It is good in itself for recognising the goodness of God. It boasts that God can be happy with your inadequate view of him and his goodness!! Most of us want to think prayer is only okay if there is some kind of helpful response in yourself or from God. So it is about something God can do not God. It boasts then that you are holy enough to get God to do things and fool him into

thinking you really seek his heart in prayer.

In any case, if prayer is about furthering humility as well as doing other things then it never works or is never answered! Prayer is fake humility.

Religion says that if you pray for something the most important thing is God giving you the answers to your problems. For many prayer is not about making things happen, not about winning a car, but about the answers. So prayer helps those who help themselves. See what is happening? If you pray for something and you make the wrong choices as a result you are blamed for not letting God give you the answers and guidance or for distorting what he has told you.

If prayer when done properly always gets answers you open yourself up to seeing the answers. So you are made to feel responsible and to blame if the answers lead only to disaster. You are accused of not really wanting the answers from God and of imagining that the answers you got were from him. That is victim-blaming and could be very serious.

You pray for blessings and soon you get a lovely spouse and a nice house and your diabetes improves. But what if some of the good things that follow prayer (if not all) had nothing to do with your praying? And if you pray for a suffering man to get well and he dies you will reason that death was good for him so the prayer was not answered in the way you expected. You are guilty of taking the "good" and the good that happened after the prayer as evidence that prayer works and ignoring anything that shows it has not worked. To centre on hits and ignore misses is a sign of insincerity. It is a sign of how we can think we believe what we know is lies. The misses hurt. If you pray to God to bless Jane and she gets over her flu but her husband dies his death is a miss. To ignore the misses is to condone God who lets them happen and who even does the bad things.

The Bible and the Church both say that when we pray the Holy Spirit prays with us - and in our place to make up for our deficiencies and that all prayer is inspired by God (Romans 8:26). When you pray for your baby to get better and it doesn't, did God inspire you to pray for something that was against his will? The doctrine is so absurd. It shows that if prayer works, it is not down to a God. A God that inspires you to pray for things he has no intention of giving you is a deceitful God. Prayer would prove his sneakiness more than his reliability. It wouldn't prove that prayer works. If you ask a disobedient brat to do something and he does it, it only proves he did it to please himself and not because you asked him. Your asking him didn't work - it only looked as if it did.

Some say God foresees how he will respond to prayer. He knows the future. God cannot look at the future and see if answering the prayer will be best for he knows all along. That doctrine shows a strange concept of responding!

If I ask God to cure a sick baby and the baby gets better what if I had not prayed? Some say that because prayer is one of the causes of the cure if not the only cause then without the prayer God would have to find another way to cure the baby. That would mean that God does not need my prayers to help the baby. The Church will clarify, "The baby then was not healed because I prayed. It was made better through my prayers." But what does through mean? It means nothing. The cure only looks like it was linked to the prayer so there is no reason to imagine there was any direct (because I prayed) or indirect (through my praying).

Some people believe that even the staunchest atheists have a relationship with God without realising it. They say God is bigger than any errors a person makes and if the person has a good heart God is in that person and that person is connected with God. If this argument is true, it disposes of the notion that those who say prayer is no good for it is never answered are guilty of not doing it to try it. They would be praying without realising it.

It has been found that statistically people who pray are no better off than those who don't (page 157, The Puzzle of God) so that shows that there is no God or that prayer is no good if there is.

Bishop John AT Robinson in *Honest to God* wrote that when you pray for another you are opening yourself up unconditionally to love for him or her before God (page 99). We are incapable of this love - we only love selfishly - so prayer is only for perfected saints if they really exist and we know they cannot. Coming from anybody else it is a show-off and could not possibly cause supernatural benefits except by black magic.

Ayn Rand claimed that belief in God is demeaning because it suggests that man is an inferior being and has to worship an ideal represented by God that he will never achieve (page 230, *Christianity for the Tough-Minded*). She is right for you should be happy with yourself as you are and this will improve you automatically. There is no way then that prayer with the example and message it gives could be really helping another person. Any help it gives is useless compared to the damage.

Some hotly contested studies claim to show that people who pray are mentally healthier and get better quicker than people who do not. It is certain that one prayer should be enough if God is going to help you. But the studies say is only people who pray a lot who get the good feelings and the happiness and the power to overcome illness. Clearly, the benefits are not

down to prayer but to the good feelings it may induce.

Prayer is relaxing and that benefits. But any relaxation technique that appeals to you should do.

We are not told in the studies about those who prefer to heal themselves through the power of relaxation and inner peace not by prayer but by using crystals and spells and other actions which the Church considers profane for they imply that magic is necessary to get favours from God for he is incompetent in many things.

Prayer does not help because it cannot help without a positive outlook so it is magic that really does the work if anything supernatural is happening. The relaxing and hopeful attitude behind prayer helps but that is not the same thing as prayer helping. Cheerfully chatting all day is great therapy when you are sick. Prayer has the same effect for it is like cheerfully chatting to your friend God. But God is not nice so the good results have nothing to do with him and you only imagine he is a nice guy.

Prayer is not supposed to be about healing and helping but about bringing yourself and others into submission to God so the studies are irreverent and distorting what prayer would mean if there is a God. Only the Devil could ensure that the results of the studies are positive towards prayer.

The reason the Church says that prayer is necessary for remaining a true believer in God is that most believers in God believe because they think they have got results from their prayers which indicates that there is a God out there. So when Jim prays for a bicycle and he gets one within days he thinks this is an answer to his prayers. But Jim has a brain and knows he might have got the bike anyway. There must be a fear then that makes him ignore this and attribute the act to God. The fear is that he might be ungrateful and get no more favours from this God if he decides it was not or might not have been God after all.

He might be afraid to fail to thank God in case God got him the bike. Guilt then can impel people to think that prayer works even though most of the time prayers are unanswered. Prayer is bad for this reason. If God or prayer were really good then a person deciding that a seeming answer to prayer was not a real answer from God and was just a coincidence would be seen as doing nothing wrong. To condemn or penalise them is simply to hold that they have no right to think for themselves or have their own opinion. So prayer is not so virtuous and wonderful after all! Anything that produces guilt dents self-esteem which is so essential for living a life of decency that has concern for others so prayer causes much indirect evil and violence.

It is not strictly true that religious people think you must make your prayers come true. The act of praying and then working to bring about what you pray for is seen as two separate acts. But do not forget that believers see praying and then acting to bring your request about as prayer in action. So both are prayer but in different forms. So strictly speaking there is only the intention to pray. "Prayer was more a means of focusing yourself on what was really important and asking for guidance as in opening yourself up to wisdom" is incorrect.

The Bible speaks as if God will respond to holy sincere prayers no ifs or buts. But this conveniently refers to spiritual matters. An orphan praying to escape from slavery will be disappointed. But if he prays to accept his state he will imagine the Lord has helped. Thus praying for a baby to recover from an agonising condition is not as important as praying that somebody will love God better. That only leads to you thinking your prayers are working though it does not look like it.