

Prayer: Communicating with God

We know the importance of communication in the workplace. Careful listening and speaking are essential for the health of working relationships, and the effectiveness of our transactions. The value of communication, though, is not restricted to the secular. Communication with God is vital for all that we are and do. Following are thoughts about how Prayer as communication will bless us as we work.

Prayer is 'raising our hearts and minds to God.' It is communication with God in which we engage our intellects and feelings, senses and intuition. Prayer's purpose is to give and receive love. God wants to express love for us, freely and abundantly. In turn, God wants to receive our love through prayer. There are indicators to help us discern how effective our Prayer life is.

Answers to Prayer: God always answers prayer. Biblical records, Church and personal experiences make this point. Four answers to prayer which we can expect are *yes, no, wait, and 'you figure it out.'* *Yes* tells us that God's will agrees with ours. *No* says: God does not agree with what we are asking for. *Wait* tells us that it is in our best interests to wait for a while. In God's time, *wait* will be followed by *yes, no, or you figure it out.*

You figure it out has precedence in Scripture. In Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's stories of the feeding of the 5,000, the disciples asked Jesus how to feed many people, who were far from their homes. Jesus replied, *you give them something to eat.* In effect, he said: 'you figure it out.'

Jesus' response expressed his confidence in the disciples to problem-solve, even when they did not realize that they could. Their situation is similar to the employee who goes to her/his supervisor and asks, "What should I do about such and such?" The supervisor replies, "You figure it out," saying in effect, "I have confidence in you and your abilities to solve it on your own." *You figure it out* is Jesus' expression of confidence in us. We usually perceive this response as 'no response,' or, more accurately, silence as we pray.

Listening to God Three, inner voices clamor for our attention. One is God's. The other is our thoughts, hopes, concerns etc., which fill our minds, consciously or unconsciously. The third is evil, the ever-present voice of deceit. Trying to discern which voice is which can be a challenge. When we are not certain who or what we're hearing in prayer, it helps to say: *God, I can't hear you.* We need to keep saying that over and over until we are clear that it is God who is responding. When we press God this way, God will respond! God has no interest in evil or our own minds' distractions misleading us.

Recognizing God Some tests for discerning God's will can help us:

- Insight - Insights from God are usually perceived as the 'aha!' from a fresh idea or understanding. Insight is the ability to perceive in a new way.
- Inspiration - Inspiration is fresh motivation to respond to a new opportunity.
- Ideas - Just when we think we have run out of ideas, an idea 'comes to us.' This is part of our innate creativity, which is characteristic of God and us.

- Peace - Only God gives peace. Peace is stillness of spirit, which nothing can upset. When God's and our wills agree, peace is the inevitable result. God often speaks to people through the presence of peace.
- Churning - When our spirits or minds are agitated, it may be because God is trying to get our attention. Stop. Ask God about it. Then, expect God to answer.

Communication in the workplace is vital for the well-being of people, systems and relationships. Communication with God is also vital for well-being and 'doing,' no matter where we are. God is infinitely eager to love, bless and help us in what we are and do. May these communication tips bless us in our personal and working relationships with God.

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