

Prayer: God's great idea!

God on Mute

Scriptures: John 14:12-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23; Daniel 3:1-18; 10:12-14; 2 Cor. 12:1-10; James 4:2-3; Psalm 66:18; 1 Peter 3:7; Prov. 21:13; Ephesians 6:10-13; Psalm 13.

1. Share of a time in your life when you thought God was on mute? (. . . you needed an answer to your prayers, but none was forthcoming; heaven was silent)
2. Corrie ten Boom wrote of the miraculous bottle of vitamins that didn't run out, providing life-preserving nutrients to her sister and a couple of dozen cell mates at Ravensbruck concentration camp—truly God's provision—yet just before the war was over her sister died. What do you make of this story? What sometimes confuses you about God?
3. Read John 14:12-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23. What does it mean to pray "in Jesus' name"?
4. Bruce Nolan (Bruce Almighty) claimed that God could fix his life in five minutes if he wanted to, and was given the opportunity to be God for one week. What would you change in this world if you were given that power? Why do you think Mahatma Gandhi when asked "If you were given the power to remake the world, what would you do first?" replied "I would pray for power to renounce that power"?
5. Read Daniel 3:1-18. What do you find astonishing about the Hebrew boys' response to King Nebuchadnezzar (see v16-18)? What might their response teach us about suffering? Jesus taught us to pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." In what way has God's kingdom come, and is yet to come, on earth?
6. What prayer are you thankful that God ***didn't*** answer? Read 2 Cor. 12:1-10. What prayer didn't God answer for St. Paul (. . . or at least in the way that Paul expected)? What "better" answer did Paul receive?
7. What reasons do you think God has for withholding an answer? (For example, take a look at James 4:2-3; Psalm 66:18; 1 Peter 3:7; Prov. 21:13). Steve said that sometimes the Lord withholds an answer because he desires to show us that he himself is a better answer than the thing we are asking from him! Thoughts? Do we sometimes treat God as a "celestial debit card" or "Aladdin's lamp"?
8. Read Dan. 10:12-14 and Eph. 6:10-13. What might this tell us about the power of prayer and, maybe, the reason why we sometimes don't get an answer to our prayers? What's the lesson?
9. Read Psalm 13. It appears that the writer didn't get his prayers answered as quickly as he'd hoped? What can this Psalm teach us about how we pray?