

## Tuning In! / Zoning out!

**1 Samuel 3 v 1 – 10** “Now Samuel did not yet recognise the Lord, for He had not yet been revealed to him.”

Just because we don't know how to pray, doesn't mean God is not trying to communicate with us!

#malayalamexperience

Before we can start praying (communicating with God) effectively, we need to get **tuned-in** to Him.

**v 8 – 9** “Eli realised (was aware that) it was the Lord who was calling the boy, so he told Samuel, “...if he calls you again, say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening’”.

Now Samuel was tuned-in!

If God were to call him again – this time he was *all ears*!

**John 8 v 47** Jesus challenges the Pharisees –“He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

**Matthew 11 v 15** “He who has ears to hear – LET HIM HEAR!”

**Revelations chapter 2 & 3** (message to the Churches)

Sometimes we **zone-out**!

Like a child to his father, he hears the noise, but he takes no notice!

God is often wanting to communicate with us, but we have zoned out.

#venezuelanfamilymeal

**Revelations 3 v 20** Message to the church of Laodicea: (*not a Gospel message*)

The Lord says “...I know you and I know your deeds...” **v 15** .....

**v 20** “...yet, here I am, standing at the door and knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I WILL COME IN!”...

**v 22** “He who has an ear, let him hear...”!

## **A Good Reason to Pray**

**Ephesians 3 v 14 – 21** “...to Him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations.”

**v 14** “For this reason I kneel before the Father.”

- Do we come before the Father with a reason?
- Do we acknowledge His authority?

**v 16** “I pray that He may strengthen you...”

- What are our desires for one another?
- Are we bold enough to ask for so much?

**v 17** “and I pray that you may be rooted in love...”

- Do we fully appreciate the love of Christ?
- Dare we to ask that He fills us with His love?

**v 20 – 21** The Benediction.

## What is “Prayer” for?

**Colossians 1 v 9 – 14** “...in order that you might live a life worthy of the Lord, and please Him...”

**v 9** to KNOW God

**1 John 5 v 20** “The Son of God has come to give us understanding, that we may know Him who is Truth.”

**v10** to PLEASE God

**Zephaniah 3 v 17** “The Lord your God will take great delight in you, quietening you with His love and rejoicing over you with singing.”

**v11** to GROW IN God

**1 Peter 5 v 10** “He will restore you and make you to grow strong.”

**v11** to WAIT ON God

**Isaiah 40 v 31** “They that wait (look up in anticipation) upon the Lord shall renew their (inner) strength...”

**v 12** to GIVE THANKS to God

**1 Thessalonians 5 v 18** “In everything give thanks, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Why? Because **v 13 – 14** “He has rescued us from darkness, and brought us into the Kingdom of His Son. It is through Him (Jesus) that we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

**Sense of Duty** – It’s been drummed into me since I could talk.

**Guilt** – If I don’t pray, bad things might happen.

**Emotional crutch** – It’s a form of therapy!

**Justification of plans** – Get God’s seal of approval.

**Habit** – It’s like cleaning my teeth!

**To make a deal** – If I do this, then God, You must do that!

**To look good** – Hopefully someone is watching me and is impressed.

**Gossip** – Tell God (and anyone who may be listening) about “stuff”.

**Someone to talk to** – When I’ve no one else to talk to.

**Desperation** – If I’m in so deep that I can’t manage anymore.

**Last resort** – Well, I’ve tried everything else.

**To argue the toss** – I’m not happy with Your last answer.

**Shopping list of “wants”** – I ask, You listen!

**Testing God** – Give God choices or ultimatums on my say-so.

**To feel good** – Just unload all my cares and problems, to feel better.

**Because of a promise to a friend** – fulfilling an obligation.

**Blaming God** – When everything’s going wrong!

**It’s what I’m supposed to do** – I’m a Christian, God’s my Father, so...

## Receive

**Mark 11 v 22 – 26** “Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have *already* received it, and it will be yours!”

Simply receiving is a childlike concept.

We grow cynical, sceptical, doubtful.

Jesus says, “...don’t doubt, just believe in your heart, and it will be done.” **v 23**

*30 minutes with Jesus* –      What do we expect?  
   What do we ask for?  
   How do we approach “Jehovah Jirah”?

Does our prayer life seem meaningless or awkward?

Most of the time we – Keep asking for the same thing over and over!

Avoid asking for anything to “difficult”!

Ask for things God has already offered us!

The Gospel message and our Christian walk is all about **RECEIVING**.

God our loving heavenly Father has it all, ready for us to **RECEIVE**.

**1 John 3 v 21 – 22** “Let us have confidence before God, to *receive from Him anything that we ask for*, so long as we obey Him and walk to please Him.”

**Mark 11 v 22 – 26**

**v 22** “*Have faith in God*”

**1 Corinthians 16 v 13 – 14** “...stand firm in the Faith...do everything in love.”

**v 23** “*Believe that what he says, will happen*”

**Galatians 6 v 9 – 10** “Don’t become fed-up with doing good, for at the intended time we will reap a harvest, but only if we do not give up!

Therefore, let us do good to all, at every opportunity – especially to them who are in God’s family of believers.”

**v 24** “*Believe you have received it*”

**1 John 5 v 14 – 1** “This is the confidence we have in approaching God, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us; and if we know that He hears us - whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of Him.”

**v 25** “*Have a heart of forgiveness to your brother/sister*”

**Matthew 5 v 23 – 24** “...if you are offering to the Lord, and remember that your brother in Christ has an issue with you, leave your offering, and go and be reconciled first, then offer your gift to God.”

“...and it will be yours!”

## **The Sound of Silence**

### **Psalm 23 v 2 – 3**

- i) He makes me lie down in green pastures
- ii) He leads me beside still waters
- iii) He restores my soul when I'm weary

There's a time for praising God with loud voices

There's a time for singing, dancing and clashing of symbols

In any relationship, there is a time for raised voices, but there is also a time for peace and quiet, and listening.

- i) v 2 - just lie down. Stop nibbling and foraging!
- ii) v 2 - get away from the hustle and bustle!
- iii) v 3 - It's NOT God's will for me to be tired and worn out all the time!

**Isaiah 40 v 31** "They that wait (look up in anticipation) upon the Lord shall renew their (inner) strength..."

**1 Peter 5 v 10** "He will restore you and make you strong."

**Matthew 12 v 28 – 30** "Come to Me all who are over-burdened and weighed down, and I will cause you to rest....you will find relief, ease and refreshment, and a blessed quietness for your soul.

Because my yoke is comfortable for you to bear, not hurtful with sharp edges, making it easier for you."

### **Zephaniah 3 v 17**

"The Lord your God is with you.

He is mighty to save you.

He will take great delight in you.

He will quieten you with His love.

He will rejoice over you with sacred songs."

## **When I Struggle to Pray?**

**Zephaniah 3 v 17**

“The Lord your God is with you.

**Joshua 1 v 5** “I, the Lord, will never leave you nor forsake you.”

He is mighty to save you.

**Luke 19 v 10** “For the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) came to seek and to save that which was lost.”

He will take great delight in you.

**Psalms 147 v 11** “The Lord delights in those who reverently and worshipfully fear Him, and who have a blessed hope in His unfailing love.”

He will quieten you with His love.

**Matthew 11 v 28** “Come unto Me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

He will rejoice over you with sacred songs.”

**Psalms 100** “...come before Him with joyful songs, and know that He is your God...” **v 2 & 3**

**Romans 8 v 26** “In times when we do not know how to pray or for what to pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in accordance with God’s will.”

**Psalms 141 v 1** “O Lord, hear me when I cry to You for mercy; in Your faithfulness and righteousness I plead that You come to my aid.”

## **Jonah and the Shelter**

We often think of our conversations with God to be “formal”, and “polite” –  
We make a request – God grants our wishes – and all is well!

Never consider that God’s will is different to what we hope for.  
Never consider that God would want to teach us a lesson when all we want is  
“justice”, and “righteous indignation”.

**Jonah chapter 4 v 4 & v 9** “Do you have a right to be angry with Me?”

**v 2** “I guessed You wouldn’t really go through with it...”

Jonah became depressed and decided to -

**v 5** “sit in the shade of his own making.”  
and “wait and see what would happen.”

We have our own agenda. We ask God – but really we don’t want His input.

However, in his despondency, God gave Jonah comfort

**v 6** “...to ease his discomfort.”

Jonah could have quite happily stayed there until he died!

Now God teaches Jonah a harsh lesson **v 7 – 8** - destroying the shelter.  
Was God being nasty. No, He was showing Jonah that “justice” is God’s will,  
not ours. It is for us to be obedient to His will. **v 9 – 11.**

God wants us to be involved in His conversation with us (prayer).

- Sometimes we can be angry.
- Sometimes we can be despondent.
- Sometimes we can feel like giving up.
- Sometimes we can question God’s will.

But in all things –

**1 John 5 v 3** “This is love for God: to obey His commandments; for His  
commands are not burdensome.”

## **Daniel and the Lions**

**Daniel 6 v 10 – 25** “Daniel answered, ‘O, king, live for ever. My God sent His angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions, and they have not hurt me’.”

**v 21 – 22**

Why didn't the lions harm Daniel?

i) He had learned to recognise the mind of God.

**1 v 17** “God gave them knowledge and understanding...to understand visions and dreams of all kinds.”

**2 v 20 – 23** *Daniels psalm of praise to God.* “You have given me your wisdom.

ii) He, like his friends, knew he would not be alone.

**3 v 12** “They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

**v 17** “If we are thrown into the fiery furnace the God we serve is able to save us... **v 18** “but even if He doesn't – we still will not bow down to your image!”

**v 25** “Look, I see four men walking around in the furnace, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

iii) He knew that God would deal with the king in His own time.

**v 22 – 31** “You have not honoured God, and so He has numbered your days.”

**v 30** “That night, the king died in his bed.”

iv) He had a continual conversation with God.

**6 v 10** “Just as he had always done, Daniel knelt by his window, facing Jerusalem, three times a day, and prayed, giving thanks to his God.”

**v 16** “May your God, whom you serve continually, be your rescuer!”

**v 20** “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?”. **v 21 – 22** “Daniel answered, ‘O, king, my God sent His angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions, and they have not hurt me’.”

**Micah 6 v 8** “The Lord has shown you what is good – what does He require of you?

- That you live justly,
- that you love kindness,
- and show mercy,
- and that you humble yourselves, and walk humbly with your God.



## **But, What If We Don't Understand?**

When we Church-folk speak of doctrines, we presume that we all get it. Sometimes we don't!

Hymn 111 Dear Lord and Father of mankind

**John 14 v 1 – 6** “I am the way....” etc.

**v 5** “Lord, we don't know!” - Thomas

**v 8** “Lord, show us!” – Philip

**Acts 6 v 30** *the Eunuch says*, “of course I don't understand, unless someone explains it to me”.

Hymn 166 Give me a sight o Saviour

Here's some questions we all want answers to:-

*Why do the lights always change to red when I get close?*

*Why does it rain when I'm wearing a T-shirt?*

*Why does my toast fall marmalade down?*

*Why was the bus on time when I was just two minutes late?*

*Why didn't I turn the oven on before I left for church?*

*Why did my dear friend have to get cancer?*

*Why do children die from lack of food and healthcare?*

*Why does a man attack innocent bystanders with hatred in his heart?*

**1 John 5 v 20** “For we know that Jesus, the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may grasp Him who is TRUTH”.

Sometimes we don't need to understand!

**1 Corinthians 13 v 12** “Now dimly, but then – face to face.” \*

Hymn 262 I do not know what lies Ahead

**John 8 v 47** Jesus challenges the Pharisees –“He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

**Revelations 3 v 20** Message to the church of Laodicea: (*not a Gospel message*)

The Lord says “...I know you and I know your deeds...” **v 15** .....

**v 20** “...yet, here I am, standing at the door and knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I WILL COME IN!”...

**v 22** “He who has an ear, let him hear...”!

Are you waiting to hear from God?

Is there an answer you are desperate to receive?

When did you last have a proper conversation with God?

Hymn 22 All the way my Saviour leads me.

## **The Prayer Our Saviour Taught Us.**

**Matthew 6 v 5 – 15** “When you pray, say something like this...” v 9

Listened to instruction on murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, forgiveness, love for enemies, giving to the needy, and now PRAYER.

**Luke 11 v 1** “One day Jesus was praying, and after He finished, one of His disciples asked Jesus ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’”

This is clearly a topic that His disciples wanted to know about.  
They didn’t question anything else – just “How to Pray”.

“When you pray... v 5 – 7

- i) don’t be hypocrites
- ii) don’t be showy
- iii) don’t go on and on

“...because your heavenly Father knows what you need, even before you ask Him!” v 8

**Ephesians 6 v 10 – 17** “Put on the full armour of God...”

Reasons are given for each piece of our spiritual armour, and its purpose.  
It is no coincidence that v 18 follows the equipping of ourselves.

Once we’ve put on this spiritual armour...

**v 18** “Pray in the spirit...”

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| i) on all occasions;                           | WHEN     |
| ii) with all kinds of prayers and requests;    | WHAT     |
| iii) stay alert;                               | HOW      |
| iv) don’t cease from praying for one another.” | FOR WHOM |

Prayer is the strongest weapon we have.

Without prayer we are feeble and defenceless.

**Philippians 4 v 4 – 6** “Rejoice in the Lord, always, and again I say ‘Rejoice’.

Let your gentleness of spirit be evident to all. The Lord is near, so don’t be anxious about anything, but rather, by prayer and specific requests, with continual thanksgiving, make your wants and your desires known to God.”

God assures us that he hears our prayers and gives us the confidence to ask of Him.

**I John 5 v 14** “For this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we ask of Him.”

## The Lord's Prayer – what is it NOT?

### **Luke 18 v 9 – 14 – How should we, therefore, pray?**

- i) The Lord's Prayer is not an **INCANTATION**
- ii) The Lord's Prayer is not a **"SHOW"**
- iii) The Lord's Prayer is not a **"GET-OUT-OF-JAIL-FREE" card**
- iv) The Lord's Prayer is not a **KEY TO THE KINGDOM**
- v) The Lord's Prayer is not an **EXCUSE FOR REAL COMMUNICATION**

**Incantation** – If we repeat it often enough it will....

**Luke 6 v 46 – 47** "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord', without knowing what you are saying?"

**"Show"** – as a public indulgence in piety....

**Matthew 6 v 5** "...for they pray on street corners, to be seen by others..."

**"Get out of Jail" free** – as a white-wash over all other failings...

**Matthew 5 v 20** "...for unless your righteousness surpasses theirs, you will not reach to God's throne."

**Key to the Kingdom** – as a "Free Pass" into heaven...

**Matthew 23 v 13** "You shut the door of the Kingdom of God to those who would seek Him."

**Excuse for Real Communication** – as a "quickie"-prayer to save talking to Him

**Mark 12 v 40** "They like to walk around a lot and do all the "right" things, in order to be seen by men – not by God."