

## Prerequisites for Answered Prayer

Though it is clear from Scripture that God always answers our prayers in some manner (as we mentioned above) there are also some guidelines for effective praying. Certain practices or attitudes can hinder your prayers and, in such cases, God will not respond to them. The passages below help us understand that we must be in a right relationship with God and with others in order for our prayers to be effectively heard by God.

1. Harboring unconfessed sin will put a barrier between you and God (Ps. 66:18).
2. God hears the prayers of those who obey His commands (1 John 3:22-23).
3. God will not hear prayers that have wrong or selfish motives (James 4:3).
4. We are instructed to pray according to His will, not according to ours (1 John 5:14-15).
5. When we pray, we are to ask in faith. Unbelief is a barrier to answered prayer (Mark 11:22-24).
6. An ongoing abiding life in Christ (having regular fellowship with Him) will allow your prayers to be heard. When fellowship is broken, so is communication with God (John 15:7).
7. Sometimes we don't have answered prayers because we do not ask. We are to pursue appropriate requests regularly and bring them to God (Luke 11:9).
8. Prayer in the Spirit (that is, under the control of the Holy Spirit) is also a prerequisite. This verse instructs us that we must also persevere in our praying. Prayers offered in the flesh will not be heard by God (Eph. 6:18).
9. If you are unable to forgive someone for something that person has done to you, then God says He will not forgive you. Restored and right relationships are essential for open communication with God (Mark 11:25).
10. We are to pray with thankful hearts. Those of us who come before God without a spirit of thankfulness will find our prayers are not heard (Phil. 4:6).

Bill Donahue, *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*,  
(Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996), p. 58