

**What is prayer?**

**Why do we pray?**

**We learn the types of prayer as youngsters**

**Prayer of petition and thanksgiving**

**Praise and worship**

**Prayer of contrition or sorrow**

**There is also Hindu prayer and Islamic prayer**

**Jewish prayer and more**

**I suppose even atheists have a type of prayer**

**But for us as Christians there is a specific approach to prayer**

**And at its heart**

**A specific person we pray to**

**That is really what the difference in all prayer is**

**We pray to a person**

**A person who is so powerful and transcendent**

***He knows every hair on your head***

**Even a sparrow does not fall from the sky without his knowledge**

**And a person who is so imminent**

***I knew you before I created you in the womb***

**He tells us to call him Father**

**Abba, papa**

**Nothing is beyond his providential care**

**Nothing is too small to bring to him in prayer**

**And people have been praying in one form or another since the beginning**

**We see a type of prayer in our reading from Genesis**

**Abraham praying over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah**

**God has heard the outcry**

**He wishes to investigate to see if it is as dire as it seems**

**While the 2 go to investigate the Lord remains with Abraham**

**And Abraham begins to question him**

**Really to petition for the innocent**

***Will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty?***

***What if there are only 50 innocent people in those cities?***

**Six times he asks**

**Each time reducing the number**

**45, 40**

**What if only 10 can be found?**

**The Lord tells Abraham**

**For the sake of those ten I will not destroy it**

**We see the power of prayer**

**The power of persistence**

**The same thing we see in our Gospel**

**When Jesus teaches us the Our Father**

**He first teaches the words**

**What to say**

**Then he teaches us perseverance**

**How to pray**

**He teaches us the intimacy God desires**

**Our Father**

**We call out to the very source of all creation and life**

**But we do so with a term of endearment**

**Calling God our papa or daddy**

**As baptized Christians, we have a special relationship and  
familiarity with God**

**Like a small child in the arms of their grandfather**

**With the total trust this implies**

**That is how intimate God desires us to be**

**Then Jesus teaches us the power of surrender**

**His will be done**

**Even when our vision is clouded**

**When we cannot see through the suffering and the pain**

**Of our own**

**Or often what is worse**

**That of a loved one**

**When we do not understand**

**We trust that even here**

**Our Father is present**

**He who was present when his own son was offered up for our sin**

**He who did not abandon him**

**Will not abandon us**

**His will and his presence is our peace**

**Christian prayer is not a prayer of manipulation**

**We do not force God into granting our desires**

**We cannot manipulate him according to our whims**

**He is not a genie that answers prayers based on our actions**

**He does not demand we say it a specific number of times**

**Or we put so many copies in the back of the church**

**Or we publish it in the newspaper**

**The power of prayer comes from conversion of heart**

**Our heart**

**And the peaceful surrender this brings about**

**Then there are a series of petitions to our Father**

**Where we present our needs**

**We ask for forgiveness for ourselves**

**And the grace to forgive as well**

**Trusting God with the truth about ourselves**

**In humility and truth**

**It is said that doctrine forms the mind**

**But prayer forms the soul**

**This is true for all faiths**

**Even for non-believers**

**How they see God**

**How they view the world**

**This is their doctrine**

**We have this as Catholics**

**We learn the structure and form of our sacraments**

**The doctrines of our Church**

**But as Christians we have a special prayer**

**We are the only ones to have a relationship with a Father**

**Not a master**

**Not a remote task master**

**Not one removed from our daily existence**

**But a God who is our Father**

**And one who knows our every need**

**One who desires to give us everything for our own good**

**One that wants us to return to him again and again....and again**

**Seeking him**

**Trusting him**

**Loving him**