



Empowering People to Change the World

**P.U.S.H.
Pray Until Something Happens**

Steve Holt

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Years ago Liz told me about seeing a bumper sticker on the back of a van that read, "PUSH—Pray Until Something Happens." She never forgot about that. I think it's an apt description of prayer—not complete—but very descriptive of prayer.

I want to give you a definition of prayer. I know this is quite risky because there are so many views on prayer. Between "worship" and "prayer" there are probably hundreds of different viewpoints. But let me give you my definition of prayer from the two most important sources: The Scriptures and personal experience.

Prayer is asking and receiving. Simple and complex as that. That's my best definition after studying the scripture all these years.

- Many more liberal theologians don't believe that prayer really changes things. They don't believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible and can't see the obvious teaching from the Word of God, is that prayer is asking and receiving.
- Dr. Harry Fosdick, noted liberal pastor of the early 20th century, once said, "There are some who still think of prayer in terms of childish supplications to a divine Santa Claus...Many foolish prayers are offered by well meaning but unintelligent with the excuse that they are child-like in their simple trust...Childishness in prayer is chiefly evidenced in an overweening desire to beg things from God."
- For this pastor, prayer is not asking and receiving for if you did this you are "childish, foolish, and unintelligent"! That's me! I hope that's you!
- Even unbelievers, those who don't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, even they believe that prayer is asking and receiving. Someone has said, "There are no atheists in foxholes." People in need pray! I have rarely asked a waiter, waitress, unchurched friend who has a major need, a major disease who turns me down if I ask if I can pray for their situation.
- All of us have prayed in times of crisis and need because we believe that prayer is asking and receiving from God.

**Prayer is asking and receiving. What does the Bible say about prayer?
What does Jesus say about it?**

Matt 7:7 (NKJV) “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. **9** Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? **11** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Matt 7:7-11 (The Message) “Don’t bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This isn’t a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek game we’re in. If your child asks for bread, do you trick him with sawdust? If he asks for fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? As bad as you are, you wouldn’t think of such a thing. You’re at least decent to your own children. So don’t you think the God who conceived you in love will be even better?

John 16:24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

James 4:2 You do not have because you do not ask.

Matt 21:21-22 So Jesus answered and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

Matt 21:21-22 (The Message): But Jesus was matter-of-fact: “Yes—and if you embrace this kingdom life and don’t doubt God, you’ll not only do minor feats like I did to the fig tree, but also triumph over huge obstacles. This mountain, for instance, you’ll tell, ‘Go jump in the lake,’ and it will jump. Absolutely everything, ranging from small to large, as you make it a part of your believing prayer, gets included as you lay hold of God.”

John 14:14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.

If you go into a country western saloon here in our city, you will see a Mechanical Bull or Rodeo Bull that replicates the bucking bronco. Some of these can be controlled with variable speeds. You press the button and off you go. You get kicked around, shirt tail flying, arms flapping. But when you get off, you're at the same place you started. You didn't go anywhere! It might have been fun, but you didn't go anywhere. You've see those little horses at Walmart that the kids can ride. It's fun, it's even exciting for little guys, but at the end you haven't gone anywhere. For some people that's what prayer is, just an exercise, maybe making them feel better or more excited but it doesn't go anywhere. I have ridden one of these Mechanical Bulls before and I have also rode wild unbroken horses. Prayer is like riding a real horse. Prayer goes places. Prayer has a destination, not just an exercise.

Prayer, in our best understanding from Jesus and the Scriptures, is "Asking and receiving something from God."

Matt 7:7 (NKJV) Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. **9** Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? **11** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Prayer is Asking

- Prayer is asking. Prayer is seeking. Prayer is knocking. Prayer is asking for something.
- Prayer is expecting God to do something. Prayer is asking for something definite.
- One who knocks is expecting someone to answer and open the door. The one who seeks for something, expects to find it.
- There are two words in the Greek New Testament for "ask." One is *eperotao*, which means to inquire, as in asking questions. But the other is *aiteo*, and it means "to crave, to ask, to desire, to call for," and always means asking for something. This is the word used for prayer. 30x it is used in the New Testament alone. It is translated "ask."

- The great “Prayer Book” of the Bible are the Psalms. The Psalms are cries from David, Moses, Asaph, Heman, the sons of Korah, Solomon, and Ethan and many of the Psalms are cries for God to help, deliverance, and justice.
- Jesus modeled a life of asking God for things. He asked His father for healings, deliverance, and comfort.
- Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup from Me.” He even told the disciples to pray so that they would not enter into temptation.
- In the final major prayer of Jesus he is asking for his disciples to be unified, sanctified, and experience God’s love. (John 17)
- All of the prayers of Paul in the New Testament are prayers asking God for specific things.

We had a child who was struggling with deep depression, even contemplating suicide and we prayed and prayed and over a one year period he was mightily delivered and set free—went to college, got two degrees, and has a dynamic walk with God today.

While I was a missionary we came back to the U.S. needing over \$15k but God told us not to ask for the money but rather to pray and ask Him for the money we needed. We spent 3 months meeting with friends and never once asked for money. But on the night of our last day before flying out of LA back to Japan, the final \$2k was given!

- But not just asking, seeking, and knocking, but it is receiving, finding, and opening. God wants to bless you with the things you are asking for.

Prayer is Receiving

- **John 16:24** Jesus said, “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”
- **Matt 21:21-22** So Jesus answered and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be

cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

- Prayer is receiving because it's the very nature of God to give to His children. This is what God does because at the heart of God is giving. God gives. God gives to His children.

We were once in a very difficult financial situation. It seemed that everything we had was breaking down—two cars needed major repairs, problems with our septic, etc. We finally came together and placed our wallets, bank cards, Visa cards, everything out on the floor and prayed over them. We cried out to God daily and suddenly out of the blue God surprised us with money we didn't know we had and in two weeks \$13k came in.

Chris Tomlin in his song "Everything."

With rain, with sun
With much, with less
With joy, with pain
With life, with death

Only things that satisfy come from You
They come from You
Everything that's beautiful
Everything that's wonderful
Every perfect gift comes from You

Your grace, Your heart
Your voice, Your touch
Your word, Your peace
Your hope, Your love

Only things that satisfy come from You
They come from You
Everything that's beautiful
Everything that's wonderful
Every perfect gift comes from You

A thousand words could not explain
A thousand worlds could not contain
Every perfect gift comes from You

It comes from the Father of Lights
It comes from the Giver of Life

It comes from the Heavens above
It's coming straight from Your heart
To the people You love
From the Father of Lights
From the Giver of Life
From the Heavens above
It's coming straight from Your heart
To the people You love

- It is in the very nature of God to give!
- One of the names of God is that He is a God who answers prayer—Psalm 65:2.
- Hebrews 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- Two things necessary:
 1. Faith to believe that God exists.
 2. Faith to believe that He will reward you for seeking Him.
- Guess what? You can't believe either of those if you don't believe in a God who hears your prayer and will give to you!
- Why does God answer prayer:
 - It is His very nature to give—He is full of grace and mercy.
 - He is loving and caring.
 - He is all knowing and knows what you need.
 - He is all powerful and can get you what you need.
 - He is glorified by answering your prayers.

- God will answer anyone's prayer! Whatever their situation, whatever their skin color, ethnic background...
 - God heard the prayer and gave to Enoch, who walked with God.
 - God heard the prayers and gave to Abraham a child.
 - God heard the prayer and gave to Daniel when he asked for revelation about Nebuchadnezzar's dream, delivered him from the lions den and his friends in the fiery furnace.
 - God heard the prayer and gave to a Canaanite woman.
 - God heard the prayer and gave of a Roman centurion.
 - God heard the prayer and gave to a dying thief on the cross with Jesus.

- And God will answer your prayers! He is a giving, loving, caring God!

- Prayer is asking and receiving! But most of us have not because we ask not!

- **PUSH—Pray Until Something Happens!!**

Once we were out of money and our well died. We had no resources to draw from—we don't use credit in such times—and cried out to God. We needed \$5100. A few days later one of our friends and neighbors said that during prayer, God had told her we needed money and that she was to give us \$5k.

Luke 18:1

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. 3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"

Luke 18:6

Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

- What do you need God to do for you? What are 3 specific things you need to cry out to God to do? I want you to write them down.
- What about the 7 Mountains of God that we're praying over next weekend? What are 2-3 things you would like God to do in these areas:

War Room: The 7 Mountains of Influence

- The Church (churches, denominations, para-church ministries, and other religions)
- Family and Marriage (youth, children, and marriage)
- Education (all schools, universities, colleges, and educators)
- Business (marketplace, entrepreneurs, and new innovations)
- Media, Arts, and Entertainment (the press, internet, TV, social media, movie industry, and sports)
- Military (our servicemen and women, strategies, and leadership)
- Government

Next Saturday and Sunday—24 Hour War Room! We actually have 3 young men in our church who came up to me and said they were going to pray the entire 24 hours together! Wow!!

Sign up! Here's how...

How to sign up for 24-Hour War Room: Click this link to go to our invitation page on VolunteerSpot: <http://vols.pt/1aUTdC> and follow the instructions.