

Discussion Questions for *The God Who Hears*

1. C. S. Lewis once said, “That gnat-like cloud of petty anxieties and decisions about the conduct of the next hour have interfered with my prayers more often than any passion or appetite whatever.” What do you think interferes with your prayers? Make a list. Do men and women have different kinds of difficulties?
2. The author claims that black clothes and long faces are not the best way to express holiness. What do you think? Do clothing or facial expression have *anything* to do with holiness? Why or why not?
3. Why does God want you to be holy?
4. The author contends that the modern Christian life often is a series of compartments. Is life really as fragmented as he suggests? In what ways is your life fragmented?
5. The happy—or dramatic—answers to prayer tend to get the most attention from fellow Christians and the Christian media. Does this help or hurt your attitude toward prayer?
6. Do you think it is right biblically to say that prayer should be viewed primarily as a way to build a relationship with God rather than a way to get answers? Why is this hard to remember when God does not answer your prayer?
7. What practical suggestions have helped you most in your prayer life? Why?
8. Do you think the existence of pain and evil is a difficulty for most praying Christians? Explain. Do you know anyone who has stopped praying because of suffering?
9. Do you think Christians feel they have to put on a happy face and have a nice day (every day) in order to be spiritual? Do you think your church or Bible study group lets people “hurt” in prayer?
10. How do our attitudes toward our parents affect the way we think about God?
11. What do you think about the contention that obedience to God’s Word helps a Christian pray according to God’s will?
12. How does media advertising encourage dissatisfaction and insecurity?
13. What do you think about the author’s claim that “life is a prayer”?
14. The author says “no pain, no gain” is a principle which applies to our spiritual lives. What do you think about this? Do you have to hurt to be holy?

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15. Why do Christians find it hard to accept the notion that God's discipline is really evidence that God loves them?

16. In a letter written in 1940 C.S. Lewis said:

When you pray for Hitler and Stalin how do you actually teach yourself to make the prayer real? The two things that help me are (a) A continual grasp of the idea that one is joining one's feeble voice to the perpetual intercession of Christ who died for these very men. (b) A recollection, as firm as I can make it, of all one's own cruelty; which might have blossomed under different conditions into something terrible. You and I are not at bottom so different from these ghastly creatures.

Could you have prayed for Hitler or Stalin? Who do you today find it most difficult to pray for (an unjust leader, a personal enemy, etc.)?

17. Are you ever afraid to ask others for prayer for yourself? Why or why not?

18. How do you think an unforgiving spirit might interfere with your prayers?

19. Imagine that two believers both pray for healing from a chronic illness. One is healed and the other is not. What should the attitudes of the two be? What struggles will they face given God's differing answers to their prayers?

20. How can you believe with all your heart that God will answer your prayer and yet not find your confidence in him shattered when he does not?

21. Does it make sense to say that Christians persist in prayer to express their *complete dependency* on God? Are there other reasons for prayer persistence and importunity?

22. Is there a difference between honest doubt and the doubt of skeptics? Do you think God sees any difference?

23. If you think of prayer in God's name as prayer according to God's will, does it explain why some recent prayers of yours were not answered? Does it help to know that? Why or why not?

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