

# Praying Effective Prayers

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Sometimes people equate Jesus' teaching on "vain repetitions" or "babbling" (Matthew 6:7) with reading prayers or praying for the same things every day. But the word Jesus used means using words that are "meaningless" or "mechanically repeated."

A mechanical prayer would be words repeated by rote, requiring no thought, no concentration, having no heart—words so familiar that our thoughts easily drift as we pray. That's the opposite of the "effective, fervent prayer" that James speaks of (James 5:16). Certainly we can pray for our loved ones every day without being vainly repetitious.

Effective prayer is prayer that is offered in the name of Jesus (John 14:12-14), in His authority, according to His nature and character, asking for what He would ask. It is prayer according to the will of the Father (1 John 5:14-15), which certainly includes praying Scripture—prayers taken directly from the Bible, such as the beautiful prayers of the Apostle Paul, or verses of Scripture turned into prayers. We are on powerful praying ground when we pray God's Word, whether extemporaneously or with written prayers.

Remember, too, that effective prayer doesn't mean eloquent prayer—it's not the number of words, nor the beauty of our words that make a difference. It's the fervency of our heart, not emotions, but genuine love for God and for others. God's Word tells us that though we look on the outside appearance of a person, God looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). That's as true of prayer as any other part of life.