

Dear Stevan,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You wanted to know what it meant if you did not feel the holy spirit when praying.

Prayer is essential to the Christian because it is his lifeline to God. It is through prayer that the Christian is able to connect with God and experience that peace that transcends all understanding (Philippians 4:6-7). When Jesus walked the earth he spent many hours communing with his Father in prayer. Jesus' disciples noted that prayer renewed and strengthened Him so they asked, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). Jesus, in what is now referred to as "The Lord's Prayer," told them to honor His Father's name and pray for the kingdom of God to come. He told them to ask for food for the day and for forgiveness of their sins while at the same time forgiving others. He also told them to ask that they not be overtaken by temptation (Luke 11:2-4).

What else should we pray for? We should pray for the will of God to be done in our lives, thus allowing a greater portion of the holy spirit to work in us so that we may better demonstrate its fruits. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22)

What is the holy spirit? We believe the holy spirit is the power or influence of God in our lives. It is a channel by which we are led to a greater knowledge of Him through study of His word (the Bible) and prayer. We assume that when you say you do not "feel the holy spirit" you refer to an outward manifestation such as speaking in tongues or receiving a healing. These miraculous gifts that Jesus' disciples received at Pentecost were necessary in order to fulfill Jesus' last command to them before he ascended into heaven. "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." (Mark 16:15) "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by signs that accomplished it." (Mark 16:20) We believe the special gifts of the spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) were much needed at the time since the gospels were not yet written. Seeing that the apostles were preaching the good news of Christ's kingdom on earth (as well as in heaven), it was fitting that they should confirm their message by doing miracles, which gave a foretaste of that future kingdom when "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." (Isaiah 35:5) We believe that once the apostles died, the special powers they possessed also ceased. The Apostle Paul states, "But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. . . . And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:8, 13)

What should you "feel" when you pray? If you do not feel connected to God, perhaps your prayers are self-serving. "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives" (James 4:3).

However, when you pray in accordance with God's will you should feel a close connection to God and a sense of comfort and confidence that God's strength will support you through every trial that may come your way. You should find refuge and joy in prayer knowing that God hears the prayers of the righteous. "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:16) When you feel that connection to God through prayer you are receiving a measure of the holy spirit.

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio