

Seek, Ask, Knock

The phrases "seek, ask, knock" are central to Christian understanding of prayer and humanity's relationship with God. They describe the active and persistent nature of prayer, emphasizing that God desires a relationship with humanity and responds to those who earnestly approach God.

The Meaning of "Ask"

To "ask" in prayer signifies a humble recognition of one's dependence on God. It is the most spontaneous form of prayer, expressing our awareness that we are creatures who are not self-sufficient, not masters of adversity, and not our own ultimate end. When we ask, we acknowledge our limitations and our nature as creatures. This act of petition is a turning back to God, even for sinners who have strayed from Him.

The New Testament uses a rich vocabulary for supplication, including asking, beseeching, pleading, invoking, entreating, and crying out. Asking is not meant to instruct or direct God, but to appeal to God's goodness for what we need. It gives definite form to our desires, helps us focus our attention on what we recommend to God, and deepens our appreciation of our close personal relationship with God. We should not be ashamed to ask God for help, whether in times of need or to express gratitude for God's grace. God always responds to those who invoke the Lord, even to reluctant questions hidden deep within the heart

The primary thing to ask for is the coming of God's Kingdom, followed by what is necessary to welcome it and cooperate with its coming. This includes both spiritual and material needs, such as daily bread, forgiveness of sins, peace in relationships, and deliverance from temptation and evil

The Meaning of "Seek"

"Seeking" implies a diligent and earnest pursuit of God and His will. It is a quest to understand the "why and how" of the Christian life, in order to adhere to and respond to what the Lord is asking. This seeking is an essential component of Christian life and a fundamental human quest for truth and happiness.

To seek God means to seek God's face, God's Kingdom, and God's righteousness. It involves a continuous spiritual journey, a *fides quaerens* (faith seeking). This quest is not merely intellectual but involves the whole heart, with tenacity and eagerness. It is a lifelong journey of being with the Master, listening to the Lord, and learning from the Lord.

Seeking God also means recognizing that it is God who first seeks us out and draws us to Godself. It requires a willingness to move beyond self-centeredness and embrace an ever more profound experience of communion with God and others. This pursuit leads to renewed emphasis on contemplation, intensified personal prayer, and a re-evaluation of the silence of the heart.

The Meaning of "Knock"

"Knocking" signifies persistence and earnestness in prayer, indicating that even if the door is not opened immediately, we are to continue. It is an act of unwavering faith and a demonstration of a "glowing mind".

Jesus Himself teaches us to practice prayer insistently, to "knock, knock, knock". This consistent prayer leads to progressive transformation, strengthens us in tribulation, and helps us to be supported by God's love and protection.

The image of knocking also represents Christ knocking at the door of human hearts, inviting us to let Him in. Just as the priest in the old Palm Sunday liturgy would knock on the church door with the processional cross, symbolizing Christ opening the door between God and humanity through His Cross, so too does Christ knock at our hearts, inviting us to open ourselves to Him. This act of knocking is a call to allow God's presence to enter our lives and transform us.

In essence, "ask, seek, knock" encapsulates the dynamic and relational nature of prayer, where humanity actively engages with God in humble petition, diligent pursuit, and persistent faith, trusting that God, in His infinite goodness, will respond.

