

● WARM UP

How real is the power of prayer for you? It became real to me after my hearing had been destroyed by a terrorist's bomb, when 7kg of high explosive detonated a metre behind me and the blast destroyed my hearing. I was serving in Northern Ireland as a Platoon Commander against the Irish Republican Army during what became known as "The Troubles".

The blast destroyed my eardrums and the frequency mechanisms of the inner ear. I asked for hearing aids but was told I did not have enough hearing to amplify and that I had better get used to being profoundly deaf. For three years I lived not hearing speech until I was prayed for by a group of ordinary Christians. Through their prayers God restored my hearing.

I now realise that prayer is the most powerful force in the universe and that its power is available to all Christians. To be effective in prayer we do not need to be spiritual superstars, but we do need to actually spend time in prayer.

● READ Mark 1:32-35, Luke 5:15-16, Luke 6:12-16

● BACKGROUND

Jesus prayed regularly and received significant answers to prayer. He often went to a quiet place to pray, away from other people. Prayer connected Jesus to the Father so that He might know the Father's will. This communication with the Father was so important to Him that He spent many hours praying, sometimes all night. The twelve apostles were chosen as a result of Jesus' all-night prayer and they went on to change the world!

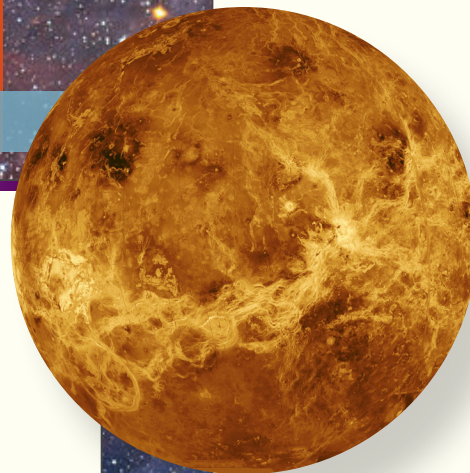
● QUESTIONS

1 Why do you think prayer was so important to Jesus?

2 How much time are you spending in prayer?

3 How has prayer affected your life?

4 What can you pray for today as a group?



What is God saying to me?

● LET'S PRAY

● REAL LIFE STORIES OF GOD'S POWER



Twenty-four years ago I gave my heart to the Lord. One of the reasons was because [of] my father. We didn't have a very good life together when I was younger but he came north and he asked me to forgive him and we forgave each other. About three days later I got a phone call that my father had died. I was really broken. The day after my dad was buried I gave my heart to the Lord. But I had this real grieving in my spirit that I couldn't shake off. About a year later I attended a meeting. Bill Subritzky was ministering. Bill said to me, "Your father just died. The Lord just told me you've got to forgive yourself". Moments after I was prayed for I had a release, and from that time on I went into fulltime ministry. Mike

● CONSIDER THIS

Prayer is two-way communication with God, so we need to listen as well as speak. Effective prayer requires time and commitment. If we pray on a regular basis we will establish our own prayer relationship with God and receive answers to our prayers.

We can do our own thing, cut God out, live our lives through our own will and in our own strength and miss the best that God has for us. Or, we can reach out to Him in prayer and so release the power of the Holy Spirit and the blessings and gifting that He wants to bestow upon us.

Through prayer God enables us to minister the baptism of the Holy Spirit, healing and deliverance. These can be life-changing events that help to move people "from darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

In prayer we can also ask to receive from the Holy Spirit the spiritual gifts that bring forth the fullness of ministry to others. See Matthew 7:7; 1 Corinthians 14:1.

