

Becoming like Jesus in prayer (Based on Chapter 15 of *Costly Grace*)

The Big Idea

Our faith in Jesus reflects the way we pray.

Biblical Foundation

... But when you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you ... Do not be like them. Your Father already knows what you need before you ask him. -Matthew 6:5-8 (TEV)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "The right way to approach God is to stretch out our hands and ask of One who we know has the heart of a Father."

He says it is significant that the Father knows our needs even before we ask. "If God were ignorant of our needs, we should have to think out beforehand *how* we should tell him about them, *what* we should tell him, and whether we should tell him or not. Thus faith, which is the mainspring of Christian prayer, excludes all reflection and premeditation," says Bonhoeffer.

This means Christian prayer presupposes faith. It is based on our belief that we are connected to God through Jesus and that he will hear our prayers. In fact, we pray at his command, so we can expect him to respond to our prayers.

If we really believed this, how would our prayers change?

- What do your prayers say about the way you view God?
- What do your prayers say about your faith in God?
- What do your prayers say about your love-obedience to Jesus?

If you believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that God heard your prayers and would answer them, how would you pray? When will you start to pray that way?