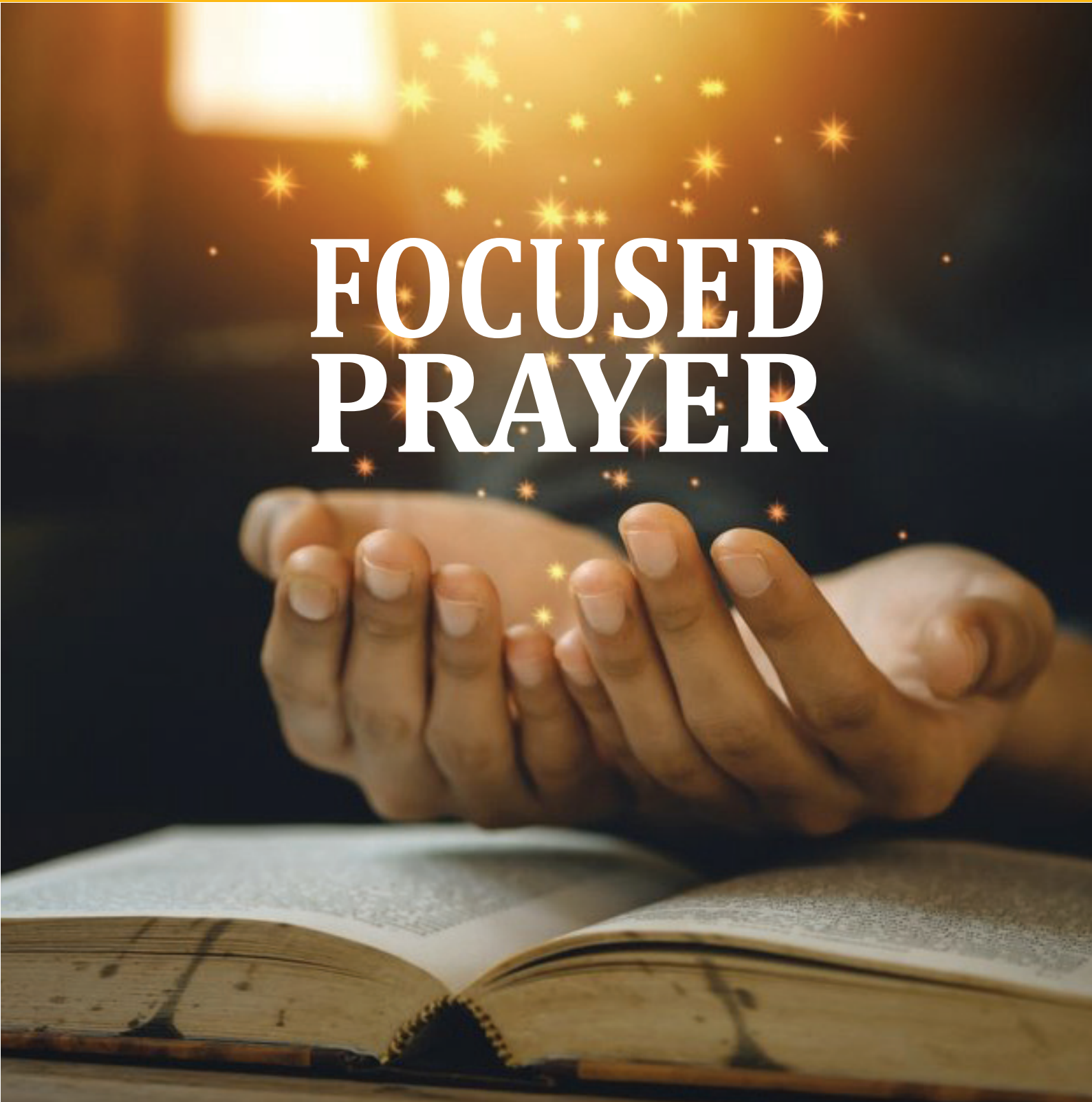


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## FOCUSED PRAYER





**Pastor Dr. T. Valson Abraham**

Founder/President  
India Gospel Outreach

President  
India Bible College and Seminary

President  
India Pentecostal Church of God

# ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

It is not that we can achieve a limited amount without prayer, but we can achieve nothing of eternal significance. We see the importance of prayer in the life and ministry of Jesus. We see that reflected in the disciples' request to Jesus asking him to teach them to pray. The continual activity of the apostles was prayer (Acts 1:14).

Following are some ideas to help increase prayer:

*Pray the scripture.* When we pray the scriptures, we are praying according to God's will. God is in the process of re-shaping our thinking and values to become more Christ-like. When we pray scripture, we know he not only hears us, but he also answers us.

*Have concerts of prayer.* The entire local body of believers, pastors, leaders come together to pray for revival and for the needs of the church, village or city.

*Praise God.*

- Praise helps us to focus our heart upon God.
- Praise removes worry and earthly concerns.
- Praise increases faith.
- Praise invades Satan's territory.

*On-site praying.* Many teams go to various cities and nations for on-site praying. There have been numerous examples of occultic places, places of violence and pornography and other places of sin that were shut down as a result of believers doing on-site praying.

*Spiritual Warfare.* According to Ephesians 6, we know our battle is with spiritual powers. Prayer takes back from Satan the territory he has stolen and long held. More is accomplished for the Lord in a short time when this kind of prayer is employed. A good example of prayer and evangelism was John Hyde. As he was leaving by ship to India, a man handed him a letter. He tucked it into his coat pocket and went into his state room. Later, he remembered the letter. He pulled it out and began to read. The friend asked, "Dear John, Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?"

The note angered him so that he crumpled the letter and threw it on the floor. Then he started pacing about. He said to himself, "I dedicated my life to the mission field, graduated from seminary, and I'm on my way to India." But God used that note to bring conviction to his heart. By the time he reached India, he was a different man from when he left the United States. He spent much time in prayer on his voyage to India. The Holy Spirit fashioned John Hyde into a great prayer warrior, granting him four souls won to Christ every day.

As we pray for community and our nation, let us remember these important truths. ●

Someone remarked, "A typical prayer meeting in many churches today is little more than an organ recital—a litany of prayers for ailing body organs."

We spend more time praying to keep dying saints alive than keeping sinners out of hell. If we are to experience supernatural empowering, we must give priority to prayer. Yes, we do need and are exhorted to pray for the sick, but we should not neglect praying for the salvation of souls and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The church in Korea is a great example. Most Korean believers get up very early in the morning and pray an hour or more. That prayer is the power behind their church growing and reaching out.

Church history records a common thread to all church growth—prayer that is concerted, focused, and supernatural. The methods and models may vary, but the prayer will be constant. In John 15:7, we read, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you." In 1 John 3:22, we read, "And whatever we ask, we receive from him because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight." In James 4:2, we read, "You do not have because you do not ask." There is a critical nature of prayer that can be summarized by two seemingly contrasting verses of scripture: "I can do all things through him that strengthens me," (Philippians 4:13) and "I am the vine, you are the branches. Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). How much can we accomplish through supernatural empowering? The answer is, "All things." What can be accomplished without supernatural empowering? The answer is, "Nothing."

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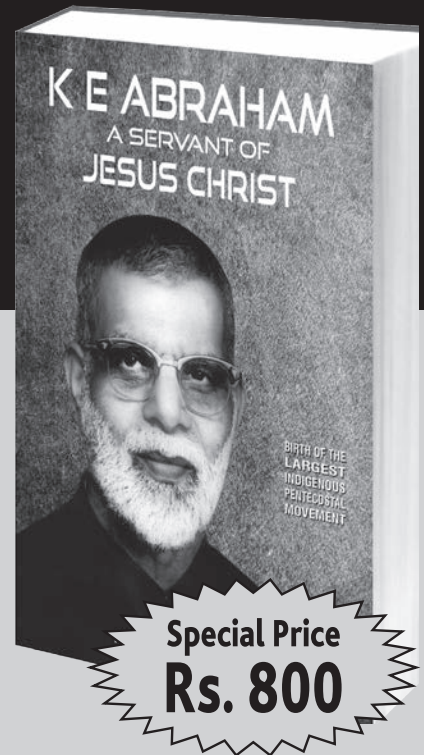
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Pastor Dr. John K. Mathew

**Apostle Paul** with no grain of ambiguity demands Christians to "rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thess.5:17) because it is God's will for all of us.

'Pray continually', means that we should be in contact with God at all times and in all places. Prayer is an attitude that should influence every area of our lives.

According to Manfred Roeseler, "Prayer enables us to express our union with the Lord uniquely, deepens our relationship with Him, and strengthens our faith. Therefore, it is impossible to be a Christian and not pray." That's why our Lord Jesus Christ said, Pray always and do not give up.

Check out this. A worried young man stepped into an elevator to go to the second floor of a hospital where his father was in the intensive care unit. Although the button labeled '2' was already lighted, he pushed it again. A doctor behind him said, "Pushing the button someone has already pushed is like reminding God you are still there when he has not answered your prayer immediately." As the man thought of his father in intensive care, it was comforting to know that God does encourage believers to continue to pray the same prayer until he answers."

# THEREFORE, KEEP PRAYING



*"Ask and it will be given to you: Seek and you will find: Knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; The one who seeks finds; and the one who knocks, the door will be opened. "* Therefore, keep praying. ●



## KNOWING GROWING IN GOING FOR **GOD**

*(Excerpts from Opening Day Address, 2024-25 Academic Year at India Bible College and Seminary)*



**Dr. SAPHIR ATHYA1L, 94**

(PhD, cum laude, Princeton). Formerly, Principal of Union Biblical Seminary, Pune (15 yrs.); Director of 'Faith & Development' with World Vision International (14 yrs.); Vice-chairman of the Lausanne Movement; and Founder-Chairman of Asia Theological Association; Secretary of Board of Theological Education of Serampore 'University', and its interim President. As an Adjunct Professor he taught and gave special lectures in over 15 universities and institutions in all the continents. He is the author/editor of ten books.

**P**raise and thanks to God our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord. I am very grateful for this opportunity to share my thoughts with you all. We are all looking forward for a blessed new academic year ahead. Today I want to give us an overview of what is God's bonding with us and sending us for His ministry. I want to comment on three areas: Knowing God, Growing in God and Going for God.

### **I. KNOWING GOD**

In the Bible the word 'know' is a great word which describes the intimate relationship between two people. In John 8:32, Jesus said that you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free. Jesus never spoke about attaining knowledge about the truth, but always referred to having an intimate relationship with truth. In Galatians 4:9, Paul describes the believers' previous life without God and also about life after knowing God. He says that people always have some concept of knowledge about God but he also refers that God know them. Our experience is the same as the believers in Galatia – We know God rather we are known by God.

Paul towards the very end of his life talks about his desire to know God. We should have a thirst to know God. We boast about knowing the Bible in and out having read it several times. We have a great God who has revealed Himself so that we can know Him better. We live in a religious country filled with many deities and faiths that are different from ours. In Indian villages there are different deities where they have home gods and village gods. There are gods in hills nearby and supreme gods in remote pilgrimage places. We have the greatest and supreme God who is always around us not far away from us. We never take the initiative to go to Him but God takes the initiative to come to us. He is a shepherd that goes out searching for the sheep



that is each one of us. He is the father who waits for the son to come back. This whole process of God providing a way for us to experience Him is based on his initiative.

Ephesians 2: 4-7 summarizes our life. We are crucified with Christ and are resurrected with Christ. To be resurrected we have to die. Many of us want to be resurrected without dying. We are not only resurrected but also ascended and seated at the right hand of Christ. This is our status – while yet on earth we are crucified, resurrected, ascended and seated in heaven with Christ. We have dual citizenship – we are Indian citizens and heavenly citizens. Phil. 3:20 clearly mentions about our heavenly citizenship.

God gives us an invitation to come to Him which is of two types: One is the invite to follow God and second is the invite for full-time ministry. Many of us are in full-time ministry because of someone else's commitment to send us for ministry or to get a respectable job

**We are crucified with Christ and are resurrected with Christ. To be resurrected we have to die. Many of us want to be resurrected without dying. We are not only resurrected but also ascended and seated at the right hand of Christ.**

in Christian ministry. Peter says that we must be sure about our calling (2 Peter 1:10). We must make sure that God has called us for ministry. We can excel in ministry if we are called by the greatest God. We will face many problems while doing ministry but always remember whom we are serving.

What is our central call? In Mark 3:14-15 we see Jesus calling the twelve disciples. If we see the purpose of his call, we can find out a list of things to do: first, to be with Him, then, go out to preach, heal the sick, perform miracles and cast out demons. We may be appointed in the highest positions of organizations or churches but always remember to be with God. The devil will always try to keep us busy in ministry so that we do not spend time with God which affects us in many ways.



Our definition of being with God is to pray to Him. Our prayers are like shopping lists where we pray for everything. Prayer should be a time where we forget the rest and be with God. One of my definitions about prayer is: Prayer is more a desire for the Giver than His gifts. Being in prayer is not for any need, not for any gifts or analyzing Bible verses, but only desiring for being with God. Knowing God is God taking initiatives towards us to know Him intimately. Our call is great and firm because God is great, and our primary call is to be with God.

## II. GROWING IN GOD

First of all we must know about the hindrances in our growth. One of the reasons is our temptation to project ourselves, to impress others and get credit for our work. Denying ourselves in everything we do is the key for our growth. Second reason is the grudge against

“ “  
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someone who has hurt us. Grudge is a self-served poison that we drink. In the Lord's Prayer there are six requests, and the only request explained is about forgiving others. We should forgive others just like Christ forgave us. Third reason is jealousy when someone's achievements are better than ours. Another reason is the lack of integrity in our life. Integrity is who I am when God alone looks at me.

For growing we must completely be under the ownership of God. Ephesians 2: 4-7 speaks about us being God's workmanship. If God owns us, he will work in our life and we will grow. God is not able to work in our lives because we are rigid at times. Another aspect of growth is corporate growth – growth together outside of individual growth. The Bible pictures us as a body with different organs (1 Cor. 12:14; Eph. 4:16). Our body parts do not grow individually, rather it is always a corporate growth in the whole body. The most important people for God are not the ones who are in the limelight but those who work behind the curtains who deserve respect.

We are called to build up one another which is the most important factor for corporate growth. Whatever we receive we must share it for the growth of others. One another aspect of growth is by doing something and obedience, and not just knowledge. A friend of mine was teaching about the omniscience and omnipresence of God to his students. He purposefully put some currency notes on the way from classroom to dining hall. He wanted to test whether anyone picks the notes and reports about it. Nobody reported even after studying about the omniscient and omnipresent God. They did not obey or do anything even after gaining knowledge.

One important aspect of growth is the holistic growth. Luke 2:52 explains about the growth of boy Jesus in physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects. We also need to have such a holistic growth in our lives. We need to love God holistically and not in parts. We need to always find the hindrances in our growth through self-examination. We are very grateful and confident in our salvation and joyful in what we receive, yet before God we are nothing, and we still need to grow. Broken heart and contrite spirit is the sacrifice that God expects from us.

### III. GOING FOR GOD

Many times, we make the Bible very complicated, but let me tell you that the Bible is very simple. People ask me to summarize the Bible which I do in two words – Come and Go. The Bible is filled with invitations to come to God and then go out for God. One of the common phrases I have heard is Lighted to lighten, but when I ask people (who promote this) when and how they were 'lighted' they stand clueless. Remember all those who are called by God are sent by God. God wants to reach out many people around us. Many of those are lonely and helpless, and we are the only means to be used by God to reach these people. We need to open our eyes and see how God can use us in these conditions.

During the Vietnam War, I was travelling from one city to another in Vietnam. A GI co-passenger noticed the pocket Bible

I had with me and we started having conversation. He said he was ordered to shoot all in a family boat in the river, and possibly they were innocent. Killing them left a deep scar in him, and he lost all hope in life. I was able to share about the forgiveness of God to him in such a situation. There are many people around us who need encouragement. Jesus said Go to the ends of the earth. Where is the end of the earth? I would say the end of the earth is where you are. There are

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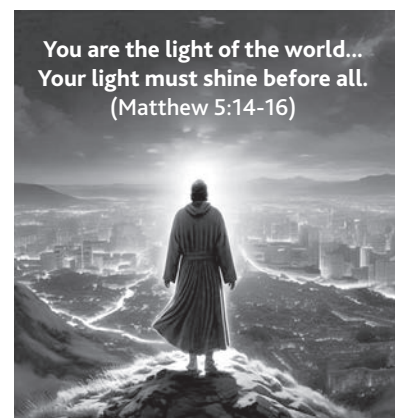
many people around us in our family, relatives, friends, and non-Christians, and we are the only means to reach out with the light to them.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said that the light should reach out to everyone in the home (Mt. 5:14-16). The most difficult place to show our light is our homes because they know us. We should live near to Christ wherever we are. Going for Christ is giving oneself to others. Our life project the light of Christ

to others. Lausanne Movement has a watchword – The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World. We can make a lot of excuses to back off from our Christian service, but let me tell you that even a small light can drive away darkness. The whole Gospel is not just spiritual transformation but the Kingdom of God which comprises everything around us. The whole world for each one of us is the people around us.

I want to leave you with some questions to think and find answers about – If Christ has called us, what is His purpose and calling for my life? Do I really thirst for Him? Do I deny myself so that I may grab God? How do I grow in Christ? What hinders my growth in Him? What is my integrity? If God examines me what will He say about me?

Every morning in our life should begin with asking God about how we can serve Him today, how I can build up my colleagues. Look at everything through the eyes and heart of Christ, how does God look at a person. Going for God is increasingly difficult in the present day, but the call for bearing cross is before you. We will not be able to do anything if the power of the Holy Spirit is not in us. May the Holy Spirit empower us and guide us as we move ahead in our Christian journey. Amen. ●





# *Is there an answer to every prayer of a Christian?*

**J.N. MANOKARAN**

A Civil Engineer by profession. God called him and his family to be a missionary leader in Haryana as cross cultural missionaries for eleven years. Since, 1997 they returned back to Tamil Nadu to help missionaries and pastors to build their capacities by teaching, training and writing.

**P**rayer is a great privilege God has given His people. Nevertheless, it could be under-utilized, neglected, and over-used with presumption instead of faith and ignorance. Prophet Elijah is a classic example in the Bible who is esteemed as a great man of prayer. Though he had many answered prayers to his credit, had at least one prayer that was not answered.

### **I. Wrong understanding:**

"Prayer Brings Victory," is quite a common slogan among Christians. However, it is not right from a biblical perspective. Prayers are just a few words recited if God does not listen and respond. It is not 'Prayer Brings Victory,' it should be "Prayer answering God gives victory." Prayer becomes empty words, repetitive words, futile words, and useless words unless God listens and answers. Prayer is neither a formula nor a mantra. Prayer becomes a deity or an idol when prayer itself is esteemed and God ignored.

### **II. Prayers shut out**

A person could block the phone number of someone on his smart phone. The blocked person could never call the person. Similarly, God can block the prayers of some people. When God judged the Nation of Judah by sending Babylonians to destroy the city of Jerusalem including their cherished temple. Prophet Jeremiah laments: "He has shut out my prayer." (Lamentations 3:8) His intercession for Judah was not heeded. God is not obliged to always listen to prayers. The Bible provides some insights regarding prayers being blocked.

- **Poor ignored:** When people of God ignore the cry of the poor, God need not answer the prayer. (Proverbs 21:13) Ignoring the poor includes ridiculing, demeaning, and cursing the poor. The rich man ignored the poor Lazar who lived in a visible distance. The rich man was not immoral and did not amass illegitimate wealth. His sin was



ignoring the poor, his prayer even from hell was rejected. (Luke 16:19-31)

- **Doubt:** God need not answer the prayers of the people who doubt (James 1:5-7). God honours the faith as small as a mustard seed but without a doubt (Matthew 17:20; Mark 11:23; Luke 17:6). Unwarranted fear, worry, and doubt are enemies of faith, thus unable to receive answers for prayer. Those who come to Him should believe He exists and reward those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).
- **Proud:** God opposes the proud, hence such people's prayers are not answered (James 4:6). Pride does not allow a person to seek God's help, with humility. Only in desperation, s/he may seek help. Without humility, God will not act on behalf of them. God's mercy and grace are available only to those who are humble. Proud people tend to be self-reliant, self-confident, and self-dependent. Unless they become God-dependent, God cannot respond to them.

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- **Violent:** Those whose hands are covered with blood, though they might pray, such prayers would not be listened to by God (Isaiah 1:15). Having an attitude of being violent, approving violence and feet rushing to shed blood are abominations for the Lord (Isaiah 59:7). Those who run to do evil and shed blood will not be heard (Proverbs 1:15-19). Violence need not be in physical form, but in attitude, paradigm, and expressed in other ways including emotional oppression, mental torture, words, and social media.
- **Relationship with spouse:** Husbands who do not honor their wives and vice versa would experience hindrance to prayer (I Peter 3:7). Loving, covenant relationship with



one mind is necessary for prayers to be answered. Family discord, separation from the spouse with bitterness and unforgiving attitude, and divorce are other factors for unanswered prayers.

- **Selfish prayers:** Prayers with wrong motives, selfish motives, and wicked motives will not be answered (James 4:3). Rage, revenge, and destructive spirit are counter-productive for people who pray. Envious prayers, that desire harm for others is self-destructive.
- **Sin esteemed:** Prayers of people who esteem or give high regard to wickedness, will not be heard (Psalms 66:18). It means being silent in the midst of a wicked environment or silently approving the tyrant (Romans 14:22). A person who

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Elijah did not die as he prayed a physical death, instead was caught up to heaven in a whirlwind, by angels in the chariots of fire (II Kings 2:4). God is gracious to alter, edit, delete, downgrade, or upgrade our prayers appropriately. God modified the prayer of Elijah.  
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approves violence in society silently, will one day become a victim of the same violence.

- **Mistreat God's people:** Those who mistreat, harass, and persecute God's genuine servants, their prayers will not be heard. (Micah 3:2-5) Those who persecute the people of God or the righteous will be punished. Pleadings of such people will not be heard unless they repent.

### III Study from prayer life of Elijah

Elijah is considered as one of the great prophets. God remarkably answered his prayers.

#### 3.1. Answered prayers of Elijah

James provides Elijah as prayed earnestly or fervently, though he was just an ordinary person like any human. (James 5:17-18) His effective prayer even affected the weather. When he prayed for rain to stop, it stopped. Again, when he prayed for rain, it poured. He did not do according to his whims and fancies, or shifting moods, or personal vendetta, but according to God's will, intention, and purpose. James teaches that all believers could pray as Elijah did and receive marvelous answers. Elijah followed His instructions in prayer as well as action. (I Kings 18:36) God multiplied the widow's flour and oil. (I Kings 17:16) God answered his prayer by sending fire from heaven and consuming the sacrifices. (I Kings 18:38)

#### 3.2. Unanswered Prayer of Elijah

When Queen Jezebel threatened Elijah with the death penalty, he ran to a forest. If he had the intention to die, he would have remained where he was. Jezebel would have killed him. Perhaps, Elijah thought it would be ignominy to be executed by Jezebel, instead he wanted God to take away his life (I Kings 19:4). But God did not take away his life, instead gave him more ministry assignments. Elijah did not die as he prayed a physical death, instead was caught up to heaven in a whirlwind, by angels in the chariots of fire (II Kings 2:4). God is gracious to alter, edit, delete, downgrade, or upgrade our prayers appropriately. God modified the



prayer of Elijah. Elijah wanted to take his life, but God took him to his presence by sending angels, not through physical death. He inspires the New Testament saints to be ready to be raptured when the Lord comes again (I Thessalonians 4:17).

#### IV. Obligation of God?

Some believe that God is obliged to fulfill or answer all the prayers of his children. According to them, God is bound to answer, he is obliged to answer, and he has no other option. This is a misunderstanding. For them is like a jinn in Arabic fables. Jinn becomes the slave of one who is released from bondage undersea or cave or inside a bottle. Jinn fulfills all commands of the master. Some imagine God as a mega-jinn who obeys and obliges all requests. Some even dare to command God, misquoting the bible verse (Isaiah 45:11).

First, God as Sovereign God is not obliged to be answerable or accountable to anyone. A potter need not explain or clarify or answer the clay (Isaiah 45:9). Second,

**God knows the harvest is plentiful, yet he expected the disciples to ask. He wants His children to ask and delight in doing what they ask (Matthew 9:38).**

**God commands His people to open their mouths wide so that he could fill them or answer their prayers (Psalms 81:10).**

sinful humans do not have any rights before God. Grace is God's mercy shown to ill-deserving, nil-deserving, and hell-deserving sinners. Mercy and grace are prerogatives of God and not an obligation. Third, God is good and will answer prayers that are appropriate and for the benefit of those who love him. Prayers that would hinder His plan and purpose will not be answered. Fourth, God is wise, not to answer all prayers. Many are immature and do not know what to ask and what to pray for. Some ask things that are harmful or destructive in the long run. A two-year-old could ask for a knife, which is dangerous, harmful, and even life-threatening. A wise father will not oblige, and so is our Heavenly Father. Five, God knows the future. Believers who pray are unaware of what will happen tomorrow or thereafter. However, God knows the future. Hence, keeping the future plan in mind, God may reject or postpone answering such prayers.

#### V. The right way to pray?

When an email is sent, if there is no right email ID, it will not reach and may bounce back. A mail or courier cannot be sent without the receiver's address. When prayers are not offered in God's prescribed way, they are rejected. Here are four principles of prayer.

##### 5.1. First principle: Ask

God expects his people to ask. A believer should discern the need, have the humility to express dependence on God and have faith that God answers prayers to really pray. Ask and it shall be given to you (Matthew 7:7). Saints of God do not receive because they did not ask. Probably they did not ask because of ignorance, laziness, lethargy, and lack of discernment. God knows the harvest is plentiful, yet he expected the disciples to

ask. He wants His children to ask and delight in doing what they ask (Matthew 9:38). God commands His people to open their mouths wide so that he could fill them or answer their prayers (Psalms 81:10).

### 5.2. Second principle: Ask in His Name

All prayers ought to be in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (John 14:13). The Lord is the only mediator between God and humans, and there is none other (I Timothy 2:5). Some people want to ask through dead people who are considered as saints including the Virgin Mary, Apostles, and others. Strangely, there are a few who do not have the discipline of prayer but request Tele-evangelists to pray, making them their mediator. Prayers done through living or dead saints are not answered. Yes, as people of God, we can pray for others, a pastor could pray for members, but they cannot become mediators.

### 5.3. Third principle: Ask without evil intention

Apostle James writes that some people did not receive answers to prayers, because their motivation and intention were neither righteous nor right (James 4:3). God does not show favoritism. He is the righteous God of all humans. He does not take sides with believers to torment or oppress others. It is presumption and wrong belief to think God is with us to execute wicked revenge on those who oppose us. Such prayers, seeking revenge with evil intentions will not be answered.

### 5.4. Fourth principle: Ask according to His will

The disciples of the Lord should have spiritual discernment and maturity (I John 5:14-15). They should know the will, plan, and purpose of God. In fact, God's will



is pleasing, good, and perfect (Romans 12:2). Discerning God's will is a spiritual discipline every disciple should learn. Immature disciples who do not study and mediate the Word of God, will not be able to know the Will of God. They misapply God's Promises to the wrong contexts. God's promises have terms and conditions. God's promises are intimately connected to His Will and Plan, hence God answers accordingly. Seeking God's will means surrendering personal will, desires, preferences, and choices.

### VI. Transformed

One who prays gets transformed. Prayer helps a believer to get intimate fellowship with God. Being in His presence means to grow in His love, worship, knowing his attributes, and offering as a living sacrifice. David longs to seek His face, admire his beauty, and adore Him (Psalms

27:4). Prayer transforms an individual, his attitude towards the context before God changes the situation or context. Such transformation brings spiritual maturity and scriptural understanding.

### VII. Challenge

Prayer is a privilege God has offered the humans. Prayer of repentance by sinners, with humility, godly grief, forsaking sin, and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ in faith is heard and answered by God. God need not answer other prayers of sinners. The born-again children of God also ought to come into His presence in faith, depending on God's grace, not reliant on their self-righteousness or super-spirituality. Prayers of believers with humility, without wicked or criminal intent, and discerning God's Will, Plan, and Purpose will be answered. Prayer is a Privileged Access to God, but humble Access. ●



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# WHY DOESN'T GOD WORK MIRACLES SOMETIMES?



**Dr. K.P. SAJI**

Pastor, Counselor  
Principal,  
India Baptist Theological  
College, Areeparambu, Kottayam

**T**he certainty of God's work in miracles—a divine intervention in the chaos and troubles—is a sustaining aspect of our faith and practice. We generally await visible evidence of God's power and compassion in all problematic situations. However, the non-appearance of miracles, particularly in times of terrible need, increases deep theological and logical questions. Why does an almighty and kind God choose not to intervene in some of the situations where a miracle could prevent misery or unfairness? One of the challenges here is the belief that the miracle is the evidence of the presence of God in our lives. When we see the absence of God's work and intervention at the moments of our need, it raises doubt in the attitude of faith and the presence of God Almighty.

This article seeks to explore the multifaceted and complex reasons behind God's apparent silence in moments of human prayer. By examining theological perceptions, logical arguments, and practical inferences, we aim to understand why miracles are sometimes pending and how this forms a relationship between faith, anticipation, and divine providence. This investigation will provide insights into the nature of trust, the purpose of misery, and the broader divine plan that may transcend human understanding.

## **PERSPECTIVE OF THE DIVINE WILL**

From a theological viewpoint, the absence of miracles can be explained in terms of divine will and purpose. God is almighty, and He has his own perfect will. The will of God is perfect even while we don't see it working in the time and space we desire. The will of God transcends all our understanding, and we see it after we pass through God's silence. One of the classical examples is the Book of Job, in which no answer was possible to the suffering of the righteous. Later, when everything falls in line,



we realise the fact that the will of God was to prosper job and to prove the faith.

The will of God demands surrender. The perfect submission to the will of God reveals the ideal outcome. It requires absolute trust in God and faith in His promises. God's ideal will is rooted in His omniscience and omnipotence. He knows the past, present, and future, and His plans are intended with a purpose that is ultimately for our good, even if we cannot immediately notice it. This divine will is not always easy to distinguish, and it can occasionally seem at odds with our wishes or understanding of what is good. However, believing in God's flawless will means having confidence in the aspect that He is working all things together for good (Romans 8:28).

In our daily lives, we come across situations that test our faith and understanding. We may face trials, grief, or unanswered prayers that make us question God's existence and His strategies. In these moments, we are entitled to submit our

**The story of Joseph in the Bible is a powerful example. Sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph tolerated many adversities. Yet, through his faith and trust in God, he rose to a position of power and was able to save many lives during a famine.**

limited perspectives and trust in God's more excellent plans. The story of Joseph in the Bible is a powerful example. Sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph tolerated many adversities. Yet, through his faith and trust in God, he rose to a position of power and was able to save many lives during a famine. What his brothers intended for harm, God used for good (Genesis 50:20), and that was the will of God.

#### THE STRENGTHENING ASPECT

The Bible often portrays suffering as a way individuals are tested or strengthened. Suffering is an inescapable part of the human condition, manifesting in various forms such as physical pain, emotional distress, or existential crises. Despite its universally unwelcome nature, suffering can be a powerful catalyst for individual growth and



transformation. Throughout history, many philosophical, religious, and psychological perspectives have examined the role of suffering in strengthening individuals, recommending that adversity, while painful, often fosters faith, empathy, and deeper understanding.

One of the most noteworthy ways suffering reinforces strength in individuals is by nurturing resilience. Resilience refers to the capability to endure and recover from problems, adapting to challenging circumstances with a sense of determination and hope. That is how children of God develop their strength of faith. When faced with suffering, individuals are often compelled to dig deep within themselves to find the strength and resources necessary to cope and survive. It is at this point the depth of their trust and faith is revealed. This process can reveal inner strengths and capabilities that might have

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comfort others.  
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troubled, we can  
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more we suffer for  
Christ, the more  
God will shower us  
with his comfort  
through Christ. ( 2  
Corinthians 1: 4-6).**  
”

otherwise remained inactive. The concept of post-traumatic growth (PTG) illustrates this phenomenon, where individuals who experience traumatic events report positive changes, such as increased inner strength, improved relationships, and a greater appreciation for life. Life is more pragmatic when one recovers from the confused stages of crisis in one's own life itself.

## CULTIVATING EMPATHY AND COMPASSION

Experiencing pain and hardship and the silence of God often enhances one's capacity to understand and share the feelings of others. The answer to why God is absent in our suffering points to this very truth. The empathy achieved through the complex realities of life can lead a person to greater compassion, and it motivates individuals to support and care for those who are suffering. The concept of "karuna", or compassion, emphasises that recognising and understanding one's own suffering is critical to developing genuine empathy for others. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we can give them the same comfort God has given us. The more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. ( 2 Corinthians 1: 4-6).

Individuals who have endured significant suffering frequently channel their experiences into helping others facing similar struggles. For instance, survivors of illness, abuse, or addiction often become potent advocates and support systems for others undergoing similar challenges. Their knowledge of suffering allows them to connect with others on a deep level, offering understanding and hope that can be transformative. One of the most profound ways suffering engenders compassion is by recognising shared human vulnerability. When individuals experience suffering, they often come to realise that pain and hardship are universal experiences. This recognition breaks down barriers of perceived separateness, fostering a sense of connection with others who suffer. For instance, someone who has endured the grief of losing a loved one

may find themselves more empathetic towards others experiencing similar losses. This shared vulnerability creates a bond that transcends individual differences, highlighting our shared humanity.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The psychological and spiritual influence of God's silence can be profound to all of us. Feelings of doubt, loneliness, and frustration are common. Spiritually, believers might question their faith, feel aloof from God, and be tempted to give up their spiritual practices. However, these challenging emotions and struggles can serve as agents for growth.

One of the primary ways God's silence contributes to spiritual growth is by testing and strengthening faith. Just as gold is refined through fire, faith is often strengthened through trials. During periods of silence, believers are forced to confront their doubts and rely more fully on their faith. This process can lead to a more healthy and mature faith that is not easily shaken by external circumstances.

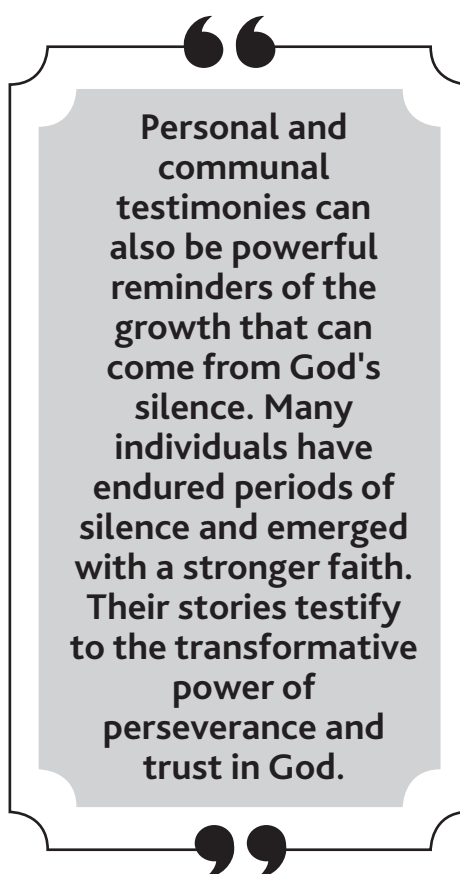
Furthermore, God's silence can teach believers to develop their trust in Him. In times of silence, individuals learn to rely less on their own understanding and more on God's wisdom and timing. This can lead to a deeper trust and surrender to God's will. Silence also provides an opportunity for more profound prayer and reflection, naturally helping us to seek a more intimate relationship with God.

Responding to God's silence requires active patience and waiting. The Bible encourages believers to wait on the Lord, promising renewed strength to those who do (Isaiah 40:31). During these times, it is crucial to maintain spiritual disciplines such as prayer, reading Scripture, and worship, even when God feels distant. Additionally, seeking support from a faith community can provide encouragement and guidance. Personal and communal testimonies can also be powerful reminders of the growth that can come from God's silence. Many individuals have endured periods of silence and emerged with a stronger faith. Their stories testify to the transformative power of perseverance and trust in God.

## BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Periods of God's silence are recurring themes throughout the Bible, often serving as the deepest trouble in the lives of biblical characters. These moments of divine quietness provide valuable lessons on faith, trust, and spiritual awakening. By examining the responses of various biblical figures, we gain valuable insights into navigating our own experiences of God's silence.

The foremost example of divine silence

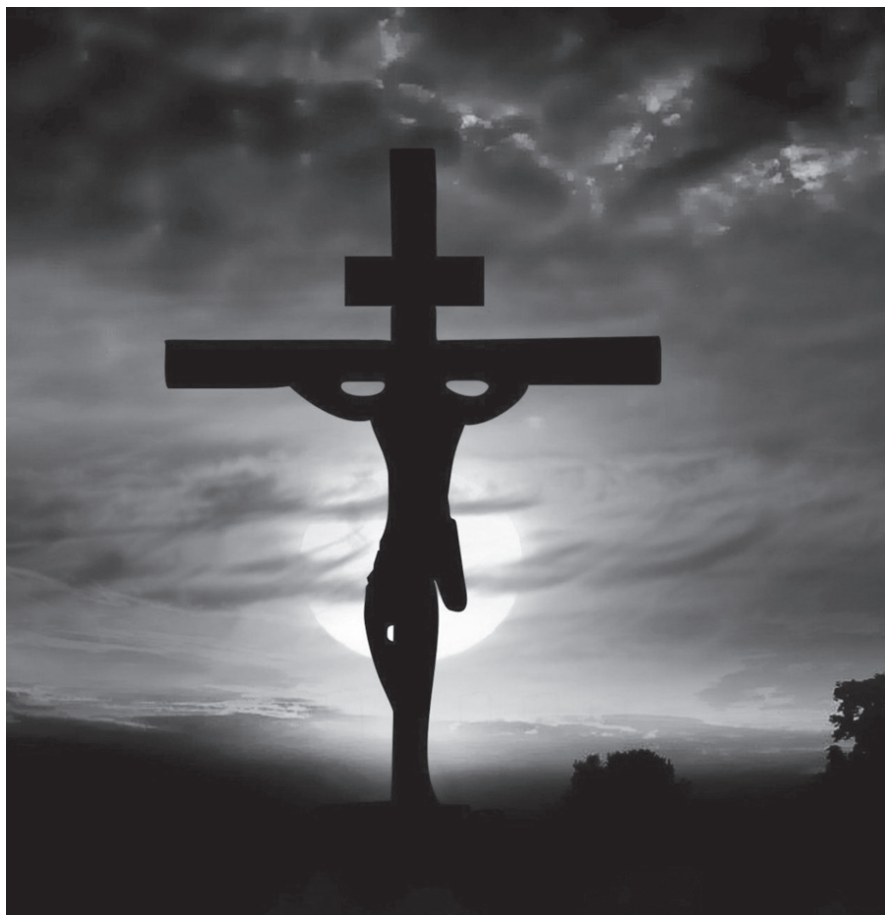


and a spiritual response is found in the Book of Job. Job felt the silence of God during his enormous suffering; he is seen crying out, "I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me" (Job 30:20). Job's story is one of profound suffering and divine silence. After losing his wealth, children, and health, Job seeks answers from God, only to be met with silence. Job's response is a mixture of anguish and steadfast faith. Despite his deep

sorrow and confusion, he declares, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him" (Job 13:15). Job's relentless quest for understanding and his refusal to curse God demonstrate a profound faith that endures despite the silence. Job teaches us that it is okay to question and express our pain, but maintaining hope and trust in God's sovereignty is crucial, even when we don't receive immediate answers.

Similarly, King David, in his Psalms, many times stated a sense of divine silence, saying, "Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why do you hide in times of trouble?" (Psalm 10:1). King David frequently felt silence by God, particularly during times of intense personal distress and danger, as reflected in many of his psalms. David responds to God's silence by persistent prayer and worship. In Psalm 22, he cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" yet he continues to praise God, saying, "You are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises" (Psalm 22:3). David's example shows that continuing to seek God through prayer and worship, even in times of silence and distress, can sustain and renew our faith.

The prophet Elijah experienced a profound sense of isolation and divine silence after his victory over the prophets of Baal. Fleeing for his life from Queen Jezebel, he felt abandoned and despondent. Elijah's encounter with God on Mount Horeb is striking. He experiences a powerful wind, an earthquake, and a fire, but God is not in these dramatic events. Instead, God speaks to Elijah in a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:11-13). Elijah's story teaches us that God's presence may not always be evident in dramatic ways; sometimes, it is in the quiet, subtle moments that we find Him. We need to be



attentive and patient, listening for His gentle whisper.

When Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, falls ill, the sisters send word to Jesus, expecting Him to come immediately. However, Jesus delays His visit, and Lazarus dies. Mary and Martha express their disappointment and grief to Jesus when He finally arrives. Martha says, "Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). Despite their sorrow, both sisters still trust in Jesus' power, and Martha even expresses belief in the resurrection. Mary and Martha's experience shows that even when God seems to delay or remain silent, He has a greater plan at work. Their story reminds us to trust in God's timing and His ultimate power over life and death.

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**Even Jesus Christ experienced divine silence during His crucifixion, voicing it with the emotional words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).**  
”

Even Jesus Christ experienced divine silence during His crucifixion, voicing it with the emotional words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). These examples demonstrate that divine silence is not a sign of abandonment or divine disfavour but a part of the spiritual journey. Despite this profound sense of forsakenness, Jesus ultimately surrenders to God's will, saying, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Jesus' response teaches us the ultimate act of faith—complete surrender to God's will, even in the face of silence and suffering. His example encourages us to trust in God's greater purpose and His unfailing love.

### HOW SHOULD WE NAVIGATE THROUGH DIVINE SILENCE?

First of all, maintaining a discipline of prayer is very important at times of God's silence; even when it feels like talking into the void, it is crucial. Persistent prayer signifies unwavering faith and dependence on God, as illustrated by the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8. We must also maintain the word of God within us at these significant challenges. God's word remains a steadfast guide during silent periods. Immersing oneself in Scripture can provide comfort, guidance, and reassurance of God's unchanging nature and promises. Next is to engage with a faith community to see the support of the faithful around us. Engaging with a faith community offers encouragement and perspective. Fellow believers can provide support, share their own experiences of divine silence, and pray together.

Accepting the belief that God is sovereign and His timing is perfect helps believers trust that silence has a purpose. Proverbs 3:5-6 advises, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Learning to be comfortable with silence, practising contemplative prayer, and being still before God can transform silence into a profound spiritual discipline. It gets its completeness at times of divine silence.



# PUNJAB BIBLE COLLEGE

## Graduation Ceremony

12th  
MARCH  
2024



March Past with Faculty and Graduates



Opening Prayer: Bishop George Joseph



Praise & Worship led by Evang. Thomson Koshy



Opening Prayer by Pastor Satpal Soni



Rev Dr. K. Koshy Welcomes the Guests

### MULTILINGUAL SCRIPTURE READING BY STUDENTS



Chattisgarhi



Haryanvi



Hindi



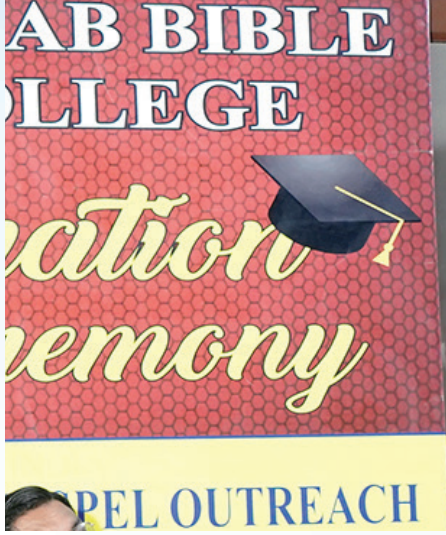
Nepali



Message by Graduates (Hindi) by Joyas Soni  
(Dip. Th)



Prayer by Pastor Jaison (Dehradun)



Graduation Message by Rev. Dr. T. Valson Abraham, President. *Translation:* Pr. Blesson K. Mathew



Responsive reading by faculty and congregation



Academic co-ordinator Evang. Akhil George presents the report

**PRESENTING THE GRADUATES & AWARDING OF CERTIFICATE BY  
REV. Dr. T. VALSON ABRAHAM (PRESIDENT) & REV. Dr. K. KOSHY ( DIRECTOR)**



**APPRECIATION AWARDS TO PBC FACULTY BY REV. Dr. K. KOSHY (DIRECTOR)**



Mrs. Pheba Daniel



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**Evang. Joshua Daniel**



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**Commissioning the Graduates by  
Pastor Rajan Daniel**



**Dedication Prayer by  
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**Graduation Theme Song by Evang. Geom M. Mathew,  
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**Words of appreciation by Bishop.  
Darbara Singh (Guest of honor)**



**Award to Bro. Lucky, highest mark scorer  
in C. Min presented by Pastor Charanjeet**



**Best Evangelist of the Year award to  
Bro. Vishal by Evang. Thomas Varkey**



**P.R. Gupta presented to the award  
Joyas-highest mark scorer (Dip.Th)**



**Best student of the year award to  
Bro. Sahil Gautam by Pastor Rajdeep Singh**



**Pr. Madam Lal awards Esha, C.Th. who  
scored highest marks**



**Top Scorer of the C. Th (Extension) Sis. Lalita was  
presented the award by Pastor Raju Chacko**

## FELICITATIONS



Sahil Gautam receiving Cash Award from Pr. Madan Pal and Pr. Rajdeep



Pastor Issac Dutta



Pastor Edwin Robert



▼ Congregation ▲



Closing prayer by Pastor Eric Masih

## FELLOWSHIP DINNER



# PUNJAB BIBLE COLLEGE

## *Graduation Ceremony*

12th MARCH 2024



Worship Session



Mrs. Saramma Cherian and friends from IPC, Garhi, Udhamapur with Rev. Dr. Valson Abraham & Mrs. Laly Abraham



2024 Graduates, Faculty of PBC with Principal and Rev. Dr. T. Valson Abraham and Mrs. Laly Abraham