



Theology Q1

Why pray?

Key Issues and Questions to Address

1. Definitional Questions

What constitutes prayer across different traditions?

How does prayer differ from meditation, contemplation, or reflection?

What are the varieties of prayer (petition, thanksgiving, confession, adoration, etc.)?

2. Efficacy Issues

Does prayer "work" and how would we know?

Research on intercessory prayer and its methodological challenges

The relationship between prayer, coincidence, and confirmation bias

3. Theological Dimensions

How prayer relates to divine sovereignty and human free will



The paradox of petitioning an omniscient God

How prayer is understood to affect God, the person praying, or both

4. Psychological Benefits

Prayer as stress reduction and emotional regulation

Community and social dimensions of shared prayer

Prayer as meaning-making and narrative integration

5. Philosophical Considerations

Locke's epistemological framework and its implications for prayer

The rationality of prayer in a scientific worldview

Prayer as relationship versus prayer as transaction

6. Prayer Practices



Different methodologies and techniques of prayer

The role of ritual, repetition, and spontaneity

How prayer practices shape religious identity

7. Existential Aspects

Prayer as confrontation with ultimate concerns

Prayer as expression of human finitude and limitation

The relationship between prayer and human vulnerability

8. Sociological Dimensions

How prayer functions in communities

Prayer as political act or social statement

The relationship between prayer and ethical action