

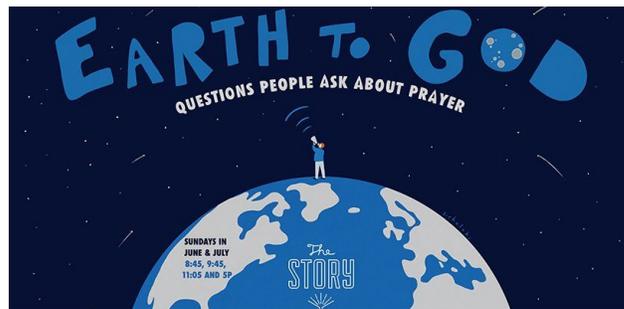
Sermon Study Guide

The Story Houston - June 30, 2019

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Intro to 'Earth to God'

After today, we'll be halfway through The Story's sermon series on prayer! I hope this series has been inspiring and challenging to you. As we look ahead to the next month, be sure to keep your questions about prayer coming via email (EarthToGod@thestory.church) and don't forget to join The Story's new Facebook Group called "The Story Houston ONLINE". So far in this series, we've learned about the following questions:

- What is prayer? (June 2, John Hopper, guest speaker)
- Is there any proof that prayer really works? (June 9)
- If God already knows the future, why pray? (June 16)

And some of the remaining questions that we'll dig into with this series include:

- Is prayer more effective when a bunch of people all pray for the same thing?
- Are there right and wrong ways to pray?
- Is it okay to pray to the saints?
- Why does God seem to answer some prayers and not others?
- If Christians celebrate answered prayers as signs of God's faithfulness, doesn't that mean unanswered prayers are signs of God's unfaithfulness?
- Does God ever change His mind?
- When it comes to prayer, does persistence pay off? Does it matter how many times you pray for the same thing? Can you "wear God down"?
- Is it within reason to pray for a person's physical healing?

The questions before us today are:

Does God talk back to us when we pray?

And if I'm not hearing anything, am I doing something wrong?

What were your thoughts about these questions before hearing this message? On what authority, knowledge, or experience do you base your understanding?

Prayer is about _____ and _____.

What is the #1 reason why so many believers struggle to be present with God in prayer?

What effect do **distractions** have on your prayer life?

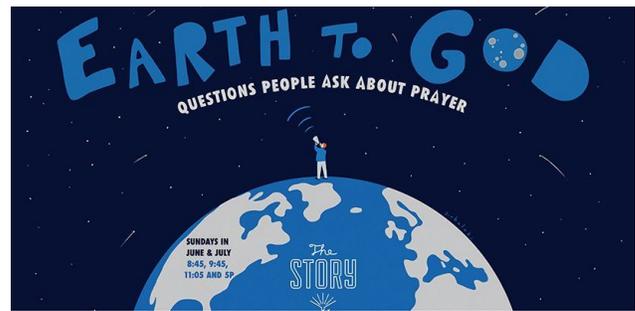
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What are some of the ways people in the Bible listened for God?

1. **Psalm 27:4** One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

How did David listen for God?

2. **Luke 10:38-42** As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

How did Mary listen for God?

3. **1 Kings 19:9-15** There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.[a] And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." And the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus.

How did Elijah listen for God?

How will you commit to *listening for God* when you pray this week?