

RISING GENERATIONS

THE UPPER ROOM

A Never-Ending Conversation

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Be joyful always; pray continually;
give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NIV)

I want to live a life permeated by prayer. Little by little my hope is coming true. Prayer has come to feel like a conversation with God. It has claimed a place of sweetness and delight in my life and has become essential to my journey with God.

I love the sense of participating in a conversation that never ends, a prayer that extends all day long. Saying prayers of different kinds makes it possible for me to “pray continually,” as the scripture encourages us to do.

Family Conversations

The way I talk with God is similar to the way I converse with my family. The focused, thoughtful, deep conversations that I occasionally have with my parents and my siblings help us to know one another better and to grow as we learn from one another. They are essential for knitting us together in deeper relationships.

At other times, we spend time in the living room together, simply sharing a space. One of us watches TV, another reads, and someone else plays a computer game. Every so often one of us says something to the others about what we're reading, watching, or playing; but then we go back to what we were doing. This type of conversation also builds our relationships as we share comfortable, everyday moments.

Talking with God

I talk with God in the same ways. Sometimes I get down on my knees beside my bed to pray. I cast aside distractions (most of them anyway); and in my spirit, I listen for how God is directing me to pray. Sometimes I don't pray at all; I just listen, as if I were having a focused, face-to-face conversation with God.

I also pray as I'm driving down the street or sitting at my computer or talking with a friend. In the middle of other activities, I say brief prayers thanking God, asking God a question, or telling God about what I'm doing. Unlike the members of my family, who aren't always around, God is always with me. Everywhere I am, all the time, God is there. Praying throughout the day feels like a conversation that is never finished. It's interrupted but never ended. God and I are not necessarily actively chatting every second, but we are always in each other's presence.

Ongoing conversation with God is one of the ways we discover God's presence in our everyday life. Never-ending prayer reminds us that God isn't far away and that God cares about us in ways that are more complete than we can fathom. Different kinds of conversations with God add together, creating an attitude of prayer that permeates our days; and that's something to be joyful about!

Dig Deeper

Give it a try. Pick a day this week to pray continually. Try talking with God at several points during the day. Then go to your bedroom or to another place where you can be alone and pray without distractions. If this practice is difficult at first, you might ask God to help you learn how to “pray continually.” At the end of the day, reflect upon your ongoing conversation with God and notice how it affected your life. Then schedule another day to try this again next week!