

PRAYER IS LIKE A TELEPHONE

By Rod

This sketch explores the nature of prayer. It seeks to emphasise how God, our loving Father, delights to hear our prayers. He is not a remote figure who is hard to reach but is immediately available to us as soon as we ask. The old analogy of the telephone is used but put into a modern setting to stress what prayer is not.

CAST

Introducer *Male or female. The link person who helps to explain the analogy.*
Chris *Male or female. The person praying. Some words have been written but Chris could improvise a few extra mutters, irritations, etc.*
Operator *Male or female. Voice appears over speaker system sounding as much like a recorded message as possible.*
God *Male. Voice appears over the speaker system from off stage.*

Introducer It has been said that “prayer is like a telephone”. Indeed there is a favourite children’s song, which says exactly this. But with the recent rapid development in telecommunications and the advent of all sorts of new modern telephone systems, we have to be clear what we mean by this analogy.

Do we mean that prayer is like this?

Enter Chris looking worried and anxious about something. After some deliberation he/she produces a mobile `phone and starts to dial. It should be a long number. Puts `phone to ear. Dialling tone is heard over speaker system.

Chris Oh, hello it’s Chris here.... [*Breaks off realising is speaking to a recorded message*]

Operator [*Try to make this sound like a pre-recorded message*] Thank you for calling Prayers Direct. Please note that all our calls are recorded for staff training purposes and for use in any disputes over whether prayers have been answered or not.

If you have a touch-tone `phone please press the star key now. [*Chris presses one key*] Thank you. To help us deal with your prayer as speedily as possible please enter your personal number now, followed by the hash key.

Chris OK. 0-0-6-5-8-2-4. [*Types in these numbers or any will do(!) – followed by hash key*]

Operator Thank you. Please enter your telepin, followed by the hash key. [*Chris does this*]

Thank you. Please choose the service you require from the main prayer menu:

If you wish to praise and magnify the Almighty – Press 1.

If you wish to confess your sins – Press 2.

If you wish to thank God for something He has done for you – Press 3.

If you wish to make a prayer request, asking God to do something for you – Press 4. *[Chris presses one key]*

[Cynical] I thought so. Most people go for 4. I don't know why we bother with 1, 2 and 3. Oh well – you'll just have to wait as all our lines are busy at present. Meanwhile we'll play you some annoying music in the hope that you'll hang up.

[Music is played. E.g. "Always look on the bright side of life" or "I'm H_A_P_P_Y"]

Still there? I admire your persistence. I guess someone else is paying your telephone bill. You realise that Heaven isn't exactly a local call?

Anyway, if you want to pursue this, now you have to choose from our prayer request menu.

If you wish to pray for world peace – Press 1.

If you wish to pray for a friend – Press 2.

If you wish to pray for your family – Press 3.

If you wish to pray for yourself – Press 4. *[Chris presses one key]*

[Mocking] 4 again is it? Talk about selfish. OK then, now you need to choose from our personal prayer request menu.

If you wish to ask for more money – Press 1.

If you wish to ask for healing from that nagging pain in the middle of your back – Press 2.

For all other requests – please Press 3.

Chris I reckon it has to be 3 this time. *[Presses one key]*

Operator Thank you. An operator will be with you shortly. *[More music plays]*
Thank you for calling Prayers Direct. I am afraid all our operators are busy at present. Very busy. We estimate that your call will be dealt with in thirty-five minutes. Please hold. *[Music resumes]*

Chris Oh, forget it. *[Switches off phone. Puts it away and storms off stage]*

Introducer Well, do we mean that prayer is like that? Or do we mean instead that prayer is like this?

Enter Chris looking worried and anxious carrying a mobile. He/she presses just one key and starts to speak immediately.

Chris Hello Father.

God *[Through speaker system]* Hello, Chris, how's that nagging pain in the middle of your back?

Chris Oh, much better thanks. It's great to know you care.

God What can I do for you?

Chris Well *[Wanders off stage talking earnestly to God]*

Introducer "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him."