

Psalm 86: 1-7 (ESV): Give Ear to My Prayer

Main point: God hears your prayers and is faithful to answer.



Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: A prayer of David. David lists lots of requests in this prayer, with a definite sense of urgency.

Focus of the study:

- ¹ Incline your ear, O Lord, and **answer me**,
for I am poor and needy.
- ² Preserve my life, for I am godly;
save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God.
- ³ Be gracious to me, O Lord,
for to you do **I cry** all the day.
- ⁴ Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, do **I lift up my soul**.
- ⁵ For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who **call** upon you.
- ⁶ Give ear, O Lord, to my **prayer**;
listen to my **plea for grace**.
- ⁷ In the day of my trouble **I call upon you**,
for you answer me.

Questions:

1. *What is the attitude of the speaker in this psalm? (generate as many definitions/ideas as possible for each word or phrase; what does it mean to be...)*
 - a. v. 1: poor
 - b. v. 1: needy
 - c. v. 2: “godly” (looking to God, loyal to God, devoted to God)
 - d. v. 2: trusting
 - e. v. 3: crying out
 - f. v. 6: pleading
 - g. v. 7: troubled
2. *What does the speaker do?*
 - a. Cries out, lifts up soul, calls, prays, pleads, calls upon God
 - b. *What feelings and actions do all these words describe in terms of relating to God?*
 - i. Honest, desperate; communicating! Speaking and listening.
3. *What is the speaker asking for? (generate as many definitions/ideas as possible for each word or phrase)*
 - a. v. 1: “incline your ear”
 - b. v. 1: “answer me”

- c. v. 2: “preserve my life” (protect me)
 - d. v. 2: “save”
 - e. v. 3: “be gracious” (merciful, full of grace)
 - f. v. 4: “gladden the soul” (joy, happiness, peace)
4. When does the speaker pray/talk to God?
 - a. v. 3: “all the day” (constantly)
 - b. v. 7: “in the day of trouble” (anytime, in need)
 5. How does the speaker pray/talk to God?
 - a. v. 2: trusting
 - b. v. 3: humbly (my cry)
 - c. v. 6: pleading (urgent)
 6. Here’s the most important question: Who is the speaker asking for these things?
 - a. God!
 7. Why does the speaker ask God for these things? What is God like?
 - a. v. 5: “For (Because) you, O Lord...”
 - i. are good, forgiving, abounding in love, steadfast; and
 - ii. v. 7: God answers!
 1. Does the speaker say that God “maybe” answers?
 - a. No; the speaker is sure
 8. Why do we pray/talk to God? How often?
 - a. We need help! All the time!
 9. Again, Who do we pray/talk to?
 - a. God, the powerful and gracious, who listens and answers his people specifically, personally (not the vague “universe”... the universe can’t and doesn’t answer)
 10. Based on the example of this psalm, how do you think should we pray/talk to God?
 - a. without ceasing
 - b. with thanks
 - c. with sincerity/honesty, pleading, crying out, earnestly
 - d. having faith in God’s goodness
- Ask for any prayer requests for today.
 - Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
 - End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

Psalm 86: 1-7

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for I am poor and needy.

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you are my God.

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