

**Prayer as Listening**  
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So many of us have been raised with the idea that prayer is talking to God. So we do two things when it comes to prayer: 1) saying all the rote Catholic prayers that we all know, the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and so on; 2) asking God for favors. We want our children to know and use these types of prayers.

If prayer is having a conversation with God, why is it that we're doing all the talking? Who knows more about what is best for us, what we really need? Is it us or is it God?

Mother Teresa once said, "Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depths of our hearts."

Fr. David Fleming, an expert on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, says this: "God is an active God. He is ever at work in people's lives, inviting, directing, guiding, proposing, suggesting... We need to have an active attentiveness to God joined with a prompt responsiveness to his leading."

We should read Psalm 139 to our children and talk with them about what it means for each one of us. A portion of that psalm reads: "Lord, you have probed me, you know me: you know when I sit and stand; "You understand my thoughts from afar...with all my ways you are familiar. Even before a word is on my tongue, Lord, you know it all...My days were shaped, before one came to be."

If our days were shaped before we were born, then it is most important that we each learn the unique mission and purpose for which we were created. Next week we'll focus on how God communicates His will for our lives.