

The Prayer Question

Was God really listening when Xóchitl prayed?

By Xóchitl Bott Rivera
(Based on a true story)

This story happened in the USA.

Xóchitl lay in her bunk bed, looking up at the bed above her. Her family had just said family prayer, and it was time to sleep. She hadn't said her own prayer before bed yet.

Why do we need to pray? she wondered. Her family always said the same things, like thanking God and asking Him for good dreams. Were their prayers really answered? Sometimes she still had bad dreams anyway.

What would happen if she stopped praying? Ready to test her new idea, she turned over on her side and fell asleep.

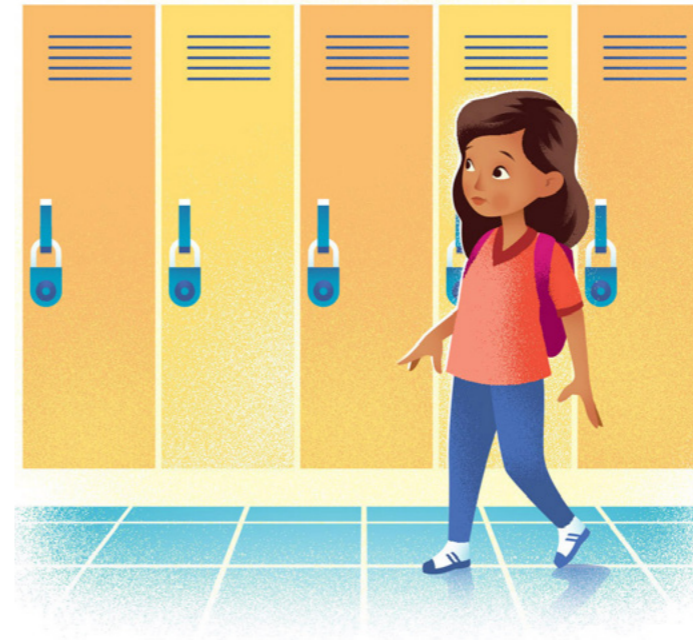
For the next few days, Xóchitl didn't pray. Then the days turned into weeks. Nothing really changed. She didn't feel much different.

She finished the rest of the school year, and soon it was summer. Xóchitl had fun going to swimming lessons and playing with her dogs. She got to see her cousins at a big family gathering.

Every night, she joined her family for prayer. But she still didn't pray on her own.

Soon summer had to end, and Xóchitl started to get ready for school. But she wasn't excited at all. A few days before school started, she met her new teacher, found her locker, and got a new backpack. Whenever she thought about going to school, she felt sick. Every day the feeling got worse.

One night she stayed awake in her bed, thinking about school. *I don't want to go. It's scary*, she thought.



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Then she remembered what her parents taught her about prayer. They said she could pray anywhere and that she could pray for help and comfort.


Xóchitl knelt next to her bed and took a deep breath. For the first time in months, she said her own prayer. She prayed to Heavenly Father. She thanked Him and asked Him for good dreams just like they did in family prayers. When she finished, she didn't feel much different inside.

The next night, she tried again. And again. She asked Heavenly Father to bless the prophet and her family. Soon she was telling Him her feelings and what she hoped for at her new school.

"Heavenly Father," she said one night, "I'm so scared about school. I can't sleep. Can you help me not feel scared anymore?" She felt a strong feeling of peace wrap around her, almost like a warm blanket. Right away, she knew it was the Holy Ghost.

So this is why we pray, she thought. *To feel Heavenly Father's love*. It was an amazing feeling. For all those months she didn't pray, she had been missing out on this feeling.

Xóchitl smiled. She was still nervous to start school, but she felt much stronger knowing God could comfort her. She really could pray for comfort anytime, anywhere, because God really was listening. ●



"God hears and answers the prayers of His children."

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Waiting on the Road to Damascus," *Liahona*, May 2011, 70.