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## Hasn't a Prayer

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## **Hasn't a Prayer**

When we say that someone "hasn't a prayer," we mean that their situation is pretty near hopeless, though usually we use the expression as an exaggeration, empathizing with a person who is having difficulties. Literally, the present situation is supposed to be so far from resolution that not even resorting to God could be of any help. Suggesting that any human involvement could be beyond God's capacity to help, heal, or deliver is not worth considering. But from our perspective, when we are only aware of the problem facing us, we might not even think about praying; we might not have a prayer.

If everything depended upon us, we would be in much worse circumstances than could exist now or ever have before. God does not need us to first formulate our needs in conceptual terms, in words, or even with conscious intent, before taking interest in our well-being. Just as we are quite capable of foreseeing, for example, that someone is going to need the keys left on the desk, and bringing them to him or her, God knows what we will need before we do, and often either "brings the keys to us" through the kindness of some person, or "gives us a call" with a surprising inspiration of memory or circumstance that enables us to avoid a potential problem.

If someone "hasn't a prayer" because he or she does not pray, at least not consciously, or not in forms that many consider as prayer, yet some interaction with God might take place. We have learned to "read" facial expressions and involuntary movements of persons, and respond to those cues although no conscious exchange takes place. We do so because we care. And so does God care, whether or not we pray. Love transcends rules and expectations that we might have, and God surely is not bound by any of them.

If and when we pray, it is not so much that we might inform God of our plight or our praise, but so that we can experience ourselves actively in communication with God. Prayer, from our side, expresses trust, hope, and love, the powerful and quite positive movements within us that transcend much of the dehumanizing forces at work within and around us. Prayer of any kind is a gift initiated in us by God who holds us in love, and who enables us to experience personal contact that is in some ways analogous to

the ways we communicate with all others in our various relationships.

If any of us should think of ourselves as someone who hasn't a prayer, at least two options are available for further consideration: we could reflect on our feelings, whether of hopelessness, depression, or numbness; we could reflect on the myriad of ways we communicate with others, from those closest to us to those unnamed persons who are in minimal contact with us.

When we think over the possible sources of negative feelings or of no feelings at all, we might gain some insight into an incident that needs acceptance as having happened and needs healing so that we might move beyond the occurrence. Further, if we engage in such honest work, we might experience what people often describe as some of the fruits of prayer: an increase of peace, hope, self-respect, and Presence.

When we consider any one of the spontaneous means we use in conveying thoughts and feelings to others, and make use of them in relating with God, we might again have experiences that are similar to those we have when we relate with friends, acquaintances, or those not previously known to us.

We need not be a person who hasn't a prayer.