

*Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I [am poor and needy. (Psalm 86:1)*

The greatest hindrance to effectual praying for all of us is unbelief. We simply do not believe our prayers will be answered, that God will grant our petitions. For,

*What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (Mark 11:24)*

Again,

*And this is the confidence we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him. (I John 5:14-15)*

How, then, may we be encouraged to believe that we are heard and that our request will be granted? Psalm 86 gives us seven most wonderful assurances to that end.

1. *I am poor and needy.* God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. His ear is always attentive to the cry of the weak and helpless. When our perception of our state is that we are secure and adequate, we not only have a foolish and deluded confidence in carnal things, but *cannot* believe in God, simply because we do not feel our need of Him. If I am to believe God, I must sense myself so low that God must bow down His ear to hear me.
2. *I am holy.* When the Christian affirms his holiness, he is not boasting or vaunting his spirituality. His holiness is his separation to God, Who alone is absolutely holy. His separation has been secured in God's loving election, His free choice. If we can say we are holy, then we are appealing to God's sovereign will in choosing and calling us to Himself. I can, therefore, plead my circumstance to be according to His purpose, and believe that He will deliver me.
3. *You are my God.* I have no other. I am single-minded in this. There is no "plan B" to invoke in case You do not answer. All my eggs are in this basket. I have no other recourse. If You do not hear me, then I will sink. I therefore fix myself at Your feet, and here I will stay.
4. *I am Your servant.* This is not the cry of Your enemy or a rebel. It is my whole heart's desire and intention to live in loving, devoted obedience to You. I am Your instrument to do Your will.
5. *I cry to You daily.* You are hearing no new voice, nor one rarely heard. My petitions, supplications and thanksgiving are heard by You every day. You, Yourself, have made me Your friend, have taken me into Your confidence, and made Yourself my Saviour. Shall I make daily prayers to You, and then deny them by not crying to You in the day of my trouble? No, I will lay this desperate matter in Your Hands, where it will be surely resolved.
6. *I lift up my soul unto You.* You are the Eternal God, and my soul has been put into Your Hands. You alone are worthy and able to safeguard, deliver, and cause me to rejoice. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none that I desire on earth beside thee."
7. *You are ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy.* It is true that I have more than enough sins to shut me out of Your favor forever, and if You should hold those against us, none should be able to approach You. But You are a God that puts away the sins of those for whom Your Son died, yes, You are He Who justifies, Who rejoices in forgiveness, and refuses to hear the condemnations of our accusers. Shall not You, Who delivered up His Son for us all, not freely by Him give us all things?

If we can whole-heartedly affirm these as truth when we pray, we can be certain we are heard and our petitions will be granted.

-C.M.