



**“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear”** (Isaiah 59: 1). The Jews had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon and wanted to build the temple. They felt though that God was not helping them and was not answering their prayers. Some may have had the thought that God was not powerful enough to help them in such a difficult situation. The Bible passage used for today’s devotional is the response of the prophet to this way of thinking.

The prophet explains why God does not seem to answer their prayers: “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

### **Why does God not answer prayers?**

We can also sometimes have the impression that God does not hear or answer our prayers. This is not because God is too weak or unwilling to hear us. The situation is never too complicated, the enemy never too strong, the servants never too weak, and our sins never too great for God not to help us! God’s help does not primarily consist of putting an end to our suffering here on earth, but rather to give us the strength we need and then to redeem us from evil and lead us into His kingdom. So, let us therefore keep faith, even in the face of difficult and unsolvable situations, in the certainty that God is a loving God who will arrange everything for the best.

### **The Holy Spirit teaches us to pray**

Sometimes requests are made in prayer that are contrary to the will of God and to what really benefits us. This is why the Apostle Paul says: “... We do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8: 26). When we ask for the wrong thing or just don’t have the words, then the Holy Spirit can help and will inter-cede for us and give us inspiration. God does not fulfil all our requests, but He does fulfil those that are in accordance with His will. God knows what we need!

### **Our prayers**

Let our prayers include giving thanks to God: for our lives, for being children of God, for every good word that has been given to us through Him and people around us.

Let our prayers not contain demands or reproaches, but let them be characterised by a humble plea for grace and be an expression of our agreement with God’s plan.

Let our prayers focus on our longing for the return of Christ and the completion of the kingdom of God.

Let our prayers then be filled with trust in God and be an expression of the certainty that He is friendly towards us and wants us to be saved, so that even in difficult and threatening situations we can say: "Lord, Your will be done!"

22 April 2020