

Ever Feel Like You're Bothering God?

The police do answer 911 calls—even if it does embarrass the pastor.

Our church celebrated my first anniversary as pastor by taking over a local park for a Sunday afternoon picnic. The afternoon included a lot of food, and after a couple of hours, it included the police.



The squad car pulled up and the officer sought out whoever was in charge. Apparently, that was me. He informed me that the 911 operator had received multiple calls from the park pavilion pay phone.

It didn't take long to find the culprit. He was standing right next to me.

My six-year-old son and friends were playing near the pay phone and play eventually included the phone. They dialed the one number they knew—the number they were taught to use—never realizing the pay phone would connect to the 911 dispatcher even without coins.

They didn't think they had a connection—but they did.

I'm convinced a lot of people pray the same way they approach 911. When we call 911, we want help, but we're not looking for a relationship with the 911 dispatcher. Too many of us look to God for help without really wanting God Himself. *"God, fix this for me, and I won't bother You again."*

God wants us to bother Him. God does not shut us out for non-emergencies nor does a police officer show up telling us we're making too many requests. God invites us to talk to Him.

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and incomprehensible things you do not know" (Jer. 33:3).

"The Lord is near all who call out to him, all who call out to him with integrity" (Ps. 145:18).

Pray.

- **Talk to God when life is in crisis.** The prophet Daniel's life was in mortal danger, but he didn't panic. He asked for time, and he used that time to pray (Dan. 2). We don't need to wring our hands in a crisis, we need to bother God—and pray.
- **Talk to God when life is calm and serene.** Thankfully, not every day is a crisis. But it's still OK to bother God. Talk to Him on the good days.
- **Talk to God when _____.** You don't have to have a reason! In fact, you don't even have to have a request in mind. Just talk to Him. Build a relationship with Him—an ongoing relationship of talking and communing with Him. Experience has taught me that a daily walk with God, an ongoing conversation of prayer, keeps me from worry, sweating, and wringing my hands when the crisis comes.

So go ahead. Bother God. Just talk to Him. He's fine with that.

