



How to Pray

Luke 11:1, Matt. 6:5-13

RECAP

This week's focus: Knowing who God is and how God is gracious should shape how we pray.

You have probably heard it said that some things are better caught than taught. Much of discipleship is this way, including prayer. As we study prayer in the sermons and Life Groups, Matthew 6:5-13 reminds us that some of Jesus' most important teaching on prayer arose from His disciples watching Him pray and wanting to pray more like Him. Jesus taught his disciples a model prayer that was less about the mechanics of what to say to God and more about knowing the God to whom they were praying.

Knowing that Jesus prayed tells us two things. First, He is dependent on God's help and direction. Second, He is not a magician working sorcerers' tricks; His power comes from God. The disciples asking Jesus to teach them to pray does not mean they did not know how to pray but that they are impressed with the example of Jesus' prayer life and convinced of its effectiveness because of the results they could clearly see.

This passage begins and ends with God pictured as Father and serves to teach Jesus' disciples that God is a loving Father who desires to give good gifts to those who have faith. All of Jesus' teaching in this passage and Luke 11 were in response to a disciple asking Jesus to help them pray better. Many of the disciples had learned how to pray in the Jewish custom. So, it's not likely that the disciples did not know how to pray at all. What they were seeking in prayer was what they had witnessed in watching Jesus pray. They saw Him pray often and differently than their religious leaders. His whole life was saturated with prayer. They witnessed with their own eyes that His prayers were effective and powerful. So, they asked to be taught and Jesus answered with a simple model of prayer for His disciples to emulate.

Prayer is a muscle that grows as you use it. The more you do it, the more you know how to do it, and the more you desire to do it. Jesus gave us a model. You can start with five minutes a day if that is all you can handle. You can also join us each morning for the next 21 days and commit to regular prayer. Asking God isn't rocket science. Prayer is about building your relationship with Him and aligning your will with His.

21 days of Fasting and Prayer

- Fill out your prayer request and commit to fast and pray.
- During the next 21 days join us daily from 7:00-7:30 AM in the Chapel Monday-Saturday for corporate prayer.
- Join us for a night of Prayer and Worship-January 29th



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SHARE (5-10 min)

1. Icebreaker Question: What is one characteristic you received from your parents you want to keep and one you wish you could change?

STUDY (about 30 min) Read Luke 11:1 & Matthew 6:5-13

2. Many of the disciples grew up learning to pray according to Jewish traditions. Why do you think the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray?
3. Jesus teaches His disciples an outline or model of the things that God loves to hear His children pray. What did Jesus teach His disciples to say? Discuss how we should understand each one.
4. How do the petitions for daily bread and forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer free believers to live more committed and surrendered lives for Christ?
5. Review the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8 and read Jesus' parable about the neighbor in Luke 11:5-8. How are the parables similar? How are they different? What do we learn about prayer from Luke 11:5-8?
6. What do the actions commanded in Luke 11:9-10 teach us about the relationship we have with God?
7. How do verses 11-13 help us understand the Lord's Prayer, the parable of the neighbor, and God's command to come to Him with our requests?
8. How does the model of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 help you in your prayer life? What do you see you need to change or address when it comes to praying to your Heavenly Father?

SUPPORT (15 min)

Break up into groups of two or three. Using the template of the Lord's Prayer, take turns praying your version of this sample prayer.