

Introduction

Last week, we discussed how prayer is a vital component in establishing a solid foundation for a strong relationship with God. It connects us to Him and enables us to receive His guidance, peace, and strength. This week, we would like to delve into prayer in more detail.

Before we begin, let's discuss our prayer life.

Discussion Questions: *What is prayer to you? What kinds of things make it hard to pray sometimes?*

Prayer is actually a very simple thing at its core, and yet it can be studied in great depth. Today's session, though, will not be an intellectual study of prayer. Instead, we will do an overview examining the who, what, where, when, and why of prayer.

Diving In

What is Prayer?

Prayer is defined in the Bible as a petition, supplication, or request.

At its core, prayer is simply talking to God. It doesn't require elaborate words or a rigid structure; what matters is a sincere heart. As we discussed last week, prayer should be approached with authenticity and faith, knowing that God values honest and open communication.

Various forms of prayer include:

- **Petition:** Asking God for specific needs.
- **Intercession:** Praying on behalf of others.
- **Praise and Thanksgiving:** Expressing gratitude and worship to God.

Who Do We Pray To?

Prayer should be directed to God in the Name of Jesus.

John 16:23–24 (NLT) *At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.*

John 14:13–14 (NLT) *You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!*

Why do we pray in Jesus' name? Jesus is the Mediator between God and humanity.



1 Timothy 2:5 (NLT) *For there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus.*

Hebrews 8:6 (NLT) *But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.*

Jesus bridges the gap between sinful humanity and a holy God. Praying in His name acknowledges His role as the Mediator through whom we have access to the Father.

How Do We Pray?

The disciples also asked Jesus this question in **Luke 11:1–4** and **Matthew 6:9–13**. Jesus gave them what we call today, the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:9–13 (NIV) *This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'*

Jesus gave this as an example, not as a formula to recite. Let's look at what He is saying:

- Our Father in heaven: *Relating to God as a Father.*
- Hallowed be your name: *Reverence for God, focus on God's Greatness.*
- Your kingdom come, your will be done: *Submission to God's will.*
- Give us each day our daily bread: *Dependence on God for daily needs.*
- Forgive us our sins, as we forgive others: *Confession and forgiveness.*
- Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: *Guidance and protection.*

Our prayers should touch on these aspects, but not be limited by them. We can talk with God about anything, approaching Him with faith and confidence, believing in His goodness and His ability to answer according to His will.

When Should I Pray?

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NIV) *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

"Pray without ceasing" refers to continuous communication with God. We are encouraged to maintain an ongoing, open dialogue with God throughout our day, not limited to formal prayers, but a constant mindfulness of His presence.

Prayer should be more than an event or task; it should become a way of life. Living with a prayerful attitude means cultivating constant awareness of God's presence. This includes



praying throughout the day, thanking Him, seeking His guidance, and inviting Him into every situation.

Praying continually shows our dependence on God, acknowledging that we rely on Him for all aspects of life. Prayer isn't limited to specific times or places; it is meant to be an integral and ongoing part of our daily journey.

However, setting aside uninterrupted times for prayer is also important. There are many examples in the Bible of men and women of God spending time alone in prayer:

Daniel

Despite a royal decree forbidding prayer to anyone but the king, Daniel maintained his practice of praying three times a day. He knelt in his upstairs room, facing Jerusalem, and gave thanks to God, demonstrating his faithfulness and commitment to prayer (**Daniel 6:10**).

Jesus

After a busy day of ministry, Jesus rose early in the morning, while it was still dark, and went to a solitary place to pray (**Mark 1:35**).

Hannah

Hannah went to the tabernacle to pray earnestly for a child, pouring out her heart to God with deep emotion and making a vow to dedicate her son to the Lord (**1 Samuel 1:9–11**).

Why should I pray?

Oswald Chambers says, "Our ordinary views of prayer are not found in the New Testament. We look upon prayer as a means for getting something for ourselves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself."

Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV) *Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*

Ephesians 1:17 (NIV) *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

Prayer is consistently presented in Scripture as a means to know God more intimately, to understand His will, and to experience His presence. Through prayer, believers not only share their hearts with God but also receive His wisdom, peace, and revelation.

If we want to know God and see Him move in the lives of the people around us, we must spend time in prayer. It is the only way to build a relationship; it is the only way to become a disciple. All the gospels record that Jesus prayed. If He needed to pray, how much more do we need to?



Luke 6:40 (NIV) *The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.*

If we want to be like Jesus, then we must spend time in prayer.

"Some people think God does not like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking. The way to trouble God is not to come at all." —D.L. Moody

Wrap-Up / Challenge

Let's remember:

What is Prayer?

Prayer is a petition or request brought before God.

Who Do We Pray To?

Our prayers should be directed to God in the Name of Jesus.

How Do We Pray?

We pray by simply talking to God. There's no need to use specific words or sound a certain way; what matters is being sincere. Our prayers should be offered in faith, trusting in His goodness.

When Should I Pray?

Always! Prayer should be an ongoing, open dialogue with God throughout the day. In addition to this continual connection, it's important to set aside daily, intentional, and uninterrupted time for prayer.

Why Should I Pray?

Prayer allows us to know God and deepen our relationship with Him. It's an opportunity to share our hearts with Him and receive His wisdom, peace, and revelation in return.

This week, set aside intentional time for prayer, even if it's just 5 minutes. Make it a priority to spend uninterrupted moments with the Lord. Additionally, practice including God in your activities throughout the day, inviting Him into every moment and decision.

If you see one another this week, take a moment to ask how it's going and encourage each other in this challenge!

