



COMMITTED – COMMIT TO PRAYER AND FASTING

Community Group Study Guide: Matthew 6:5-18 – Week of February 26, 2023

1. Commit to Prayer with a Person

While it is good for God's people to pray publicly, it cannot be limited to that sphere. Our relationship with God should include private prayer to Him, that contains the same vigor and depth that our public prayer life does. The temptation is to pray so that we might be heard and seen by others. Furthermore, Jesus commands us to not pray like non-believers, pouring out many words simply thinking that by their quantity they would be heard. Our God already knows what we need, so speak to our Father who hears us. This level of personal interaction also reflects the understanding that we have a personal relationship... a capacity to pray to God because of the grace of God. Through Jesus, we can now stand before God, and communicate with Him.

2. Commit to Prayer with a Plan

Scripture often accounts wisdom to those who consider and prepare before they act. Our time in prayer should have these same qualities. Even in our passage, Jesus lays out a framework that we can use to pray to God. Practically, having a plan for prayer can be highly beneficial. First, determine a time and a place. Make the timing intentional. Second, make use of a template. Have a prepared structure for your time in prayer. Third, keep a list. Collect and keep those things that you need to be praying about. Finally, record and remember. Keep track of what you have prayed for and how God has responded to circumstances over time.

3. Commit to Prayer with Purity

Jesus, during this sermon, makes it very clear how important it is to resolve issues with our brothers or sisters before approaching God (Matt 5:23-24). He reiterates this in verse 6:14-15, by reminding us that how important it is to do to others as we would ask God to do to us. As we want God

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

We are commanded to pray to our Father in heaven, and to do so in a persistent and authentic fashion. Furthermore, the same assumption is made regarding fasting.

Heart

These spiritual habits of prayer and fasting should not be considered a burden, but a privilege we should joyfully undertake. We should desire to interact with God using these activities.

Hands

We should have regular intervals of these activities in our lives, prioritizing honoring God in them.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Parent Commissioning
3/12 @ 1pm
Membership 101
3/19 @ 1 pm

to forgive us, we should have already forgiven others. If we do not pray with purity, our prayers can be hindered.

4. Commit to Pray with Fasting

Like prayer, fasting is done for the glory of God, and the building up of our spiritual health. Fasting is designed to help show that we do not live on bread alone. It helps us to direct ourselves away from the distractions of this physical world, and to focus on the spiritual. So we have an imperative to fast, and we should do so in secret. Like prayer, the Lord rewards those who obey Him in secret.

5. Commit to Pray with Perspective

Jesus has been instructing us on how we should pray and fast, how these things should be done in secret, and that our Father will see and reward us. To clarify, Jesus reminds us that this treasure, these rewards, are not on earth. Our mindset as Christians should have a primary focus on the eternal kingdom of God, where things are imperishable. Ultimately Jesus warns us that the things we treasure is where our hearts lie. The encouragement for ourselves is to treasure the kingdom of God, and to act in obedience to all that He has commanded us to do.

Guide for Prayer

1. ***“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”*** Acknowledge Gods position. Recognize His holiness. Praise Him for He is, that He is set apart and worthy. Spend time magnifying the name of the Lord.
2. ***“Your kingdom come”*** Pray that God would shine His light upon the world, and that the world would respond to Him. Pray that we would follow the influence of His Spirit and His Word, and that the world would obey all that He has commanded us to do.
3. ***“Your will be done on as it is in heaven”*** Pray that God would equip us to do all that He has commanded us to do. Pray that His will would be complete here on earth as it would be completed in heaven, by the faithful acts of His children. *“Oh Lord, command what you will and give what you command.”* St. Augustine.
4. ***“Give us this day our day our daily bread”*** Pray that the Lord would meet our fundamental needs. Pray for the daily challenges of life, that the Lord would meet and supply for all of our necessities.
5. ***“Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.”*** Confess sins to the Lord, and ask for His forgiveness. Out of God’s grace on us, pray that we would remember to forgive those who have wronged us. Ask God to reveal any sin or unforgiveness in our hearts.
6. ***“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*** Pray that the Lord would not test us with too great a temptation, but that He would be our refuge during these conflicts with evil. Ask the Lord to remind us of His strength, of His provision during temptation, that we would look to Him at all times, and that we would face the enemy with His power working through us.