

WEEK 6 (September 20-26) Sermon on the Mount— “How and Why to Pray”

(Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11)

Starting the Conversation (Read

One of the most important spiritual questions that one can every ask is “How do I pray?” Jesus understood the great importance of this communication with God. Knowing the foundation of prayer for an abundant spiritual life and our need for instruction, Jesus teaches the right approach to prayer and the right model for prayer. Jesus first teaches us that prayer is about connection with God and dependence on God. It is NOT about the opinion or approval of others. It is all about connecting with God and should be approached with that goal. Second, Jesus provides a model for prayer—not a formula, but a model. Our prayer life, as a whole, should include adoration, submission, requests for God’s provision, confession, and a call for God’s protection. A prayer life that brings this to God with dependence and humility and that listens for the voice of God to speak to our hearts brings a powerful and impactful life through a deep connection to God.

Let’s Read Matthew 6:5-15

Leader: It is common for people to struggle with prayer. We can be unsure if we are praying in a way that is effective, powerful, and pleasing to God. Even the disciples asked Jesus to give them instructions on how to pray. In response, Jesus gives us a model for prayer. Let’s explore it together...

- Do you think the “Lord’s Prayer” is an order that we need to follow? If not, how should we apply this model of prayer to how we talk with God?
- Why do you think Jesus starts the prayer the way that He does?
- What elements of the prayer do you find most comforting? Most challenging? Why?

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t’s Read Matthew 7:7-11

Leader: Jesus tells us that we need to believe in prayer. If someone doesn’t really believe that prayer is powerful and effective, they won’t pray very much and won’t pray with much passion or expectation. Let’s talk about what we can expect with prayer.

- What does Jesus mean when He says “Keep on asking and you will receive what you ask for?”
- Does prayer move the heart of God and bring Him to action? Why or why not?
- Are there certain things that we can pray for and we will NOT get what we ask for? Why or why not?
- Why is it important for us to trust that God *can* take care of us and *desires* to take care of us?

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osing— Be encouraged: Romans 8:26-27 tells us that the Holy Spirit is interceding and praying for us. We won’t always know when, what, or how to pray. But God gives His grace.

- What does it mean that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us?
- How is this comforting?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for opening the way and inviting us to talk with You, listen to You, and be with You. Like you taught Your disciples, teach us to pray. Give us a deep faith in You, and show us how awesome is Your love and Your power. Forgive us for praying small and selfish prayers. Stir in our hearts a BIG faith and desires that line up with what You care about. Get us excited about praying and joining with You. Encourage us when we are discouraged, and draw us closer to You every day. In Jesus’ name. Amen.