

How does understanding 'amen' as 'yes, so be it' rather than simply 'the end' change the way you approach prayer in your daily life?

Jesus prayed honestly about not wanting to suffer while still submitting to God's will—how can we create space for similar honesty in our own prayers without falling into disobedience?

What does it look like practically to 'listen' after praying, and how might we discern whether what we're hearing is truly from God or from our own desires?

The sermon describes prayer as 'not just us talking to God but also us slowing down long enough to hear from Him'—what barriers prevent you from listening in prayer, and how can you overcome them?

In what areas of your life are you currently holding tightly to control rather than living with 'open hands' before God?

How does Jesus' struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane challenge or comfort you when you face difficult decisions that require obedience to God's will over your own?

The pastor suggests having a designated place for prayer like Jesus had the Mount of Olives—do you have such a place, and if not, what might that look like for you?

What is one specific thing God might be asking your attention on this week, and what would a 'small step of obedience' look like in response?

How does the concept of 'amen as obedience' transform prayer from a passive religious activity into an active lifestyle of discipleship?

Reflecting on the P-R-A-Y framework (Pause/Praise, Reflect/Repent, Ask, Yield), which component is most challenging for you personally and why?

Small Group Guide: "Amen - Where Prayer Becomes Obedience"

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by inviting someone to open in prayer, asking God to help the group listen, release control, and be willing to obey what He reveals during this time together.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: Do you have a specific place where you typically pray? What makes that space meaningful to you? If you don't have one yet, where might be a good prayer spot for you?

Sermon Review (5 minutes)

Key Concept: Amen isn't the end of prayer—it's the beginning of obedience.

The PRAY Acronym:

- Praise - Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name
- Reflect & Repent - Your kingdom come, your will be done
- Ask - Give us this day our daily bread
- Yield - Listen, Release, Obey

Discussion Questions

Understanding Amen (10-15 minutes)

1. **What was your understanding of "amen" before this sermon?** How does viewing it as "yes, so be it, let it be so" change your perspective on prayer?
2. **Read Deuteronomy 27:15-26.** What do you notice about how the Israelites responded after each commandment? What does this teach us about agreement with God's will?
3. **The pastor said, "Amen is not a punctuation, it's participation."** What does this mean practically in your prayer life?

Jesus' Model of Yielding (15-20 minutes)

4. **Read Luke 22:39-46 together.** What stands out to you about how Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane?
5. **Jesus prayed honestly: "Take this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours be done."** How does Jesus' example give us permission to be honest with God about our struggles while still surrendering to His will?
6. **Why do you think Jesus told His disciples three times to "pray so that you will not fall into temptation"?** What's the connection between prayer and spiritual strength?

The Three Movements of Yielding (20-25 minutes)

Movement 1: Listen

7. **How comfortable are you with silence after praying?** What makes listening to God challenging for you?
8. **Read Acts 13:1-3.** The church was worshiping, fasting, and praying when the Holy Spirit spoke. What spiritual practices help prepare our hearts to hear from God?
9. **Share a time when you sensed God speaking to you** (through Scripture, circumstances, other believers, inner conviction, etc.). How did you know it was Him?

Movement 2: Release Control

10. **Read Romans 12:1.** What does it mean to offer yourself as a "living sacrifice"? Why is this described as "true and proper worship"?
11. **The pastor admitted being a "chronic control freak."** What areas of your life are hardest for you to release to God's control? Why?
12. **What's the difference between telling God what you want (which is okay) and demanding your own way (which isn't)?**

Movement 3: Obey

13. **Read James 1:22 and John 14:15.** Why is obedience inseparable from genuine faith and love for Jesus?
14. **Can you share an example of when you obeyed God in something difficult?** What was the result?
15. **What typically holds you back from obeying what you sense God is calling you to do?**

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Amen means "yes, so be it"—it's our agreement to participate in what God is doing
- ✓ Prayer isn't complete until we're willing to obey what God reveals

- ✓ **Yielding to God involves three movements: Listen, Release Control, and Obey**
- ✓ **Jesus modeled honest prayer combined with complete surrender to the Father's will**
- ✓ **Our amen transforms prayer from words into action and obedience**

Practical Application (15-20 minutes)

Personal Reflection Exercise

Take 5-7 minutes of silence for group members to work through this individually:

1. **Listen:** Ask God to show you ONE thing He wants your attention on this week. It might be:
 - A decision you've been delaying
 - A habit you've been protecting
 - A relationship you've been controlling
 - A calling you've been resisting
2. **Release:** Imagine placing that thing into God's hands and pray: *"Father, I release this to you. Not my will, but yours be done."*
3. **Obey:** Identify ONE small step of obedience you will take this week in response. It might be:
 - A conversation you need to have
 - A decision you need to make
 - A step of service you need to take
 - A change in habit you need to implement

Sharing & Accountability (10-15 minutes)

- **Invite volunteers to share** what God brought to their attention (only what they're comfortable sharing)
- **Ask: "What is your one step of obedience this week?"**
- **Assign prayer partners** or accountability partners to check in with each other during the week

Group Challenge

This Week:

- **Practice the PRAY model daily** (Praise, Reflect/Repent, Ask, Yield)
- **After praying, sit in silence for 2-3 minutes** to listen for God's response
- **Take your one step of obedience** and be ready to share about it next week
- **Consider establishing a regular prayer place** if you don't have one

Closing (5-10 minutes)

Prayer Time

Break into groups of 2-3 and pray for each other, specifically:

- That God would help each person listen to His voice
- For courage to release control of the specific areas mentioned
- For strength to obey whatever God is calling each person to do this week

Final Thought

"Every time we say amen, we are saying: God, I hear you. God, I trust you. God, I will follow you."

For Next Week

- **Follow up:** Be prepared to share how your "one step of obedience" went
- **Continue:** Keep using the PRAY model in your daily prayer time
- **Reflect:** Journal about what you're learning about yielding to God

Additional Resources

Scripture for Further Study:

- Matthew 6:9-13 (The Lord's Prayer)
- Matthew 26:36-46 (Jesus in Gethsemane)
- 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (Samuel learning to hear God's voice)
- Isaiah 6:8 (Isaiah's response: "Here am I. Send me!")
- Philippians 2:5-11 (Christ's example of obedience)

Questions for Personal Journaling:

- What patterns do I notice in how God speaks to me?
- Where am I most resistant to God's leading right now?
- What would complete surrender to God look like in my daily life?
- How has my understanding of prayer changed through this series?

5-Day Devotional: Living the Amen

Day 1: Amen—The Beginning of Obedience

Reading: Luke 22:39-46

Devotional: When Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, He modeled what true surrender looks like. His prayer wasn't polished or detached—it was raw, honest, and deeply human. "Not my will, but yours be done" wasn't just words; it was the beginning of obedience that led Him to the cross. Today, consider how you end your prayers. Is "amen" simply a period, or is it your declaration of willingness? God invites you into honest conversation where you can express your struggles while still choosing His way. Your amen should launch you into action, not signal the end of engagement. What is God asking you to surrender today?

Reflection Question: What area of your life are you holding back from God, and what would it look like to pray "not my will, but yours" over it?

Day 2: Listening After the Amen

Reading: Acts 13:1-3

Devotional: The early church in Antioch discovered something powerful: prayer isn't just speaking—it's listening. As they worshiped, fasted, and prayed, the Holy Spirit spoke clear direction. They were spiritually positioned to hear God's voice because they created space for Him to respond. Many of us rush from prayer into busyness, missing what God wants to say. After you pray today, resist the urge to immediately move on. Sit quietly for a few minutes. Open your Bible. Pay attention to the promptings in your heart. God may not speak audibly, but He does speak to those who are listening. Your obedience begins with hearing.

Reflection Question: When was the last time you gave God space to respond to your prayers? What might change if you added five minutes of listening after praying?

Day 3: Releasing Control

Reading: Romans 12:1-2

Devotional: Offering yourself as a "living sacrifice" means living with open hands. Unlike ancient sacrifices that were placed on an altar once, we have the daily temptation to climb down and take back control. Jesus demonstrated this surrender in Gethsemane—He knew the suffering ahead, yet released His plan to the Father. Releasing control doesn't mean you stop caring; it means you trust God more than your own understanding. What are you gripping tightly today? Your career plans? A relationship? Your reputation? God isn't trying to pry your hands open by force. He's inviting you to trust Him enough to let go. True worship happens when we stop managing our lives and start surrendering them.

Reflection Question: What would it look like to hold your biggest concern with open hands this week?

Day 4: From Prayer to Action

Reading: James 1:22-25

Devotional: James warns against the dangerous deception of hearing God's Word without doing it. The same applies to prayer. We can pray beautiful prayers, feel spiritually moved, and then walk away unchanged. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commands." Obedience is the proof of our love. When God speaks to you in prayer—through His Word, through conviction, through the counsel of others—what you do next matters more than what you felt in the moment. Amen means "I agree, I will act." Identify one thing God has been speaking to you about. Don't just acknowledge it—obey it. Let your amen become visible in your choices, conversations, and commitments this week.

Reflection Question: What is one specific action you can take today in response to what God has been showing you in prayer?

Day 5: The Prayer Rhythm—P.R.A.Y.

Reading: Matthew 6:9-13

Devotional: Jesus gave us a pattern for prayer that transforms our hearts: Praise, Reflection/Repentance, Ask, and Yield. This isn't a formula to follow legalistically but a rhythm that aligns us with God's heart. We begin with praise, remembering who God is. We reflect on His holiness, which leads to repentance. Aligned with Him, we can boldly ask. Then comes the yielding—listening, releasing control, and obeying. This rhythm keeps prayer from becoming self-centered. It roots our requests in God's character and kingdom. As you pray today, walk through each movement slowly. Don't rush to your requests. Let praise prepare your heart, let repentance realign your will, and let yielding become your lifestyle. Prayer isn't complete until you walk it out.

Reflection Question: Which part of the P.R.A.Y. rhythm is hardest for you, and how can you grow in that area this week?