

Audience of One

Pastor Greg Stansel

Matthew 6:5-8

April 7, 2024

Snapshot:

True prayer seeks communion with God.

I. Prayer is expected (6:5a, 6a, 7a)

II. Prayer is not manipulation (6:5, 7)

III. Prayer is communion with God (6:6, 8)

Group Challenge

Take time each day this week to get alone and pray.

Connecting

What are some of your struggles in prayer?

Study

Point 1: Prayer is Expected (6:5a, 6a, 7a)

READ: James 4:1–10

REFLECT: What are some similarities between the passage in Matthew 6:5–8 and James 4:1–10? How does James expose wrongful prayer? What does James reveal about the expectation of prayer?

RESPOND: What are some things you need to repent of in your prayer life? What are some practical steps you can take to ensure you pray as you are called to pray? How can your small group check-in with one another to help one another grow in this area?

Point 2: Prayer is not manipulation (6:5, 7)

READ: 1 Kings 18:20–40

REFLECT: What are some similarities between the passage in Matthew 6:5–8 and 1 Kings 18:20–40? How do the prophets of Baal reveal Gentile prayer? What are some ways we see people praying these rote prayers today? Compare the prophets of Baal's prayer to Elijah's; what are the differences?

RESPOND: Are there ways that you have, or currently are, trying to manipulate others or God in prayer? What are some things you can do to ensure that you do not fall into manipulating in prayer?

Point 3: Prayer is communion with God (6:6, 8)

READ: Matthew 26:36–46

REFLECT: What are the similarities between Matthew 6:5–8 and Matthew 26:36–46? How does Jesus put to practice what He taught in 6:5–8?

RESPOND: What will it look like for you to get alone and pray to the Father? How can you ensure you are seeking His reward and not worldly rewards? In what way is it comforting that the Lord knows what you need before you ask? How does that encourage prayer instead of discourage it?

Memorizing

“But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:6).

Preparing for next week

Read: Matthew 6:9-13

Ask: questions of the text

Pray: through text, for the pastor as he prepares, for your heart to hear, for the congregation to hear, for all of us to be obedient.