



Series: “Following The Way”
Week 3 Study Guide
Message: “Teach Us To Pray.”
(The Rhythm of Prayer)

SCRIPTURE

Main Text:	Cross References:
<i>Mark 1:35–39</i>	<i>Luke 5:16</i> <i>Jesus had a pattern of prayer time.</i> <i>Matthew 6:9–13</i> <i>The Lord’s Prayer</i> <i>1 Thessalonians 5:17</i> <i>“Pray without ceasing.”</i> <i>Philippians 4:6</i> <i>“In every situation... present your requests to God.”</i> <i>1 Peter 5:7</i> <i>“Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”</i>

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

(This section focuses on understanding what the text means — before jumping to what it means for us.)

Read Mark 1:35

Main Idea: In the middle of intense ministry demand, Jesus intentionally withdraws to pray.

Commentary:

Mark places this moment immediately after a full day and night of teaching, healing, and casting out demons. **(Read Mark 1:21-34 for context.)** Jesus is at the height of momentum. Instead of capitalizing on popularity or responding to pressure, He chooses solitude. The timing matters: “*very early... while it was still dark*” shows deliberate priority, not convenience. *Prayer was not squeezed in — it was protected.*

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it significant that Jesus chooses prayer after a full day of intense ministry?
2. What does the timing of this moment reveal about Jesus’ priorities?

Takeaway:

Jesus models prayer as a rhythm that sustains ministry, not something reserved for moments of crisis.

Read Mark 1:36–37

Main Idea: The disciples feel the pressure of demand and try to pull Jesus back into the spotlight.

Commentary:

The disciples go “looking for” for Jesus. The Greek word used implies urgency and pursuit (*literally: “hunting”*). In Mark’s Gospel, this language often carries the idea of attempting to control or redirect Jesus. *“Everyone is looking for you”* represents external pressure — expectations, urgency, and opportunity. From a human perspective, *this feels like the wrong moment to step away.*

Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of pressure are the disciples experiencing in this moment?
2. Why would it have felt logical to return immediately to the crowds?

Takeaway:

Demand often feels urgent, but urgency does not always equal obedience.

Read Mark 1:38–39

Main Idea: Prayer clarifies Jesus’ direction and shapes His next steps.

Commentary:

Instead of returning to Capernaum, Jesus redirects the mission. His decision flows directly from time spent with the Father. Prayer didn’t remove Him from mission — it helped him to focus on it. Jesus shows that divine will, not popularity or pressure, determined his direction.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Jesus’ response challenge the way we usually think about productivity?

2. What does this reveal about the connection between prayer and discernment?

Takeaway:

Prayer anchors disciples to God's will so that pressure, urgency and demand don't dictate direction.

Read Luke 5:16 (Cross Reference)

Main Idea: Withdrawing to pray was a consistent pattern in Jesus' life.

Commentary:

Luke summarizes Jesus' prayer life with the word "*often*." This was not a one-time decision, but a rhythm. Jesus regularly stepped away from crowds, needs, and expectations to remain connected to the Father.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important that Scripture emphasizes prayer as a regular habit, not an exception?
2. How does this reshape our understanding of spiritual strength?

Takeaway:

Spiritual depth is formed through repeated rhythms, not occasional moments.

Read Matthew 6:9–13 (The Lord's Prayer)

Main Idea: Jesus teaches His disciples a framework for relational prayer: *Rooted in identity → Shaped by worship → Marked by*

surrender → Dependent on provision → Formed by forgiveness → Sustained through guidance and protection.

UNDERSTANDING THE LORD'S PRAYER

(A Line-by-Line Guide to the Way Jesus Taught Us to Pray)

Read Matthew 6:9a — “Our Father in heaven...”

Main Idea: Jesus teaches us to begin prayer grounded in relationship and identity.

Commentary:

Jesus opens prayer not with requests, but with relationship. “Father” (*Abba*) is family language: expressing intimacy, trust, and belonging. Prayer begins by remembering who God is and who we are to Him. We do not approach God as strangers, employees, or burdens — but as sons and daughters.

The phrase “in heaven” holds reverence and authority alongside intimacy. God is close, yet sovereign. He is personal, yet powerful. Jesus shows us that prayer holds both nearness and awe.

Discussion Questions:

1. What emotions or assumptions come to mind when you think of God as Father?
2. Why is it important to start prayer with identity rather than need?

Takeaway:

Prayer begins by remembering we are loved children approaching a good and powerful Father.

Read Matthew 6:9b “...hallowed be your name.”

Main Idea: Prayer re-centers our hearts in worship and reverence.

Commentary:

To “hallow” means to honor as holy, set apart, and worthy of reverence. Jesus teaches us to pause and acknowledge God’s holiness before focusing on ourselves. This isn’t flattery — it’s alignment. Worship reshapes our perspective, reminding us that God is bigger than our problems and worthy of our trust. Worship at the beginning of prayer helps shift prayer from self-centeredness to God-centeredness.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think worship comes before requests in this prayer?
2. How does honoring God reshape the way you see your circumstances?

Takeaway:

Worship recenters our hearts and reminds us who God truly is.

Read Matthew 6:10 — “Your kingdom come, your will be done...”

Main Idea: Prayer invites surrender and alignment with God’s purposes.

Commentary:

God's kingdom represents His rule, reign, and redemptive work in the world. This prayer is not passive — it is a declaration of surrender. Jesus teaches us to loosen our grip on control and submit our desires to God's will. This line challenges our tendency to ask God to bless our plans rather than align ourselves with His.

Discussion Questions:

1. What makes surrender difficult in prayer?
2. Where might you be asking God to bless your plans instead of lead them?

Takeaway:

Prayer reshapes our desires so our lives align with God's kingdom, not our own.

Read Matthew 6:11 — “Give us today our daily bread.”

Main Idea: Prayer expresses daily dependence on God's provision.

Commentary:

“Daily bread” represents the essentials of life — physical, emotional, and spiritual. Jesus teaches us to rely on God one day at a time rather than demanding future guarantees. This prayer pushes against self-sufficiency and invites trust. God cares about ordinary needs. Nothing is too small to bring to Him.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does “daily bread” look like in your life right now?
2. Why is daily dependence often harder than one-time trust?

Takeaway:

Prayer reminds us that God is faithful to provide what we need, day by day.

Read Matthew 6:12 — “Forgive us our debts...”

Main Idea: Prayer invites honesty, repentance, and mercy.

Commentary:

“Debts” refers to sins — ways we fall short of God’s perfect standards, will, and ways. Jesus connects receiving forgiveness with extending forgiveness. This exposes unforgiveness that hardens our hearts and disrupts intimacy with God. Prayer becomes a place of freedom, where we receive grace and release bitterness.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus connects forgiveness received with forgiveness given?

Takeaway:

Prayer frees us by inviting mercy to flow both to us and through us.

Read Matthew 6:13 — “And lead us not into temptation...”

Main Idea: Prayer acknowledges our need for guidance and protection.

Commentary:

Jesus is not suggesting God tempts us. Instead, He teaches us to pray with humility and awareness of our weakness. This line invites God to guide our steps, protect our hearts, and strengthen us against spiritual opposition.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is acknowledging weakness an important part of spiritual maturity?
2. What kinds of temptation or distraction are most common for you?

Takeaway:

Prayer keeps us dependent on God's guidance and strength as we walk with Him.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. When do you usually turn to prayer — as a rhythm or a reaction?
 2. What pressures most often dictate your schedule or priorities?
 3. Which part of Jesus' model of prayer do you tend to rush past or avoid?
 4. What makes it difficult for you to slow down and be alone with God?
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LIVING IT OUT

- 1. Choose a daily prayer rhythm.** Pick one intentional moment each day to pause and get alone with God in prayer.
- 2. Remove distractions.** No multitasking. No scrolling. Create space to be fully present with God.

3. Use Jesus' framework for prayer. Pray through Matthew 6:9–13, letting it shape how you talk with God.

4. Stay consistent. If you miss a day, return without guilt or shame.

For LifeGroups:

ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

Share:

1. What usually keeps you from making prayer a daily rhythm?
2. What has helped you stay consistent in prayer in the past?

Pray together:

Ask God to help your group develop a steady rhythm of prayer, to resist living reactively under pressure, and to stay rooted in relationship with the Father. Thank Jesus for modeling a life of prayer and inviting us to stay connected to God each day.