

Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday, May 31, 2026

Preached By: Rev. Matt Stewart

The Lord's Prayer ***God-Centered prayer in a Self-Centered world***

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: What is one of your earliest memories of prayer?
What did you learn about prayer growing up?

Review & Context (5 minutes)

Main Idea: In order to have God-centered prayers in a self-centered world, we must approach prayer with proper motives, a proper mindset, and follow the proper model Jesus gave us.

Key Scripture: Matthew 6:5-15 (The Lord's Prayer)

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Proper Motives (15 minutes)

Read Matthew 6:5-6

1. Why do you think Jesus contrasts praying on street corners with praying in your private room? What is He really warning against?
2. The sermon mentioned humility as a key element for right motives. How does the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:11-14) illustrate this?

3. Reflect honestly: When you pray, are you more aware of an "audience of man" or an "audience of One"? What influences this?
4. How can we cultivate humility in our prayer lives practically?

Part 2: Proper Mindset (15 minutes)

Read Matthew 6:7-8

5. Jesus says our Father already knows what we need before we ask. If that's true, why do you think God still wants us to pray?
6. The sermon stated: "The point is not productivity, it's relationship." How does this change the way you think about prayer?
7. Many people feel intimidated to pray because they don't know the "right words." How does this passage address that concern?
8. George Mueller said, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His willingness." How does this mindset shift our approach to prayer?

Part 3: Proper Model (20 minutes)

Read Matthew 6:9-13

9. The Lord's Prayer begins with worship ("hallowed be your name") before any requests. Why is this order significant?
10. "Your kingdom come, your will be done" - What does it look like practically to submit our desires to God's will in prayer?
11. The prayer includes "give us this day our daily bread." How does asking for daily provision cultivate dependence on God?

12. Verses 12 and 14-15 connect our forgiveness from God with our forgiveness of others. Why is unforgiveness such a serious barrier to effective prayer?
13. Is there anyone in your life you need to forgive? How might unforgiveness be affecting your fellowship with God?

Key Takeaways

Have someone read these aloud:

- Prayer is fundamentally about relationship with God, not religious duty or impressive words
- Humility is essential - we must come in dependence, not self-sufficiency
- God already knows our needs; prayer is about communion with Him
- God-centered prayer begins with worship and submission to His will before personal requests
- Unforgiveness blocks fellowship with God and limits the effectiveness of our prayers
- The power of prayer is not in the beauty of our words but in the character of the One to whom we pray

Practical Applications

Personal Reflection:

- Motive Check: This week, before you pray, pause and ask: "Am I seeking God's glory or my own comfort?"
- Simplicity Practice: Try praying using simple, honest language rather than trying to sound spiritual
- Daily Dependence: Each morning this week, pray specifically for "daily bread" - acknowledging your dependence on God for that day

Group Challenge:

- Forgiveness Audit: Take time this week to prayerfully ask God if there is anyone you need to forgive. Write their name down and commit to praying for them daily.

- Model Prayer: Use the structure of the Lord's Prayer (worship, submission, requests, forgiveness, protection) to guide your prayers this week

Accountability Questions:

1. Am I praying regularly in private, or only in public settings?
2. Do my prayers focus more on God's character and will, or primarily on my wants?
3. Is there unforgiveness in my heart that I need to address?

Closing Exercise (10 minutes)

Group Prayer Time:

Using the model of the Lord's Prayer, pray together as a group:

1. Adoration - Take turns honoring God's name and character
2. Submission - Pray for God's will in specific situations your group is facing
3. Dependence - Share one current need and pray for daily provision
4. Forgiveness - Silently confess areas of unforgiveness (or share if comfortable)
5. Protection - Pray for deliverance from specific temptations

For Next Week

Challenge: *Keep a prayer journal this week. Note how often your prayers begin with worship versus requests. Try to reorient your prayers to be more God-centered.*

Memory Verse: *"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." - Matthew 6:7-8*

Additional Resources

- Quote to ponder: "We do not pray to inform God, but to commune with Him." - D.A. Carson
- Consider reading about George Mueller's prayer life and faith
- Reflect on Isaiah 26:20 as an invitation to draw near to God