

FELLOWSHIP NOTES ~ Sunday, April 21st, 2024

"Jesus' Game Plan for Prayer"

Matthew 6:9-13

1st Half: Seeking God's _____

Why? Because he is _____

1st Quarter: _____

**⁹ "Therefore, you should pray like this:
Our Father in heaven,
your name be honored as holy.**

2nd Quarter: _____

**¹⁰ Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.**

2nd Half: Seeking God's _____

Why? Because we are _____

3rd Quarter: _____

For our _____

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

For our _____ (see also vs. 14-15)

**¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

4th Quarter: _____

**¹³ And do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.**

"This prayer is a pattern for all Christian praying; Jesus is teaching that prayer will be acceptable when, and only when, the attitudes, thoughts, and desires expressed fit this pattern. That is to say: Every prayer of ours should be a praying of the Lord's Prayer in some shape or form. We never get beyond this prayer. Not only is it the Lord's first lesson in praying, it is all the other lessons too." ~ J.I. Packer

Growth Groups Study Guide for the Week of April 21st – 28th

Reminders:

- Next Sunday we'll continue our study of "The Coming Tribulation".
- Our annual Spring Spruce-Up Day is this Saturday, April 27th at 9:00 a.m. All are welcome and encouraged to come out and assist our deacons in a variety of projects to spruce up our building and grounds.
- Our annual Mexico Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser is also on Saturday at 6:00 p.m. The dinner is \$6 per person, maximum \$25 per family. If you're able to enter a dessert for the Dessert Auction, have it at the church by 5:45 p.m. Thank you for your support for this year's Mexico Team.

Group Discussion:

1. When you were growing up or if you came to Christ later, who either taught you how to pray or modeled prayer for you? How did you learn (or are learning) to pray?
2. What are your thoughts on why it is sometimes hard for people to pray with others?

Digging Deeper:

1. Read the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. Count the personal pronouns in the prayer (I, me, etc.) and count the plural pronouns (Our, us, we, etc.) – how many of each do you find? What does this tell us about the nature of prayer?

We live in a society that is centered on individualism. Therefore, when we read the Bible, we read it from a self-centered perspective. In this case we tend to read this passage on prayer and think that Jesus is simply addressing His instructions on prayer to everyone and anyone who hears or reads His words – and He is. But Jesus' use of plural pronouns also stresses His desire and expectation that His people pray together. In fact, the majority of references to prayer in the New Testament are in the context of people praying together. Jesus' pattern for prayer is to be practiced in both our personal prayer times with the Lord and our prayer times with fellow believers.

Discussion: Read the quote at the bottom of the first page. What is Packer saying about how important Christ's pattern is to the way we should be practicing prayer?

2. Let's break down Jesus' pattern of prayer and then we'll put it into practice. The prayer falls into 4 simple sections that are easy to remember when we illiterate them as is done below.

Reverence – Who is God?

In the prayer pattern Jesus gave His disciples He instructs us to begin with a focus of reverence (worship)...

"Our Father in Heaven, hallowed (holy) be Your name . . ." (6:9)

This is the principle of "worship-based" rather than need-based prayer. It begins with the character of God as we take time to focus our entire being on the wonders of who God is. Ultimately, prayer is my response to the character of God, which leads to praise and thanksgiving. As I get to know the God Who is, I will naturally respond to Him. This response is called prayer.

Praise is my response to the person, presence, position, power, greatness, majesty, and the love of God.

"Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." Psalm 145:3

Thanksgiving is my response to the goodness, the graciousness of God.

"What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" "To Thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving..."

Psalm 116:12,17a

Fill in the blanks from the above information...

Praise is my response to the p _____ of God.

Thanksgiving is my response to the g _____ of God.

When you pray – whether it’s personally or corporately – always start with reverence, or what is also called seeking God’s face. Also always begin with a passage in the Bible. This allows God to begin and drive the conversation through the Scriptures as He speaks to our hearts. Whether it’s a passage you’re reading alone in your quiet time with God, or a passage that is being used in a group setting, as you read the passage ask the question, “Who is God in this passage”? The answer(s) to that question provide you with the praises and thanksgivings to pray to God as you begin your time of prayer in reverence and worship of Him.

Response – How Should I Respond?

Jesus taught a second element of biblical prayer when He said...

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven . . ." (6:10)

This speaks of our response to God's character in prayer as we consider His will from His Word and for the sake of His purposes on earth. This also involves yielding to the control of the Holy Spirit as I respond to His invitations to a fruitful and obedient life. Introspection and surrender mark this time of response. It is a season of pledged obedience to the will and Word of God, desiring the accomplishment of His will in our lives.

As you move from Reverence to Response, allow the passage to guide your response to who God is. Look for various responses in the passage or let God through the passage guide you to what your personal response should be to who He is. Jesus said the best response we can have is that His will to be done in our lives here on earth.

Now, as you move into the second half of prayer, the focus becomes God’s hand – that is, taking our needs to Him knowing that by His mighty hand, He has the ability to meet any need you may have. Remember to ask His help from the perspective of desiring that HIS will be done, not yours as we saw above.

Requests – What Do I Pray About?

"Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

(6:11-12)

This involves a period of heartfelt requests with the themes of **resources** and **relationships**.

This is not a time of informing God of our needs as much as it is a conscious trust in God as the perfect definer and provider of our needs. It involves prayer about personal requests and the concerns of others. This focus also includes corporate concerns, such as congregational challenges or broader issues in the body of Christ.

Jesus concludes the model prayer with a reminder about the reality of the spiritual warfare we all face and experience every day...

Readiness – Where Do I Go From Here?

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” (6:13)

This reminds us of the spiritual contest before us, and more importantly, reassures us of the spiritual resources within us. It is the recognition of our own inability to overcome the temptations and attacks of daily life. We entrust our welfare for the warfare to the delivering force of our Divine Enabler, often through the power of His promises. We pledge ourselves to walk in obedience and victory as the fruit of our praying.

PRAYER: End your time by praying the way Jesus taught us, using His model, applying it to the passage below. Using prayer prompts is something that has been developed to both bring unity when we pray together with others as well assist those who may struggle with praying aloud in a group. It provides a verbal “onramp” to the highway of prayer that many people find helpful.

An Example of Jesus’ Model of Prayer from Philippians 4:4-7 (Read passage together)

Reverence – Who is God?

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice...”

Prompt: Lord, I rejoice in You today because You are _____

Response – How Should I Respond to Who God is?

“Let Your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.”

Prompt: Because You are coming soon, I surrender my attitude of _____ (rudeness, impatience, unkindness) toward _____ (name).

Requests – What are My Requests/Needs/The Needs of Others?

“do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let Your requests be made known to God.”

Prompt: Even though I am anxious about _____, I am trusting You for _____ (request), with a spirit of thankfulness

Readiness – Where Do I (We) Go from Here in Spiritual Warfare?

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard Your hearts and Your minds in Christ Jesus.”

PROMPT: I am trusting You to guard my heart and mind with Your peace when _____ (an area of struggle or spiritual battle)

