

# Approaching God Through Prayer

6-5-24

*Internal Focus Series: Looking Inward How to Best Connect w/God*

## I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those online.
- B. Slide1 Ministry Survey: We invite you to participate in helping us know how best to serve our church body. Scan the QR code and complete a survey for any or all of the ministries you are connected in. (Last time, not many responses. I really want to hear from you).
- C. Slide2 Fentanyl Workshop: Investigator *Danny Hollingsworth, Riv County Sheriff* will be conducting a class here at CM that will provide knowledge of fentanyl as well as other illicit drugs, the signs and symptoms of use and common misconceptions associated with fentanyl. This class will be this Sun, June 9, 6:30-8pm here in the Fellowship Hall.
- D. Slide3 Prayer: Let's Pray about Prayer :)

## II. Slide4 Intro: Approaching God Through Prayer

- A. New series: Internal Focus: (looking Inward How to Best Connect w/God) *Approaching God through Prayer* (through bible reading, & through worship).
- B. Goal: Walk away from tonight with 1 thing to add to your *prayer tool belt*.
- C. Genuine Prayer can be *baffling and challenging*. For many it is *misunderstood and neglected*. *What keeps us from praying?*
  - 1. Slide5 We can become **distracted in** prayer.
    - a) A: **What** are life distractions for us. (diff seasons of life = diff distractions)
    - b) A: **How often** should you pray? **How long** should you pray? (curious, what do u think of a 15 sec prayer?) *What posture should you pray in?* (hands) *Are we supposed to feel a certain way?* Often **confusion** can lead us into **inaction**.
  - 2. We also can become quickly **diverted from** prayer.
    - a) A: **Why do we put off** prayer? (busy. Excuses: *I'm not the praying type, It's not my spiritual gift*)

### 3. We also can become discouraged in prayer.

a) **A:** What discourages us in prayer? (I never do it enough. Frustrated w/non answers).

D. **Slide6** Kevin Deyoung writes, *We don't pray to change God's mind. We pray because God has ordained means to accomplish His ends ... God doesn't need prayer, but he uses prayer just like He uses other means. He uses **rain** to grow the crops, **sun** to warm the earth, and **food** strengthen the body. *In the same way, God uses **prayer** to do His sovereign work.**

1. **Good News:** He welcomes us to come to Him in prayer. He is not distant not silent. He's relational and personal. He hears us and He loves us.

E. **This evening** if we could pick 1 person to show us *how to pray*, I'd pick ... **JESUS!**

1. Luke records Jesus praying about **a dozen times**.

2. **Imagine:** the greatest singer teaching you how to sing. Or the greatest soccer player teaching you how to make a goal. Or the greatest artist teaching us how to paint.

### III. **Slide7 FATHERHOOD OF PRAYER (Luke 11:1-4) READ**

A. **1st**, He taught them by doing prayer Himself. **2nd**, He taught them by praying. [36 words. 15 sec's to pray] (*some people's prayers need to be cut short on both sides, and set on fire in the middle!*)

1. The Bible gives us many instructions on how to pray: *pray without ceasing. come boldly to the throne of grace. let your words be few. let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. ask in faith not wavering. ask anything in my name and I will do it, etc.*

2. **But here** He teaches us to **Prioritize** prayer (1,2a). **Then** the **Pattern** for Prayer (2b-4).

B. **THE PRIORITY FOR PRAYER** (1,2a)

C. I think they are asking because *prayer doesn't come naturally to any of us.*

D. **THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER** (2b-4)

- E. I believe it's beautiful to pray this as **a prayer**, *as long as* the heart and mind are engaged (not just to recite it verbatim).
1. **Prayer Wheels**: written prayer on the outside & often 100's/1000's written inside wrapped around the core **life tree** (*but don't we often see prayer the same way*)
  2. **But** I believe it is more of **a pattern** for us on how to structure our prayers.
    - a) **Note the pattern** our prayers should begin w/**Him**, then move to **our needs**.
    - b) **How else do we have communion with Him**, but in prayer? This is how we draw close to **His** heart.
- F. **Slide8** This prayer is brought to you by the letter "P".
1. **Its Principle Figure** - **Father** (immediately see our prayer is *relational*)
    - (1) **We don't pray to an abstract idea**. We don't hurl prayers into the universe hoping that the **cosmos** hear us. **We don't pray to our ancestors**. **We pray to a living God, that is overall the Listening Lord**.
    - b) We call Him *Father* because we get to come before Him as **His children**.
  2. **Its Purpose** - **hallowed be your name**
    - a) **Hallowed** -sanctified, *set apart is Your Name*. His **Name** honored above all.
      - (1) Back then, one's **name** summed up 1's **whole character, reputation**.
  3. **Its Priority** - **Your kingdom come**
    - a) Which reminds us of what ... **the King** is coming. **That His kingdom came** in Jesus' first coming. **That His kingdom is present** in our lives. **That His kingdom will come** in the final consummation (at the 2nd coming of Christ).
    - b) Note: *you will be done on earth as it is in heaven [in nkjv]* (is in Mt.6:10).
  4. **Its Provision** - **Give us each day our daily bread** [\*now we see a shift]
    - a) If you ever wondered *if God cared about your daily needs* you need to go no further than this. [or, give us each day our bread for tomorrow. *Lt. the following day*]
      - (1) **This speaks to our daily dependence upon God** for our **basic needs**. (eg. mana from heaven each day).

(2) Prayer is also **trusting** our good heavenly Father to **not give us** what we **don't need** at that time.

5. **Its Pardon** - and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. [msg, *keep us forgiven w/You & forgiving others*]

a) 2 things are happening here: **1st** is to **ask for forgiveness**.

(1) **This is not** the initial prayer for **salvation**. **This is a prayer believers pray because sin hinders our fellowship with God.**

b) **2nd** part of this is *forgiving others ... everyone*.

(1) **But** this side of eternity we need to remember **trust** isn't always restored. **This may not** remove the **consequence** of the sin. **Forgiveness does not** mean we accept **abuse**. **Forgiveness does not** necessarily mean **forgetting**. **And forgiving doesn't** mean that we always forget **the pain** of the offense.

(2) **But** when we *choose to forgive someone* we are removing ourselves as **judge**.

(a) **How is it possible to do this?** Grasp the gravity of your **own sin**. We've been **forgiven much**, **so** we can **forgive others** what they've done to us.

6. **Its Protection** - **And lead us not into temptation**.

a) **2 realities**: 1) We are *prone* to sin, **and** 2) we are dependent upon God for *protection* of sin.

(1) We could pray then, **do not let us be given over to sin**. Temptation to sin will come, **but** we don't have fall to it.

#### IV. Slide9 **FATHERLINESS OF PRAYER** (Luke 11:5-13) *from Fatherhood*

A. **FRIENDSHIP** (5-8) **READ** *then Sonship*

B. **Houses** in Israel were small **consisting of 1 room** (sitting room, dining room, bedroom).

1. **1 door**, left open through the day. **Evening** they would close, & slide **a wooden bar** through the rings on **the door & wall** to keep out intruders.

2. **Mats** were spread out, used as beds on which the family slept all in a row. (In such circumstances it was rather difficult to get up in the dark).

C. This **isn't** about **God's** disposition towards us.

1. **God** is not *annoyed* with us, **or** a *sleeping* neighbor, **He's not** irritated when we come knocking, **nor** who's *door* is actually **ever** shut to us.

D. This **is** about **OUR** disposition towards God.

1. Come before God *w/impudence/persistence/boldness* (*not fear, shame, or timidity*)

E. See actually God is being *contrasted* to this neighbor. *parabolic contrast*

1. **Now** after Jesus' *parabolic contrast*, He gives a *parabolic comparison*.

F. **Slide10 SONSHIP** (9-13) *READ*

G. **Ask, seek, knock** - **doesn't mean** keep beating and hammering on God's door until you get what you want. **Or** to keep pounding till you overcomes God's unwillingness to act. **It isn't** God playing *hard to get*. **And it doesn't mean** our goal is to *coerce* an unwilling God to answer us.

H. **Ask, seek, knock** - *does* tell a story of *a Father & child relationship* to illustrate **who God is!**

1. The **1st man/neighbor** **would not** give; **did not** want to be troubled; **but** finally **did give** to *avoid trouble*.

2. The **2nd man/father** said to his son, *just ask & you'll obtain. seek & you'll locate. knock & I'll open the access for you.*

I. This is a story that moves from **friendship** (1st story) then shifts to **sonship** (2nd).

1. **Slide11** \*True prayer is not based on our **friendship** w/God, **but** on the fact that we are the **children** of God. **A father meets the needs of his children not to avoid shame, but to express love!**

2. So it's keeping in **close communion** with the Father, **knowing** His will, **& asking** Him to perform His will.

J. **Slide12 Serpent & scorpion** – (often found inside the house, **so** not random thoughts here)

1. No father is going to give a small child a sharp knife or a loaded gun, no matter how much the child begs for it.

2. No mother is going to give her pre-teen the keys to the car for a joyride, or her toddler freedom to play in the medicine cabinet.

a) So, God will not put some things in our hands, until he 1st prepares us for it.

K. Fish & Egg – God's so kind is when we ask for stones, He doesn't give us one, *when He knows we need bread!* (Thank you Lord!)

1. Our heavenly Father knows how to give *far better than we know how to ask. How Much More???*

L. Slide13 Yes pray for *material things, health, finances ... but this isn't* the highest form of prayer. Graduate to the *highest level of praying* as He promises to give *the Holy Spirit* to those who ask of Him.

1. Ask to receive God's Spirit into your life. Ask for a fresh filling of the HS. Ask for an overflowing of His Spirit. Ask for the gifts of the spirit and the fruit of the spirit. Ask for the Spirit to build your character, guide your conduct, and empower you for service.

M. Keywords: Prayer, promises, provision.

N. Sometimes we speak *towards God*, but not **with** Him.

O. We need to realize, when we fail to pray, it's **not** breaking a rule, *it's a failure to treat Him as God.*

P. Q: Do you pray in black-n-white or in color? (Use thoughtful language – “Melt the ice of my heart Lord.”)

Q. Q: Do you rise from prayer a better person?