

Study

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Model Praying

- Review last lesson's homework
- The prayer Jesus gave
- A.C.T.S.
- The benefits of pattern praying
- Keeping a prayer list

THE PRAYER JESUS GAVE

We generally refer to the prayer which Jesus gave His disciples as "The Lord's Prayer." The disciples had been with Jesus only for a short time and already they had observed Him in almost constant prayer. But Christ seemed to pray with a passion and confidence which the disciples had not seen in any of their religious leaders.

1. In one sense, *prayer is simple* - but in another sense *prayer is not a simple exercise*. Read Luke 11:1. How does this reveal that prayer is *not necessarily* a simple exercise?

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If prayer was always simple, then it is curious that the disciples asked Jesus to *teach* them to pray.

2. How does Matthew 6:7 show us that Jesus never intended for the "Lord's Prayer" to be repeated mindlessly?

It is of course possible to take a 'model prayer' and make it a passionate *heartfelt* prayer. But this probably takes much practice and a great amount of reflection about what is being prayed. Perhaps our ability to reflect on the Lord's Prayer might be aided by considering it more closely.

OUR FATHER

3. According to the Apostle Peter, referring to God as "Father" in our prayers involves living a certain way. How are we to live if we call upon God as our Father? (1Peter 1:17)

4. How did Jesus say we should live if we call God in heaven "our Father" based on Matthew 5:16?

Some people unfortunately have had a bad experience with their earthly fathers. A father is supposed to be a *provider*, *protector*, and *pastor*. God is the Ultimate expression of what a father really is! Each of these aspects of God's fatherhood (provider/protector/pastor) is extolled in the Lord's Prayer.

5. What encouraging things did Christ reveal about our Heavenly Father in Matthew 6:6, 8, 26, 32; 7:11?

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When we pray, we do not pray to some impersonal energy force—(such as the Star Wars concept of “the Force”), rather, we pray to our Heavenly *Father* who loves us dearly and wants the very best for us. We can pray with confidence that the father-heart of God longs for our best welfare. God, our heavenly Father, knows what we need even before we ask.

IN HEAVEN

Some people have the idea that heaven is *somewhere* within our universe. As difficult as it is to understand, heaven is not *somewhere* within our physical universe! Rather, heaven is a spiritual dimension that is intimately connected with our dimensions of space and time. If we could see the spiritual realm we might be able to see that there are *three* realms of heaven. The first realm of what the Bible sometimes refers to as *the heavens* is physical. It is the sky above us (Psalm 19:1; 2Peter 3:12). The second realm, referred to in Scripture as “the heavenlies” or “principalities”, is where demons operate (Eph. 3:10; 6:12).

6. How did Paul refer to the realm in which God immediately dwells? (2Corinthians 12:2)

When the Old Covenant was brought to an end, Satan’s access to our Heavenly Father, in the *Third Heaven* (also referred to simply as “*Heaven*”), ceased (Revelation 12:9-10). When Christ walked the earth, the Jews of that day refused to take the name of God on their lips. Instead, they replaced the word “God” with the nearest word that expressed where God was: *Heaven*. This is why Matthew, writing his Gospel to a Jewish audience, chose to record Christ’s statements about “the kingdom of *God*” as “the kingdom of *Heaven*” (compare Matthew 5:3 with Luke 6:20).

Christ taught His disciples to pray to the God who rules from the realm of Heaven. They were not to pray to *Heaven*, but to the God who *dwells in* Heaven. In Revelation 4:6 it symbolically describes Heaven as the “Throne” of God, which is surrounded by a “sea” as

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calm as “glass” or “crystal”. This speaks of the infinite *peace* that is associated with the very presence of God. When we pray to *our Father in Heaven* we are praying to the God who is seated on the Throne and is surrounded by infinite peace. Don’t think of “heaven” as being located in a galaxy far far away, but rather as a dimension that is right here but *unseen*. Remember the episode in Acts 7 when Stephen was being stoned to death? The Lord opened his eyes and he saw heaven right where he was. He saw God on the Throne and Christ standing at the Father’s right hand. Consider this the next time you address God in prayer.

7. How does Romans 8:15 reveal the benefit of having God as our Heavenly Father?

HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME™

Using the Lord’s Prayer as a model, we are instructed to open our prayer by addressing the One we are praying to. We are not praying to Heaven, or to any of the occupants of Heaven (such as “saints”) but to the *One* who rules from Heaven. In the ancient Hebrew culture, a name carries a meaning more than a mere identifying tag - it captured the character of that person. When God wanted His people to understand an aspect of His character, He would identify Himself with a particular name and often include a title as a suffix to that name.

Name of God	Meaning	Example
El	Mighty	Genesis 14:18
Elohim	Mighty Ones	Genesis 1:1
YHWH (Yahweh)	I AM (Covenant name of God)	Genesis 2:4-5 (Exodus 3:14)
Adonai	Lord	Psalms 40:17
El-Shaddai	Lord Almighty	Psalms 91:1

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God is also given titles to describe His relationship with His people, such as-

Titles of God	Meaning	Example
Yahweh Shalom	The LORD is peace	Judges 6:24
Yahweh Jireh	The LORD provides	Gen. 22:13-14
Yahweh Rapha	The LORD heals	Exodus 15:26
Yahweh Rohi	The LORD is my Shepherd	Psalms 23:1

God is also described with various terms and metaphors, such as the-

- BRANCH.....Jeremiah 33:15
- BREAD OF GOD.....John 6:33
- BREAD OF LIFE.....John 6:35
- BRIDEGROOM.....Isaiah 62:56
- BRIGHT MORNING STAR.....Revelation 22:16
- CHIEF SHEPHERD.....1 Peter 5:4
- CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL.....Luke 2:25
- CONSUMING FIRE.....Deut. 4:24, Heb. 12:29
- CORNERSTONE.....Isaiah 28:16
- COUNSELOR.....Isaiah 9:6
- DESIRED OF ALL NATIONS.....Haggai 2:7
- DOOR.....John 10:7
- FIRSTFRUITS.....1 Cor.15:20-23
- GOOD SHEPHERD.....John 10:11
- GREAT HIGH PRIEST.....Hebrews 4:14
- HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL.....Isaiah 49:7
- LAMB OF GOD.....John 1:29

To “hallow” is to *regard as holy* (set apart from the ordinary, special). When we pray, we should adore God as He is revealed to us in His various names and regard His name as the sum of all He is (Psalm 34:3; 138:2).

YOUR KINGDOM COME

The Kingdom of God is the rule of God over the whole earth. It contrasted with the rule of God over Israel. It was the message of many of the prophets that a day was coming when all nations would acknowledge God as their King (Psalm 67:2; 72:11, 17; Isaiah 66:18; Jeremiah 3:17; Malachi 3:12). The prophetic 'promise' that the Kingdom of God would one day come was a hope that every Jew held with an expectation that its arrival would rid them of the abominable Roman oppressors (note Mark 15:43). Jesus centred much of His teaching on the Kingdom of God, which Matthew deliberately refers to as *the Kingdom of Heaven*. But perhaps to the bewilderment of His audience, Christ taught that this Kingdom was not to be thought of as a *physical* Kingdom.

8. What does Luke 17:20-21 reveal about the Kingdom of God that Christ taught?

Even today there are some Christians who don't realize what Jesus was saying about the nature of the Kingdom of God. He didn't speak of it being a Kingdom that was two thousand years away! He used such expressions as- *the kingdom of God has come upon you* (Matthew 12:28), *the kingdom of God is at hand* (Mark 1:15), *the kingdom of God has come near to you* (Luke 10:9), *the kingdom of God has come near* (Luke 10:11). Added to this, Jesus plainly told His disciples that many of them would "see" the Kingdom of God come (Matthew 16:28).

Put simply, the Kingdom of God is where God is King! When we pray today for *Your Kingdom come* we should be praying for God to be the King of our lives and for Him to help us to submit to Him.

When the Old Testament was brought to an end in 70AD, the Kingdom of Christ had then come.

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YOUR WILL BE DONE

Human nature causes us to neglect our spiritual life. At the core of the Christian's spiritual life is their utter devotion to God and His will. The more we move away from that core, which is all too easy to do, the less truly spiritual we become. This is why we should continually pray for God's will to be done in us.

9. Read Philippians 2:12-13. What is it that enables us to do the will of God?

10. What do you think the main reason is for believers not conforming to the will of God?

Each day, as you pray through this model prayer, ensure that you do not fail to omit asking for God to have His will done in your life.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Some believers claim that it is unspiritual to ask God for material things. But in the model prayer which Christ gave His followers He included this very material phrase. We are told by Christ to ask God to meet our daily physical needs.

11. What promise from God can we take heart from in Philippians 4:19 that should encourage us to pray to God for our needs to be met?

12. What are three urgent physical/material needs that you would like God to meet?

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Some preachers teach that once you become a Christian (by having your sins forgiven) you never need to ask God to forgive you of your sins again. But this model prayer includes the prayer for God to forgive us for our sins. It takes humility to acknowledge that we are guilty of sin. It takes even more humility to ask God for forgiveness.

- 13. What does the Scripture promise for those who humble themselves before God? (James 4:6)

- 14. Can the believer legitimately pray Psalm 51 today?

Interestingly, this is the only aspect of this model prayer which Christ immediately elaborates on.

- 15. How are we to respond to God's forgiveness according to Matthew 6:12, 14?

We do forgive others *in order to be* forgiven by God. Rather, we can forgive others because we have been forgiven.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

This model prayer leads the believer to pray for a deeper respect for sin in much the same way we should respect poison, the edges of high cliffs, and swimming with sharks. If you respect sin, you will recognise how dangerous it is. The first step into sin is *yielding to temptation*.

- 16. Apart from prayer, what else did Jesus say His followers should do regarding the dangers of temptation? (Matt. 26:41)

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17. What promise about temptation does First Corinthians 10:13 make?

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

The forces of evil are at work against the believer. Even Jesus had to overcome the onslaught of the Evil One (Matt. 4).

18. Note Luke 22:31-32. What effect does prayer have on the believer's protection from evil? What does this tell us about how Jesus treats followers who fail Him?

Pray that God will keep you from the Evil One.

YOURS IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY

Acknowledging God is the essence of worship. In the model prayer which Jesus gave, He rounded off this prayer by leading His followers to acknowledge God as the Ruler of their lives ("Yours is the 'Kingdom'"), the source of strength to do anything ("Yours is the 'power'") and the reason for living ("Yours is the 'glory'").

19. What are three things you can thank God for?

If you spent just a few minutes each day praying through these model prayer aspects you will deepen your prayer life and discover that enduring in prayer is easier when you pray along the lines of a model prayer.

SPEND AN HOUR IN PRAYER



A.C.T.S.

There is a popular model prayer based on the acronym - A.C.T.S.

- A** *Adore*: praise and worship God
- C** *Confess*: your sins to God and ask for forgiveness
- T** *Thank*: acknowledge your blessings to God
- S** *Supplications*: present your requests to God

THE BENEFIT OF PATTERN PRAYING”

20. What benefits can you see that there might be in praying according to a *pattern* or *model*?

We still do. Most of us struggle with prayers. We forget to pray, and when we remember, we hurry through prayers with hollow words. Our minds drift; our thoughts scatter like a covey of quail. Why is this? Prayer requires minimal effort. No location is prescribed. No particular clothing is required. No title or office is stipulated. You’d think we were wrestling a greased pig.

Max Lucado, “Out Live Your Life”, page 140

21. What might the possible disadvantage(s) be of using a *pattern*?

KEEPING A PRAYER LIST”

Our passionate prayers move the heart of God. “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). Prayer does not change God’s nature; who he is will never be altered. Prayer does, however, impact the flow of history. God has wired his world for power, but he calls on us to flip the switch.

Max Lucado, “Out Live Your Life”, page 138

Some day, it would be a valuable spiritual exercise to write a prayer list. You might choose to categories your prayer points under the following categories listed over the page. This prayer list might be something which you pray through once a month either in one sitting or by taking one of the four sections and praying one section per week.

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22. Complete 5 prayer points under each of these categories-

FAMILY

FRIENDS

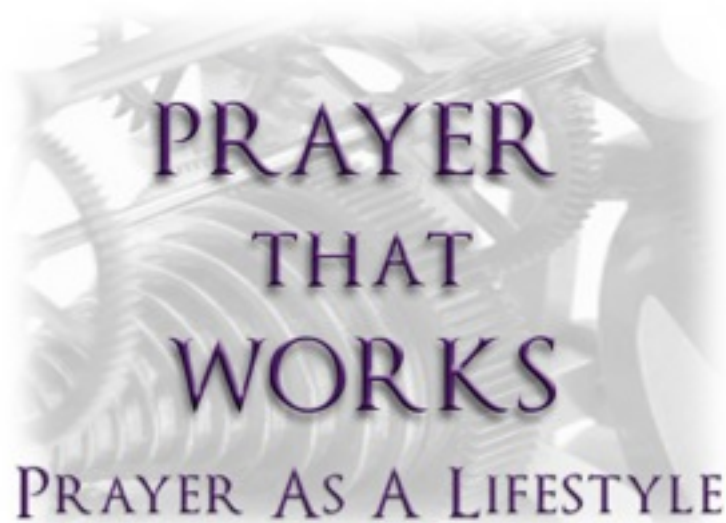
CHURCH

MY DREAMS

Your homework for our next Bible study meeting is to do the following-

1. Pray through a model prayer each day until our next Bible Study.
2. Attempt to pray one day without ceasing.
3. Pray through your Prayer List at least once before our next meeting.
4. Note any answers to your prayers to report in our next meeting.

Amen.



Study

7

Prayer As A Lifestyle

- Review last study's homework
- Pray without ceasing
- Incorporating prayer into the mundane
- Instant in prayer
- What to do with answered prayer

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

The Gospel of Luke is also known as the *Gospel of Prayer*. In this Gospel, Jesus is praying all the time.

1. Note what circumstances Luke records Jesus praying-
 - a. Luke 3:21 _____
 - b. Luke 5:16 _____
 - c. Luke 6:12 _____
 - d. Luke 9:18 _____
 - e. Luke 11:1 _____
 - f. Luke 22:32 _____
 - g. Luke 22:41 _____

Prayer As A Lifestyle

In our past studies in this series on prayer we have looked at the Scriptures which instruct us to set aside time to deliberately focus on prayer. This is an important spiritual discipline.

2. In what way does Acts 3:1 show that the early Christians considered setting a specific time aside to pray?

Beyond setting specific time aside to pray, the apostles announced that spiritual leadership demanded that they be “devoted” to prayer (Acts 6:4).

3. Why was Cornelius considered a good man? (Acts 10:1-2)

We read in the Book of Acts that the early Christians would pray at set times, pray continually, and then have special times of urgent prayer (note Acts 12:5). We would do well today to follow this example. Sadly, although spiritual leadership fundamentally involves prayer and leading others in prayer, all too often when a spiritual leader calls those in his charge to prayer - *too few respond*. Someone has said that the true size of a church is not how many are present Sunday morning but how many are at the church’s prayer meeting!

4. A Christian is filled, led, empowered and gifted by the Holy Spirit. According to Romans 8:26, how does this effect how we pray?

Prayer As A Lifestyle

5. In the Apostle Paul's list of the 27 things needed to develop sincere Christian community (Romans 12:9-21), how does he say we should pray?

6. Based on Romans 15:30, how did Paul seek to motivate believers to pray?

7. What types of prayers are called for in Ephesians 6:18?

"Praying at all times" writes the great apostle of prayer to fellow believers, "in the Spirit". Paul seems to be saying that if we can attune our spiritual ears to the leading of the Holy Spirit we can sense what we should be praying for at that time.

8. Have you ever experienced this type of Holy Spirit leading or prompting to pray? Describe one such moment-

With all prayer "and supplication" adds the Apostle. Supplication is *requesting*. Some people teach that prayer should not be seen as something you do to make *requests* of God. "This is too selfish", they argue. But when we pray our requests to God we are confessing our *dependency* upon Him. When we pray our requests to God and He provides in response to our praying, *He is the One who is glorified*. Therefore, we join with the Apostle Paul and pray with supplications.

9. What does the Apostle say in Philippians 4:6 is the answer to a lot of our anxiety?

INCORPORATING PRAYER INTO THE MUNDANE

Some people don't pray much and still others don't pray *for* much. One reason for the former is that some people regard praying as something you must be fully focussed on. To them, this requires a set time, perhaps a set place, and especially peace and quiet. This is what the monks and nuns of the Medieval period largely thought of prayer. But, if we recall what we see in the Gospel of Luke about the way Jesus prayed, we notice that He prayed nearly all the time in the midst of *whatever* He was doing.

Therefore, it is reasonable, right, and required that we pray when we are walking, waking, weaving, welding, whining, winnowing, whipping, whistling, working, wandering, or whatever.

10. Read Colossians 1:9 and tick the following correct answer-
When Paul told the Colossians he prayed for them without ceasing, he was probably-

- Having a prayer breakfast with the political leaders of his day
 In the middle of a prayer and praise conference
 taking a year off from preaching to do a prayer retreat
 In a Roman jail, manacled in chains, somewhere.

11. What did Paul tell the Colossians to combine with their steadfast praying? (Col. 4:2)

What are you thankful to God for right now?

INSTANT IN PRAYER

It seems that God is happy to hear from His children *anytime*. Some of us lead lives that are far from routine which means that having a regular early morning prayer time is quite difficult. The good news is for those who can't quite make a regular prayer time a part of their routine is that they can pray *instantly*.

12. Although no-one would have known it at the time, how was Nehemiah being spiritual at the moment of Nehemiah 2:4?

Being instant in prayer involves being in a spiritual state of listening to God as well as speaking to Him. Nehemiah needed instant wisdom and prayed instantly to get it. We too can pray constantly in the sense that we are ever "listening" and always prepared to pray instantly.

13. In First Thessalonians 5:17 Paul tells his readers to constantly pray. But in First Thessalonians 1:2 and 3:10 he has told them something else. How do these preceding references (1Thess. 1:2; 3:10, see also 2Thess. 1:11) affect his instructions in First Thessalonians 5:17?

14. What does Second Timothy 1:3 reveal about the Apostle Paul?

When I was a younger man I drove around Australia. By the time I arrived in the Pilbara (in far north west Western Australia) I knew no-one where I was staying. I arrived at a church which was pastored by a white Australian but was mainly comprised of Aborigines. The first meeting I attended was their prayer meeting. They treated me very coolly upon my arrival. But when I joined in the prayer meeting and they heard me pray, their entire attitude toward me changed! Suddenly, *I became their brother*.

WHAT TO DO WITH ANSWERED PRAYER™

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRAYER AND PRAISE™

15. Read the story in Luke 17:12-19. Why was Christ somewhat outraged? In what way does this show us how God expects us to respond to Him answering our prayers?

In his book, *More Than A Theory*, Dr Hugh Ross lists three types of miracles. Firstly, he writes, there are “sustaining” miracles. These are the miracles that makes life and matter possible. It includes the miracles of physical laws which govern the universe which God has fixed (Jer. 33:25). It includes God’s ‘sustaining’ of the world (refer Heb. 1:3). Secondly, there are “transformational” miracles where God is able to take that which already exists and by divine power transform it. For example, God took dirt and transformed it into a Man. Christ took water and transformed it into wine. God used the apostles to transform diseased people into well people. Thirdly, there are “creative” miracles where He speaks things which are not into existence. Genesis 1 tells us that after the six days of creative activity, He ceased from creative miracles in this dimension (He will one day do away with this dimension and create a New Heaven and a New Earth, a new dimension governed by different physical laws, Rev. 21-22).

Sometimes we are disappointed with God’s seeming lack of answers to our prayer demands. But, I wonder whether we appreciate the abundance of miracles which God has *already* provided for us?

16. What possibly positive affect does praising God have on our mental health according Philippians 4:8?

Prayer that works is prayer that brings us into awful fellowship with God. This is made possible through praying *privately*, for *others*, in the *Spirit*, by the *Scriptures*, with a *pattern*, and *continually*. Prayer that works involves working at prayer. History bears testimony that nothing great has ever been achieved for God and His glory without *working prayer!*

Let’s pray.

Amen.