



**#3 in the “Along the Way” Series**  
**When God’s People Pray**  
**Forest Park Church**  
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**Luke 11:1**

*Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”*

## **I. Teach us to Pray**

I do not know of anywhere in the gospels where the disciples were characterized as men of prayer.

- Jesus’ prayer life was, even in the garden of Gethsemane, something which He practiced alone, without the help (at least for very long) of the disciples.
- The petition of this one disciple was an open admission that prayer was not only needed, but was a deficiency in his life and in others as well.

**It appears that Jesus taught on prayer at two different times.**

- one recorded in the gospel of Matthew,
- the other here in the gospel of Luke.

Since the focus of both was to teach people how they should pray, without using repetition, it makes sense that the principles of the content would be similar in both occurrences, but with no need for them to be perfectly identical in wording.

The passage in Matthew was given during the Sermon on the Mount, starting in Matthew 5:1, and it introduces prayer, starting in 6:5, by emphasizing that prayer is not something to be done for public accolades nor should it be memorized and repetitious mantras or unintelligible mutterings.

**The account in Luke was in response to a direct question from Jesus' disciples.** They knew that John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray and they wanted Jesus to do the same for them (Luke 11:1).

It is no accident that the disciple asked Jesus to teach them to pray at the very time our Lord had set aside time for His own prayer. The prayer life of Jesus prompted the disciple to press Him to teach them to do likewise. **It's only natural to ask one who has demonstrated his expertise to share it with others.**

*And he said to them, "When you pray, say:  
"Father, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is  
indebted to us.  
And lead us not into temptation."*

This prayer falls into two rather obvious divisions, highlighted by the use of two pronouns:

- **The first part centers on God:** "*Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.*"
- **The second part concerns us:** "Give us our daily bread; forgive us our sins; lead us not into temptation."

It is no accident, that Jesus puts prayer in this form. He puts the things concerning God first.

- **Your Name**
- **Your Kingdom**

**This exposes a fatal weakness in our own prayers,** which so frequently begin with us.

- We rush almost immediately into a series of pleading petitions that have to do with our problems and our needs
- This serves to focus our attention on what is already troubling us and to increase our awareness of the situation.

Perhaps that is the reason we frequently end up more depressed or more frustrated than when we began.

But Jesus shows us another way. We begin with God.

We must take a slow, calm, reassuring gaze at him,

- Remember his greatness
- His patience
- His love.

Then, of course, the first thing we receive in prayer is a calm spirit focused on God's plan and purposes and there is no need for us to plunge in panic into a flood of words.

The word *father* answers all the philosophical questions about the nature of God.

- A father is a person, therefore God is not a blind force behind the inscrutable machinery of the universe.
- A father is able to hear, and God is not simply an impersonal being, aloof from all our troubles and our problems.
- A father is predisposed by his love and relationship to give a careful, attentive ear to what his child says.
- From a father, a child can expect a reply.

**Then Jesus Continues with our needs:**

- Our Daily Bread
- Our Sins
- Lead us not into temptation.

**Then Jesus Continues:**

**Luke 11:5**

*And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence[c] he will rise and give him whatever he needs.*

## II. Pray with persistence

Two of the most instructive parables Jesus ever told on prayer, one in Luke 18 and the other in Luke 11, both have to do with being persistent and not giving up in prayer.

- Luke 18:1 says, "Now He was telling them a parable to show them that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart."
- Luke 11:9 is where we find the promise that says, "ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you." Each of those verbs are in the present tense, active voice and could be translated, "keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking." Jesus does not want us to give up in prayer, He instructs us to be persistent.

Now there is a difference between a persistent prayer and a long prayer.

- A person who is persistent in prayer does not necessarily have to pray for a long time.
- Persistence means not giving up.

Sometimes we give up easy, we quit because we don't feel like praying, the joy is gone, the feeling is gone.

- But we are not to live by our feelings but to live by the commandments of our Lord who tells us to pray without ceasing.

**It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone;**

- As if it were of no use to read the scriptures when we do not enjoy them
- As if it were no use to pray when we don't feel like praying.

The truth is that, in order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to become accustomed to prayer is to continue praying.

**The less we read the Word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray."**

Be persistent in prayer.

## **Luke 11:9**

*And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*

### **A: Ask**

First, Jesus tells them to ask. This is the prayer part. It is taking our requests and needs to God, and presenting them before Him.

It is not that He is unaware of our needs, He knows what we need before we ask Him (Matthew 6:8).

- Just as we talk over the issues of our day with our spouse or friends, so also God wants us to communicate with Him about the issues and needs which are heavy on our hearts and minds.
- So, we ask Him about these things. This is the first step to prayer.

### **B: Seek**

But after we ask, we don't simply keep asking. We must begin to seek. This is the second step.

- Seeking is when we look around for how God might answer our prayers.
- After we ask God for something, the next thing we must do is start looking around with eyes of faith for how God might be providing answers to the issues we discussed with Him.

### **C: Knock**

Seeking answers to our prayers leads to the third step in getting our prayers answer: knocking. After we ask God to help us with our needs, and as we seek for possible ways that God might answer our requests, we must then step out in faith and knock on the doors that present themselves.

1. When we ask, we ask with faith.
2. When we seek, we seek possible answers with eyes of faith.
3. And when we knock, we step out and take risks with faith by pursuing opportunities that were brought to our attention during the seeking phase.

## **Luke 11:11**

*What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are*

*evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

### **III. Pray with passion.**

If you are persistent in something, it stands to reason that you are to be passionate about it.

Paul says we should be vigilant or be watchful; it is the opposite of slothfulness. This describes passionate prayer.

Jesus was passionate about His prayer life, it was something He was always doing.

How much prayer meant to Jesus!

It was not only his regular habit, but his resort in every emergency, however slight or serious.

- When perplexed he prayed.
- When hard pressed by work he prayed.
- When hungry for fellowship he found it in prayer.
  
- If tempted, he prayed.
- If criticized, he prayed.
- If fatigued in body or wearied in spirit, he had recourse to his one unfailing habit of prayer.

Prayer brought him unmeasured power at the beginning, and kept the flow unbroken and undiminished. There was no emergency, no difficulty, no necessity, no temptation that would not yield to prayer.

#### **And every time we see Jesus praying He was praying with passion.**

- In Luke 3:1 at His Baptism - while He was praying the heaven was opened.
- In Luke 6:12 before He called His disciples - He spent the whole night in prayer. Passionate prayer gives direction.
- In Luke 9:29 at His transfiguration - And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. Passionate prayer enables us to experience the glory of the Father.
- In John 17 in His high priestly prayer - Passionate prayer impacts the lives of others.
- In Matthew 26:39 in the Garden of Gethsemane - It is only through passionate prayer that we can pour out our hearts to God.
- In Luke 23:24 as He hung on the cross - a life that is lived in passionate prayer will enable us to maintain that spirit, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

**Jesus always prayed with passion, because**

- He knew Who it was He was talking to
- He knew that prayer to the Father is a powerful thing and not something to take lightly and glibly.
- Prayer from the heart, that's what passionate prayer is, it is prayer from the heart not just from the head.

That is how He taught us to pray, not only through His example, but specifically through His teaching Look in Matthew 6:7, in the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus instructs on prayer. It is here that we find the Lord's prayer. But just before the Lord's prayer what does He say?

"When you pray, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do."  
(Jews around the world may now send prayers via fax to the Wailing Wall)

What has happened to the Lord's Prayer? People repeat it as if it were some kind of magic mantra that will bless them or move God to hear them. They are doing with it is exactly what He was instructing us not to do with it.

- The gentiles, when they prayed tried, through their religious repetitions, with their chants and their mantras to call forth or impress their Gods.

### **That is not what you do when you are in a relationship.**

You don't tell your wife. "I love you, oh I really love you and I just wanted to tell you today that I love you, I'm so glad that I just have this time to just say I love you. Please feed the children, please clean the house and may all go well with you." Amen

**James 5:16** says, *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."*

## **Conclusion:**

Five things that happen when we pray:

### **1. Prayer internalizes the burden**

It deepens our ownership of the burden and our partnership with God. As we pray we begin to become aware of how God might us to answer the prayer, how He might involve us in ways we had not theretofore foreseen.

### **2. Prayer forces us to wait**

Part of prayer is always waiting for God. God has three answers to prayers: Yes, no and wait. Yes and no are no-brainers. But wait, that is tough.

There is a tension between boldness and waiting on God's will. That tension is resolved by being persistent, yet accepting God's answer when it finally comes." Instead of getting frustrated that God is not on our schedule, prayer forces us to be on God's timetable.

### ***3. Prayer opens our spiritual eyes***

It enables us to get in touch with what God is doing and how He is doing it.

In II Kings 6 you may recall the story of when the Army of Israel was surrounded by their enemies and Elijah's servant got nervous. Verses 15-17 say

Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Prayer opens our eyes, enabling us to see what God is doing, to see things we are blinded to without prayer. That's because prayer is communication. We speak to God, God answers us, speaking to us, showing us.

### ***4. It aligns our heart with God's heart***

Adjustment, alignment, setting our thoughts, emotions, actions.

### ***5. Prayer enables us to move forward***

Prayer engages God, enables God's people, and enlarges His kingdom. Jesus said, "without Me, you can do nothing." Once we have prayed we are ready to do anything, until we have prayed we can do nothing, but once we have prayed we can accomplish anything.

What does your prayer life look like this morning? Are you persistent in prayer? Are your prayers passionate or are they perfunctory? Are they filled with intensity and fervor or are they weak, timid and lacking faith? What about gratitude? How much time have you spent thanking God for all He has done for you? And who are you praying for? Is there anyone in your life that you are praying will get saved? Is there a burden on your heart to see God's kingdom expand, to see His will done?