

## “LORD TEACH US TO PRAY”

(2011 Congregational Theme: Daily Disciples: Prayer)

- A. **The first few lessons** in our congregational theme will have to do with prayer unto God.
- B. **The first thing** we learn about prayer, from Scripture, is that it is a practice that must be taught & learned.
  - 1. For example, we don't come into this life knowing how to communicate with our parents.
    - a. Oh, we may communicate cuteness, trust & our needs in a non-verbal way.
    - b. But we can't communicate with words until we are taught those words & the ideas they attempt to describe.
  - 2. Similarly, when we first become Christians we don't really know how to communicate to God.

- a. So it is at that stage of our spiritual development that we need to be taught HOW to speak to our Father in Heaven, what we ought to say to Him.
- b. That, I believe is what the apostles were doing with the new children of God in Acts 2.

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**Acts 2:42** – And *they continued steadfastly in* [devoted themselves to] the *apostles' doctrine* & fellowship, in the breaking of bread, & in *prayers*.

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- c. The apostles were teaching them not only what to believe, but also HOW to have fellowship, observe the L.S. & pray to God.

[So before we can begin to practice prayer on a daily basis, as daily disciples, we should start by learning to pray; & who better to learn from than our Lord.

Jesus Christ, as one of the Godhead, has both received prayers as God & offered prayers to God.

So there is no better place to start, in learning HOW to pray, than with the Son of God Himself.]

## I. LEARNING TO PRAY FROM JESUS

- A. In Luke chapter 11 we see that Jesus was willing to teach His disciples HOW to pray when they showed enough interest in prayer to ask for His instruction.

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Luke 11:1-4 (Model prayer; Matt 6:9-15) – Now it came to pass, **as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples [?] said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”**  
2 So He said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

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- B. From this text we’re going to look at six things Jesus taught His disciples about prayer.

[And if you will follow the guide in your bulletin this week, then you will have learned as much as they did regarding the fundamentals of prayer to God.]

1. **Praise.** “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your Name.” Acknowledging God as our Holy & rightful Father through Christ (Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:1-7).

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Lyndon Johnson’s press secretary, Bill Moyers, was offering a prayer at a staff lunch, & the President shouted, “Speak up, Bill! I can’t hear a thing!” Moyers quietly replied, “I wasn’t addressing you, Mr President.”

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It is good to remind ourselves that when we pray, we are addressing Him who is above all through all & in you all – the Creator & Ruler of all things.

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2. **Purpose.** “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Expressing our desire that God’s will – not ours – be done on this earth through us.
3. **Provision.** “Give us day by day our daily bread.” Expressing our utter dependence on God to meet our daily needs.
4. **Pardon.** “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.” Confessing our sins, since our spiritual life flows from God only when we have his forgiveness.
5. **People.** Addressing God on behalf of other Christians (notice the pronouns “us” & “we”).

6. **Protection.** “*And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*” Petitioning God for help in our battle against sin & the Devil.

[Jesus taught His disciples to begin prayer with praise to God the Father – Ask Him with the right purpose in mind – Ask for His provision – Ask for His pardon – Ask on behalf of His people – Ask for His protection.

If Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, had to depend on prayer during “the days of His flesh” (Heb 5:7), then how much more do you & I need to pray!

Effective prayers are the provision for every need & the solution for every problem.]

## II. PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER

A. **The Persistent Friend:** Next, Jesus taught His disciples about the need for persistence in the six parts of prayer.

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**Luke 11:5-8** – And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, & go to him at midnight & say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, & I have nothing to set before him’; 7 & he will answer from within & say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, & my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise & give to you’? 8 I say to you, though he will not rise & give to him because he is his friend, **yet because of his persistence he will rise & give him as many as he needs.**”

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1. Jesus was not saying that God is like a grouchy neighbor. In fact, it’s just the opposite. Jesus was arguing from the lesser to the greater.

B. **The Persistent Widow:** In a similar parable (Lk 18:1-8), Jesus said that God will act “speedily” on behalf of the elect when they cry out to Him day & night.

C. **The argument is clear:** If persistence paid off (so-to-speak) for the friend & the widow, who were petitioning selfish human beings, how much more will persistence open the door to greater spiritual blessings as we pray to a loving Heavenly Father!

[“Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness” (Phillips Brooks).

Persistence in prayer is not an attempt to change God's mind but to get ourselves to the place where He can trust us with the answer.]

### III. PROMISE IN PRAYER

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**Luke 11:9-10** – So I say to you, *ask, & it will be given to you; seek, & you will find; knock, & it will be opened to you.* 10 *For everyone who asks receives, & he who seeks finds, & to him who knocks it will be opened.*

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A. **Persistence rewarded:** The tenses of the verbs are important here.

1. It is not “ask” once & “receive”. “Seek” once & “find”. “Knock” once & “it will be opened”.
2. It is rather, “Keep on asking, keep on seeking, & keep on knocking.”
3. In other words, don't come to God in prayer only in times of emergency; stay in constant communion with your Father (1 Thess 5:17).

4. As we pray, God will either answer us or show us why He cannot answer (He'll give us the wisdom to see both sides; Jas 1:5).

5. Then it will be up to us to humbly accept His response as from an Almighty Father who truly loves His children.

B. **The Father's gifts:** Jesus' instruction on prayer closes with an emphasis on God as Father.

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**Luke 11:11-13** – If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*

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1. We never need to be afraid of the answers He gives, because He knows us & loves us.
2. Again, Jesus argued from the lesser to the greater.

- a. If an earthly father gives what is best to his children, surely the Father in heaven will do even more – even to point of giving them His own wisdom & guidance.

#### IV. PRACTICE OF PRAYER

A. In closing we need to say a word about the practice of prayer: **It takes self-discipline.**

1. You're going to have to write yourself a note, send yourself an email, set your alarm, tie a string on your finger, turn off all the electronic devices, close your door, get on your knees.
2. We're going to need to set aside a time to pray, or we won't get it done; it takes self-discipline.

B. **It takes dependence on God:** Do you remember what Peter & John were doing in Acts chapter 3?

1. They went to the temple at the hour of prayer, which was 3 o'clock in the afternoon" (Acts 3:1).
2. Is there any way to fully grasp how busy these men must have been (cf. Acts 2)?
  - a. The number of the disciples was growing from 3000 to 5000, & they, the 12 apostles, were the only leadership.
  - b. We can't imagine the demands pressing on their time from that many people.
  - c. But at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, they were heading off to the Temple to pray.
  - d. Now they got diverted, but they went to pray as well as preach & perform miracles.

- e. The point is, THEY WERE TOO BUSY NOT TO PRAY to their Father & to express their utter dependence on Him during their busy schedules – That's the way we need to view the practice of prayer.
  - f. I've often considered how pleasant it must have been for the apostles to pray to God through the One they knew so well who had just left them & returned to heaven.
3. Busyness is a chronic disease in our contemporary society.
- a. If your schedule is not always full, then you're looked down on as an under-achiever.
  - b. Well, that all depends on what you're hoping to achieve in life, the admiration of a dying world or the honor of The Living Lord.

## CLOSING

### A. Prayer is a privilege reserved for God's children?

1. Jesus brought that point home in the first words He uttered in teaching the disciples to pray: "Our Father Who Is In Heaven."
2. Paul stated what one must do to become a child of God ([Gal 3:26-27](#)).
  - a. Do you have that faith today? Are you willing to respond to the gospel?
  - b. Today is a great do to become a disciple.
  - c. Today is a great day to live as a disciple.

[Let's make time to pray every day from here on out.  
THAT IS what "Daily Disciples" do.]