



SERIES: TUNE UP
PRAYER PULSE
Matthew 6:9-13
Developed by Dr. Brad Ball
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Matthew 6:5-13 – “Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 When you pray, don’t babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words. 8 Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him. 9 Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” (CSB)

CONTEXT

This text is part of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is dealing with many aspects in the lives of His disciples and followers. In today’s text Jesus is talking to us about the spiritual discipline of prayer.

What is one thing that has happened to you or your family as a direct result of prayer? Describe a time when you have been frustrated because what you prayed for didn’t happen. Do you think God answers every prayer? Why or why not?

MAIN POINT – Prayer is our God-given means of seeing heaven touch earth.

Adrian Rogers – “The prayer that gets to heaven is the prayer that starts in heaven.”

CONTENT

In the beginning Jesus is assuming that His disciples are going to pray. The same goes for Christ followers and He assumes we are going to pray. So, here in the Sermon on the Mount He gives some great instruction on prayer.

I. Place for Prayer – (v.5-8)

We have an amazing ability to be prideful about almost anything, including prayer. Though God has given us prayer as a means of communing with Him and seeing His power at work in our lives and the world, we can easily fall into the trap of praying insincerely. Prayer, then, becomes more about a show than a relationship; more about looking good before others than presenting ourselves sincerely before God.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord taught that being His follower means more than just doing right acts. He taught His disciples to live as He lived and pray as He prayed—seeking the Father’s glory and approval. Praying was an activity expected of godly people by the religious leaders of Jesus’ day. Jesus expects His followers to be in the habit of prayer, but He doesn’t want His followers to be like the hypocrites. Jesus wants us to avoid using prayer as a means of showing off our piety. Such prayers are merely pretended prayers that God refuses to hear.

Jesus instructed us to find a private place for prayer where thoughts of people’s responses won’t distract us. Thus in secret, we can focus on the Father. The greatest reward for praying may be simply having a personal conversation with God; He whom we cannot see sees us and hears us as well (v. 6). Jesus even provided a model prayer to show us how to pray. It begins with a focus on God and His purposes before moving to our personal requests.

We all need a private room or place to prayer to where you and the Father can talk privately. Prayer is not a monologue but a dialogue. Prayer is primarily talking to God but also listening. Our Heavenly Father knows all our wants and needs.

Jesus cited three kinds of prayer to avoid. First, don’t pray as those who loved to be seen praying in synagogues and on street corners (v. 5). Jesus was cautioning against praying in public with the motive of receiving admiring glances and pats on the back for being so devout. Many times the religious leaders and others were praying to be seen and thought of as being ‘super spiritual.’

A second mistake when praying is to babble like the idolaters (v. 7). The word translated “babble” appears only here in the Bible. Because of the word’s sound, the basic meaning has been suggested as “to stammer,” that is, to repeat words. A derived meaning came to imply going on and on without thinking.

Jesus was not forbidding prayer for the same thing over and over. He even told parables about persistence in prayer (Matt. 7:7-11). Jesus stressed that the Father listens to earnest hearts, not endless words, especially when the words are mechanical.

Do you pray rote prayers to God every day to where you don’t even think about the words you are speaking to God?

Third kind of prayer to avoid. We need not feel compelled to inform God of endless details about our needs (v. 8). Jesus reminded us the Father knows the things we need before we ask Him. This is not to discourage us from making specific requests in prayer, for He invites us to do that (7:7-11). It does assure us that He will answer in ways that best meet our needs, further His kingdom, and enhance our usefulness.

Review the three kinds of prayer to avoid. Which kind provides the greatest challenge or temptation to you? Explain why.

How can you pray sincerely and biblically, yet not piously?

II. Pattern for Prayer – (v.9-13)

We are commanded to pray not only because God desires it for us, but He also wants to relate intimately with His people. We are also commanded to pray because prayer is our God-given

means of seeing heaven touch earth. But as we pray for God to act on behalf of His people, we begin to see that heaven touches earth often in ways that we might not expect.

Verses 9-13 have been usually called the “Lord’s Prayer” or the “Model Prayer.” I believe it is the “Model Prayer” and the Lord’s Prayer is actually found in John 17. Here Jesus is giving us a pattern for prayer. Jesus did not give us this pattern so that we could memorize this prayer and pray it by rote.

What is your favorite phrase of this prayer and why?

v.9 - For Jesus’ disciples, calling God “Father” would’ve seemed too personal and familiar. Through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, all Christ followers gained direct access to God, who no longer dwelt solely in the temple. We don’t pray to the Great Someone in the Great Somewhere, but to our Father in heaven.

Our view of God determines how we pray. Human fathers are not always the loving and wise providers, teachers, and examples their children need; but most of them want to be and try to be. God is the ideal Father—all-loving, all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, and always present with us. At the same time, He is in heaven, which tells us He is greater than we can comprehend; so we approach Him as our Father with due reverence.

v.10 - Your kingdom come could be translated “Your reign come.” The kingdom has come in the hearts of all who have submitted to Jesus as Lord. It also is coming as more people yield their hearts to His reign. The kingdom will not have come fully, though, until Jesus returns and establishes it absolutely and forever. This petition asks the Father to bring people under His reign.

To pray for the Father to see that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven frightens some people. They fail to distinguish between what God desires and what He permits. He desires all to be saved (2 Peter 3:9), but He permits many to turn from Him. He desires all of us to keep His commands, but He permits our disobedience and the destruction it causes. We live, therefore, in a world cursed by sin. Even so, the Father weaves even sin’s consequences into a pattern that ultimately will achieve His good will (Romans 8:28). Heaven is the only place free of sin and its painful effects. We should daily pray for the future consummation of God’s rule in which He will reign fully and completely over the world.

6:11 - The prayer’s focus shifts from God’s eternal purposes to our temporal needs. We are to request what we need to sustain life, such as daily bread (Matthew 6:11). Daily may be understood as “for today” or “for tomorrow,” in either case pointing to immediate need. Daily bread was the amount of bread necessary to survive for a day. The request is reminiscent of Proverbs 30:8-9. Jesus wanted His disciples to live in a state of constant dependence on God and His provision. This prayer reminds us that our Father ultimately is our Provider. As a wise father, God provides what we need, not necessarily what we want.

6:12 - We also are to ask for forgiveness. Debts are sins viewed as obligations to the Father. The Greek grammar indicates that the disciple prays for forgiveness from God only after having first expressed forgiveness to others. We dare not take lightly the rest of the verse: as we also have forgiven our debtors (see also vv. 14-15). At least two biblical teachings about salvation seem in conflict with the words forgive us . . . as we also have forgiven (v. 12; see also vv. 14-15; 18:21-35). (1) Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-10). That rules out earning forgiveness by forgiving. (2) Faith in Christ brings forgiveness and eternal security (John 10:27-29).

6:13 - The final petition has puzzled many believers—Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (“Evil one” also can be translated “evil”; the essential meaning is the same.) We know God is good and does not tempt us to sin (James 1:13), so how are we to understand this? The overall meaning is obvious: the prayer is for the Father to keep us doing His will rather than being led astray by Satan.

CORRELATION – Matt. 7:7-11; Luke 11:1-13; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 139:23-24

APPLICATION - Knowledge without application or action is useless information. Answer these 4 questions – Now what? So what? What does this matter to my life? What does this text demand of me?

What do you need to repent of? Is there some sin that you need to confess today? Do you believe prayer matters?

- * If you have never used this pattern for prayer, try using this prayer this week sometime.
- * Make a list of personal needs, prayer requests and an intercession list of praying for others.

Ron Dunn – “If we wait until we understand everything about prayer, we’ll never pray”

- * The flesh, devil and the world will try to keep you from praying because it is hard work.
- * A forgiving person understands and executes the principle of grace and forgiveness towards others.
- * Cast all your prayers and concerns upon God every day.
- * Approach the throne of God humbly every day & don’t try to impress God with your prayers.
- * If you are asked to pray in public, don’t try to impress people with big words, but just pray sincerely from the heart and personally to God the Father.
- * God rewards genuine prayer.
- * Persistence in prayer is biblical.
- * Prayer is asking God to enter our situation within His will.
- * Christ followers are to live one day at a time.
- * A forgiving person understands and executes the principle of grace towards others.
- * God allows trials to come into our lives in order to build us in the faith.

What do you think hinders our prayers?

- * Pray specifically when it comes to prayer requests and confess sin specifically to God also.

Spurgeon – “Oh! It is a glorious fact, that prayers are noticed in heaven.”

NEXT STEPS

- * Get a 2021 Bethsaida Bible Reading Plan and read through the Meta-narrative of the Bible this year with us.
- * Make a goal to read through the Bible with us this year though the reading plan. We have them printed out or you can download it.
- * Pray for your One who does not know Christ and look for an opportunity to invite them to church and share your personal testimony or the gospel with them.
- * Get involved in a Life Group this year whether in person or online.
- * Text, call, email somebody in your Life Group or the church and encourage them.
- * Pray for revival in our churches and SBC and spiritual awakening in our land.
- * Seek to have a daily quiet time with the Lord in 2021.
- * Pray for those who are sick and pray for their physical healing.
- * Strive to memorize the Scripture memory verses with us this year.
- * Start a Prayer Journal or Notebook or start using a prayer app.