



PRAYER

PRACTICING *Jesus*

SERMON
STUDY

10.13.2024

Leader Corner

Practicing Jesus

Prayer

Matthew 6:5-13

Martin Luther said, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing" We get this. We are supposed to pray. It's one of the bedrocks of a real life with Jesus, but even his disciples questioned Jesus about prayer. So there's got to be more to this right? If there's no bad way to pray and there's no starting point for prayer, than how can we cultivate a rhythm, a practice, a moment by moment journey with Jesus that involves prayer? This week, we take a look at this necessary and significant practice through the lens of the "Lord's Prayer," a prayer Jesus taught his apprentices.

Main Idea: Prayer is essential to real apprenticeship with Jesus.

Main Practice: Experience daily moments of connection and communication with Jesus

Main Teaching: Matthew 6:5-13

A few more housekeeping items for this week:

- *Pro Tip:* Take some time to pray over your group time. Pray for the Holy Spirit to move during your gathering.
- Leave ample time to do the "with Practice" section as this will be the most formational part of our journey.
- Remind group members to keep using the Practicing Jesus journal.

As You Begin Your Group Time:

How did last week's practice go? As you reflected upon last week, what other thoughts or reflections would you like to share?

Connect with Prayer

Have someone pray the following over the group:

Lord of my life, whose commands we are eager to keep, whose fellowship we are eager to enjoy, and to whose service we are eager to be loyal, we kneel before you as you send us out to serve you.

Thank you, Lord, for this new day. For its gladness and brightness; for its open doors of possibility; for its hope of new beginnings. Stir up in our heart the desire to make the very most of today's opportunities. Do not let us break any of yesterday's promises or leave unrepaired any of yesterday's wrongs. Do not let us see anyone in distress and pass by on the other side. Give us the strength to confront any mountain of duty or bad habit.

Next, have someone else read the following prayer:

*This day, O Lord—
Give me courtesy;
Give me both gentleness of demeanor and decisiveness of character;
Give me patience;
Give me love;
Give me self-control and faithfulness in my relationships;
Give me sincerity in my speech;
Give me diligence in the work You have given me to do.
O Lord, who, when the time was right raised up our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to enlighten our hearts with the knowledge of your love, grant me the grace to be worthy of His name. Amen.
(John Baillie, A Diary of Private Prayer)*

with Praise

As a group, sing or listen to the words of the hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." - Joseph Scriven

with Principle

"Many people hear prayer and think of one particular type of prayer — asking God for things. . . But I mean prayer in the broader scope of the word, as the way through which we communicate and commune with God." (*Practicing the Way*, page 184).

1. Take a moment, look over the "Learn" and "Listen" sections of your journal and share any thoughts or takeaways.
2. Read Matthew 6:5-13.
 - a. What words jumped out as you heard this Scripture read out loud?
 - b. What is Jesus teaching us about prayer?
 - c. How does this teaching and scripture help us communicate and commune with God?
3. Some scholars categorize prayer into four types: "Talking to God, Talking with God, Listening to God, Being with God." All of these types are necessary to growing a relationship with Jesus and each type comes with many ways to experience it.
 - a. Which of the four (Talking to, Talking with, Listening to, Being with) feels the most natural right now? How are you experiencing it?
 - b. Which one feels the most unnatural? What might be an obstacle to that fact of prayer right now?
4. Reflect upon your prayer journey. What are current ways you connect and communicate with Jesus? When have you seen God answer a prayer? How have you heard God in the past?

with Practice

This week's main practice is to experience daily moments of connection and communication with Jesus. During your group time, briefly discuss the practices listed and then:

- **Choose one practice** listed below to experience together right now.
- **Determine** which one(s) you will individually practice this week and **write** about it in your journal.

Prayer Walk: As a group, walk through the neighborhood and community your group gathers in. As you walk, pause and pray often and a loud for whatever the Holy Spirit brings to your group's attention.

Pray Scripture: Praying Scripture is using the exact words of Scripture, inserting your name, or the names of others, as you speak a particular passage, or using truths and lessons learned from Scripture to guide your conversations with the Lord. Examples include:

- Choose a favorite portion of Scripture and pray it together. Psalms 23, 51, or any part of 119 can be spoken word for word as a prayer.
- Insert your name (or the name of another) into a passage. For example, Ephesians 6:10-18 could be prayed, "May I be strong in the Lord . . ."

Finger Prayers: This is a simple prayer practice that uses the fingers of one hand to bring to mind those we want to pray for daily. Touch each finger as you pray through these:

- **Thumb:** pray for the people closest to you; your family (immediate and extended), for your children, and for those you go to school or work with.
- **Pointer:** pray for those who give you direction, such as parents, teachers, mentors, youth leaders, etc.
- **Middle:** pray for government officials and those who stand tall, such as first responders and doctors.
- **Ring Finger:** this is your weakest finger so pray for the weak, the poor, and the needy.
- **Pinky:** the finger farthest from you, so lastly, pray for your own needs.

For Further Study

Keep an ongoing prayer journal as a group.
Pray the Lord's Prayer morning, noon, and night.

"Practicing the Way" reading plan:

- Finish reading the book.

Other Resources:

- "A Diary of Private Prayer" - John Baille
- "Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire" - Jim Cymbala
- "40 Days with the Holy Spirit" - Jack Levison