

PRAYER

Good Shepherd

Sermon-Based Study Guide

Luke 18: 9-14 | January 11th, 2026

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue in our series about Prayer. While last week we thought together about why we pray, this week we will be looking at how we are to pray. By looking at a parable Jesus taught, we will consider our posture of how we are to come to the Lord in prayer.

II. Connecting with One Another

Do you remember the first time you prayed (and really meant it)? What was it like? How have your prayers changed since then?

III. Study the Text

Read *Luke 18: 9-14*

While the Pharisee and Tax Collector are in the same place, doing a similar thing as one another, obviously their posture in prayer is very different.

- In what ways are the pharisee and the tax collector similar to one another?
- In what ways are they different?
- What do you think it means to “trust in your own righteousness”?

Re-read *Luke 18: 14*

- How does Jesus respond to the two men praying?
- How does prayer and justification intersect in this story? What do learn from that?
- What does this passage teach us about humility?



Read *Luke 18: 15-17*

The story directly following this parable is when Jesus interacts with children, and he teaches his disciples on who will inherit the kingdom of God.

- What can we learn from a child's humility and faith when it comes to our own prayer life?
- In what ways can you come to God in prayer like a child?

V. Prayer

- Pray that we would come humbly before the Lord and hear from Him..
- That he would continue to shape us individually and as a community to seek Him and His voice above all else...
- For those who have yet to receive the gift of salvation and call out to God in desperation, that they would hear from Him and recognize Him for who He is and all He does...

VI. Digging Deeper

One of the ways we want to invite you to dig deeper in this series is to have a practical way to practice prayer. This week we will practice prayer through the ancient practice of *Lectio Divina*. This is a way to become personally immersed in God's Word and hear from God first rather than coming to God with something to offer.

Step 1: Prepare

Carve out 30 minutes to read, reflect and respond to the Holy Spirit's promptings. Find a space that is undisrupted and sets the tone for hearing from God. Begin with a simple invitation, saying something like "God, let me hear from you" and spend a few moments sitting quietly.

Step 2: Read

Read the passage slowly and carefully. Notice any words or phrases that seem to jump out to you.

Step 3 – Reflect

Re-read the same passage and focus again on any words or phrases that continue to pop out. Re-read those words or phrases a few times and reflect on what God may be pointing out to you. This is a great place to use your prayer journal, noting the words or phrases that are sticking out and wondering why perhaps they are.

Step 4 – Contemplate and Rest

Re-read entire passage again and spend about 10 minutes in contemplation. This isn't a time of prayer or meditation but just a time to sit quietly and allow God to work. When your mind begins to wander, simply bring your attention back to the Lord.

Some passages I would recommend trying Lectio Divina with would be: 2 Kings 6:8-17, Mark 4:35-41, Hebrews 1:1-4 or Revelation 1:9-19

