

# What's the Point

## What's the point of prayer

### Part 2

**Intro:** What's the point of praying? Have you ever asked that question? I mean seriously, it kind of feels like talking to myself. Maybe this is how you feel about it. Maybe it sounds like a religious duty. OR...maybe it's something reserved for church on Sundays.

Maybe you wonder what's the point after praying and praying for something only to have the opposite happen...only to feel disappointed or even ignored by God?

- According to recent [Pew Research Center](#) data (February 2025), 44% of U.S. adults pray at least once a day, a figure that has been stable since 2021. This represents a substantial decline from earlier years, with 57% in 2015. About 65% of US adults pray at least once a month. (Sounds like a "hail Mary" once in a while?)
- I don't know what your experience is with prayer, but today we're going to ask the question; "What the point of prayer?"

#### 1. Prayer is about relational connection

- Prayer is simply communication with God. Prayer is a conversation. Too often people look at prayer simply as a means of getting things from God. In a bit, we'll address this issue. This isn't wrong, it's simply incomplete.
- BUT, for right now, think about what kind of a relationship you would have with someone is all they did was ask you for things. The only reason they are connecting relationally with you is to get something from you.
- Sometimes, we can treat God like this. We relate to Him as if He's some cosmic vending machine. I can push the right button and get what I want. We try to use prayer as a way to use God to get what we want. This creates a shallow connection.
- But prayer is much deeper than this. We have been invited into a relationship with God through Jesus. Healthy relationships require communication.

*John 10:27 "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." (NLT)*

- It seems obvious that Jesus expects a two-way conversation happening. We actually listen as well as talk. God talks to us! How amazing is this! So how do we grow in this relational connection? Let me give you a simple tool.
- The ACTS principal. The basic components of prayer
  - A – Adoration – Adore God. Tell God you love Him. God repeated tells us He loves us in His word. Do you ever tell God you love Him? This is where we praise Him – worship Him – celebrate Him.
  - C – Confession – This is where we confess our struggle – our sin to God. This is not about groveling before God. It's about transparency. I am prone to sin. My flesh is still very active. I need to keep my heart – my behavior – my motives – my desire all before God. I need to embrace His forgiveness daily. If you let sin build up it will block your connection.

- BUT, it's more than this. I confess to God things that aren't sinful. I confess my struggles – my pain – my disappointment – my heartache – my fears – I bring my broken humanity before God
- What this does is create an authenticity in your praying. You can talk and process anything with God. It creates an intimacy with God in our praying. Confession is simply about transparency. We can be emotionally transparent with God. You don't have to sound spiritual all the time!
- S – Supplication – That's just a big word that means we are going to ask God for what we need. I'm going into more detail on this issue a bit later. But for now, let me say there is nothing wrong with asking. We are commanded to ask. God wants us to ask. We are encouraged to pray about everything. There is nothing too big or too small to pray about.
- T – Thanksgiving – This is all about gratitude. We daily thank God for who He is, what He has done in our lives – His provision – His blessings – His truth – our salvation – An eternity to look forward to.
  - When people express gratitude for you, who you are, what you may have done for them, it impacts the relationship in a positive way. This is true with God as well. Are you thankful with God every day?

**Assignment:** Will you set aside a time every day to practice this? Yes, you can practice this throughout the day and many of you do. BUT, for this developing a prayer habit, it will work best by creating a time each day. (early in the morning before distraction – on your commute – in the evenings – after the kids go to school – find a time and stick to it.)

As you begin to practice these steps, pause and listen. Learn to be still and silent. God will speak into the stillness of your heart. He will impress certain things upon you. As important as it is to learn to pray it's equally important to develop the habit of listening.

- Here are some other aspects of prayer

## 2. Prayer is about dependency

*John 15:4-5 “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.*

<sup>5</sup> *“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” (NLT)*

- The Christian life is experienced through relational connection with Jesus. We maintain this connection – this intimacy through prayer. Notice how essential this connection is. Without Jesus we can do nothing! We cannot be fruitful without spiritual connection.
  - Illustrate with an unplugged lamp – It has potential but it's not plugged into any power source.
- Therefore prayer is acknowledging this dependency. We live in this dependency. This dependency generates motivation to pray. If I cannot do anything correctly without

Him (that's what this means – explain), then depending on Jesus for results through prayer is kind of a big deal.

- Where are you not depending on Jesus? What aspects of your life are you not praying about and trying to do it on your own strength and power?
- I see this all the time with people. They don't pray about it – they don't connect with Jesus relationally – then they get mad at God when He doesn't do what they think He should have done.
- Now that you have this time with God every day, tell Him you are depending on Him. Agree with Him that without Him you can do nothing. It is a powerful thing to agree with Jesus in prayer. Agree with John 15. Which leads us to the next issue....

### **3. Prayer is about humility**

- It requires humility to depend on someone besides yourself. Humility is required when it comes to prayer. Just like pride hinders our relationships with one another, so pride creates barriers in our relationship with God.

*James 4:6 “And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (NLT)*

*James 4:10 “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.” (NLT)*

- Humility is about maintaining the right heart posture before God. When someone kneels to pray that is a physical posture. We need this type of heart posture before God. What does that look like?
- Humility acknowledges that God is the creator and I am the created. He is infinite and I am finite. He is all knowing and my understanding is very limited. He has all power and I am weak.
- Humility is not groveling but simply acknowledging my proper place before God. It recognizes the extreme need we have for this connection with God.
- We need to stop looking at humility as some negative thing as if it makes us less than. That is a lie from our spiritual enemy who never wants us to connect with God. Therefore, he is going to sow negative thoughts in your mind about how offensive humility is.
- You know why? Because he chose to not humble himself before God. He chose a prideful, self-willed path away from God and he wants you to do the same. He knows that humility engages the resources of God.
- Humility is the choice between what you can do and what God can do. If you want to tap into the power of God and all the resources that come with connection, then humility is the path.
- As your practicing prayer, how about practicing humility too. Tell God, “Lord, I humble myself before you.” You're God and I am not. I trust you more than I trust me.

#### 4. Prayer is about trust (faith)

*James 1:6-8 “But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup> Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.” (NLT)*

- I think it might be easy to read these verses and think; “Great...why pray then? I’m already struggling with faith and believing that prayer even matters. What’s the point?” I guess this leaves me out.

Let me share with you a story in Mark 9 about Jesus healing this boy who was violently possessed by a demon. – Share story - Mark 9 - father struggling with belief. *“I do believe but help me overcome my unbelief!”*

- What I love about this story is Jesus took the father at his level of faith. He didn’t rebuke him for it. I also loved the fact that the father asked for help to believe. How about you do the same.
- I think we have all found ourselves struggling with faith believing God to do something. Sometimes, we even quit praying. Maybe we need to pray the same thing. *“I do believe...but help me overcome my unbelief God!”*
- Sometimes our divided loyalties can kill our faith and trust in God. We’re not “all in” following Jesus because we’re still loyal to this world and it’s values. We want to go to heaven but this whole following Jesus thing is a little much. This is going to hinder your prayer experience.
- Sometimes our loyalties are divided because of pain. We can be more loyal to our hurt that someone else caused or the pain that life caused than trusting Jesus. I have seen many Christians just get stuck in pain.
- Sometimes the pain and injustice of life can erode our trust in God and divide our loyalties.. The prophet Jeremiah was feeling this way when he cried out to God asking if God was going to be like a deceptive stream that dries up in the summer?
- It’s tough to connect relationally with someone you don’t trust...and if we don’t trust God this is going to hinder our prayer life.
- Do you have divided loyalties?
- **Assignment:** As you pray, tell God you will trust Him. “Lord, I choose to trust you today.” Every day make the choice to trust Him. “Lord I choose to trust you now please help me trust you.”

#### 5. Prayer is about asking, receiving and accepting

*Phil. 4:6 “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.” (NLT)*

*Matt. 7:7 ““Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.” (NLT)*

- We finally get to the asking part. Seeing results from our praying is exciting, encouraging, faith building, it makes us want to pray even more. Knowing that God does listen and act on our behalf is a pretty amazing thing. The God of the universe knows me and my needs. He cares about me!
- I have experienced countless times of God answering prayers and doing miraculous things here at Foothills over the years. I've seen this church come together asking God to do big things and witnessing God showing up in big ways. When you started with 30 people in an elementary school and now see what Foothills is today...you've witnessed a lot of answered prayers.

#### Principles about asking.

- Ask in faith
  - Don't be ashamed to ask God for things...even big things! We are commanded to do so. What are you praying about? Who are you praying about? What big thing are you asking God for?
  - Are you praying about yourself? The reason I bring this up is I hear so many people say they don't pray for themselves.
  - This is not spiritual! This is false humility. If you are truly dependent on Jesus for everything, praying for yourself better be a priority otherwise you are trusting yourself.
  - Create a list. How else do you keep track? How do you know when God answers? I have a list - explain
- Receive with gratitude
  - If you start praying for more and start paying attention more you will begin to see how many things God answers. This gives you opportunity to thank God for all He has done.
  - As you see and give thanks back, it creates more motivation to pray. Don't forget to be thankful. Don't be like the story about Jesus and the 10 lepers (explain)
- Accept outcomes with humility and trust
  - The more you pray the more you are going to see God do but there are also things you will not understand. Like what?
  - You're not always going to understand why God says no. You're not going to understand when God says not now. You're not going to always understand why God allows pain – sorrow – brokenness – heartache – injustice – sickness and diseases.
  - We can pray that God removes these things and often He allows them to remain.

- OR...we see that God removed them for someone else only to allow it to remain in us or a loved one.
- In these times we must learn to accept outcomes we do not understand with humility (understanding my place before God – He’s God and I’m not) and with trust (even though I don’t understand or like it, I still trust in God and who He is) Remember...prayer is about connection not always getting.

*John 16:33 “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” (NLT)*

As we pray, never forget the point isn’t just the answers to prayer but the connection with Jesus that gives us peace no matter the trial or sorrow of this world. It’s our connection that empowers us to overcome. That’s the point no matter what He allows.

How is God wanting you to take some steps with Him growing in prayer?