MATTHEW 6

5 “**When you pray,** you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners [d]so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is **in secret,** and your Father who sees what is done in secret **will reward you.**

7 “And when you are praying, **do not use meaningless repetition** as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. 8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

**9 “Pray, then, in this way:**

**‘Our Father who is in heaven,**

**Hallowed be Your name.**

**10 ‘Your kingdom come.**

**Your will be done,**

**On earth as it is in heaven.**

**11 ‘Give us this day [e]our daily bread.**

**12 ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**13 ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from [f]evil.**

**[g][For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’]**

**Praying with confidence**

* Jeremiah 29:11-13 11 - *For I know the plans that I [a]have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12* ***Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you****. 13 You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.*
* Psalm 34:15 “The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and **His ears are attentive to their cry.”**
* Proverbs 15:29 - “The Lord is far from the wicked, But **He hears the prayer of the righteous.”**
* Proverbs 15:8 - “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the **prayer of the upright is His delight.**
* James 5:16 - The effective [o]prayer of a righteous man **can accomplish much.**

**Praying with purpose**

Types:

* Consecration - set apart, offering of self, body as an offering
* Petition - making a request
* Thanksgiving - offering of thanks and gratitude
* Supplication - it’s a request as well, but more tied to soul, depths, emotions (Heb 5:7)
* Intercession - standing in the gap for another, praying outside yourself
* Authority - declaration born from faith, especially in healing/deliverance, always “delegated”
* Adoration - simply expressing His beauty/attributes to Him

**James 5**

*“13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, [k]anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer [l]offered in faith will [m]restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, [n]they will be forgiven him. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed.* ***The effective [o]prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much****. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed [p]earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the [q]sky [r]poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.”* James 5:13-18

* Both “effective” and “accomplish” are the Greek word energeo, through which we get the word “energy”. The word literally means to put forth effort, to work.
* **In other words, prayer is work, but it WORKS**.
* *How do I learn to love this work? Stick with it long enough to experience an answer*

*“Prayer does not equip us for greater works— prayer is the greater work.” - Oswald Chambers*

**Praying with expectation**

***He expects us to approach Him with expectation***

Psalm 5:3: “In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning, I lay my requests before you and **wait in expectation.”**

**Strong's H6822 - ṣāp̄â**

**צָפָה** tsaw-faw'; a primitive root; properly, to lean forward, i.e. to peer into the distance; by implication, to observe, await:—behold, espy, look up (well), wait for, **(keep the) watch(-man).**

**Mic 7:7 NASB95** - 7 But as for me, I will **watch[H6822] expectantly**[H6822] for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. **My God will hear me.**

**Hab 2:1 NASB95** - 1 I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I will **keep[H6822] watch[H6822]** to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I am reproved.

New Testament Instruction:

**Colossians 4:2 (ESV):** 2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being **watchful in it** with thanksgiving.

**Ephesians 6:18 — The New King James Version (NKJV):** 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, **being watchful to this end** with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

**\*\*\*Would be crazy, audacious, to expect from God, except that we have His WORD**

* + *“Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you,* ***whatever you ask in prayer****, believe that you have received it, and* ***it will be yours****.”* **Mark 11:23-24**
	+ *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.* ***Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do****, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name,* ***I will do it.****”* **John 14:12-14**
	+ *7“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and* ***it will be opened to you.***
	+ *8“For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks* ***it will be opened***.” **Matthew 7:7–8**
	+ *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—****we know that we have what we asked of him****.”* **1 John 5:14-15**
	+ *“Now,* ***will not God bring about justice*** *for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and* ***will He delay long*** *over them?”* **Luke 18:7**
	+ *“Truly I say to you, whatever you [r]bind on earth [s]shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you [t]loose on earth [u]shall have been loosed in heaven.19 “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything* ***that they may ask****,* ***it shall be done for them*** *[v]by My Father who is in heaven.* Matthew 18:18-19
	+ *“But as for you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret* ***will reward you.****”* **Matthew 6:6**
* I would argue it’s *even more audacious* to come to Him *without* expectation if His Word is to be believed
* *When we take Him at His Word, we can pray with expectation!*

**Praying with the promises**

“That which God makes abundantly the subject of His promises, God’s people shall abundantly make the subject of their prayers,” Jonathan Edwards

**6000-8000 promises in the scripture**

Find a promise and pray it!

* *20 For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.* - **2 Corinthians 1:20**
* **2 Peter 1:4 -** 4 [a]For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may **become partakers of the divine nature,** having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

**Praying with persistence**

*Can you imagine if you got all the breakthroughs you prayed for immediately?*

**If God is so good, why the delay?**

1 - opportunity for faithfulness

2- “delays” not for punishment

3 - time is meant for you to know the Character of the One bringing the breakthrough

**Luke 18:1-8**

Faith defined here as “keep going”

**Praying with people and for them (in person and intercession)**

**The Church’s Charge to Pray - Nearly every chapter of acts**

* The book of Acts is, in many ways a blueprint of how to "do church." Prayer is an excellent example. Prayer is mentioned in one form or another 10 times in Matthew, 12 times in Mark, and 5 times in John. But Luke mentions it 19 times in his gospel and 32 times in Acts. - Mark E. Moore, PhD
* The church had just grown from a little over 100 people to about 3000 people, and their first response was devotion to prayer.

**Acts 2:42**

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers”

**Ephesians 6:18**

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.

**Romans 12:12**

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

**Philippians 4:6**

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

**Colossians 4:2**

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

**1 Timothy 2:8**

8 Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.

**1 Timothy 2:1-2**

1 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

[*The Bible refers to the word prayer or expresses a prayer in 61 of its 66 books, making close to 1,100 distinct references to and about prayer.*](https://www.truthaccordingtoscripture.com/documents/prayers/prayers-new-testament.php#.Y2azA3bMKnU)

**Day 1**

**Read Luke 18:1-8**

Sometimes we can be very ignorant about prayer. We pray general prayers once and expect everything to align right away. While the Bible is full of instances where faith yielded immediate results, there is much to be said about the power of persistent faith in prayer. Sometimes faith is defined as “keep going”. Our persistence, however, cannot be tied to unbelief. We must persist because we know God is good, not because we are trying to convince Him to be good in our particular situation. Appreciate quick breakthroughs, but realize that many times it takes a lot of effort to truly appreciate an answer.

It’s essential to acknowledge that God is eternal, and our perception of time differs from His. We have the timing of when things should happen all worked out in our own minds, if God would just ask us. Yet the Father is merciful and kind. Sometimes, He knows we are not ready for the answer. Sometimes the answer is coming, but other things are coming together that you can’t see that will make the breakthrough greater than you could have imagined. In the meantime, don’t get so focused on an answer that you forget that prayer is an avenue of relationship with Him first. That’s the greatest treasure.

**What does Luke 18:1-8 communicate to you? Is the Judge compared or contrasted with God?**

**What would it look like if you got all the breakthroughs you prayed for immediately? Also, if it were that easy, would you want things to be that way?**

**How can we persist in prayer, especially when we don't see immediate answers?**

**What does it mean to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)? How do we develop that kind of lifestyle through relationship with God and not become ritualistic?**

**Activation:** Take something you need a breakthrough for and pray about it every day this week

**Day 2**

**Read Proverbs 15:8 & 29**

These two verses have greatly aided me in my prayer life. After all, if I’m not sure whether or not He hears me, what’s the point in praying? If that is in question, it takes all the wind out of me and makes prayer a chore. If I’m honest, it makes it feel not worth it at all. Yet here, we have iron-clad, surefire proof that God hears us when we pray. Think about how huge that statement is. The God of the universe, who created the World with a word, who sustains and holds it all together, who gives me every breath I breathe, hears when little ol’ me calls out to Him. I have the ear of the Almighty. That’s incredible.

While knowing I’m heard fills me with plenty of hope and motivation in prayer, there’s more than just a willingness on God’s end. He actually delights in my prayer! Not only does He hear it, He enjoys it! This ought to kill any sense of drudgery or obligation. God wants to hear my voice, and He longs for me to hear His. This is relationship.

**If Proverbs 15:29 is true, and if you are in Christ, you are righteous, what are the implications of the verse? Do you have trouble believing this? If so, how come?**

**How does knowing that God delights in your prayer shape your willingness to pray? Can knowing this change how you enjoy praying? How?**

**“Delighting” in this context is a very relational term. How does this change your perspective from just bringing a list of requests to Him? What would your human relationships look like if they were just a list of requests?**

**Jeremiah 29:11-13 and James 5:16 show that God hears and responds to the prayers of the righteous. How does this build your confidence when it comes to prayer?**

**Activation:** Spend 10 minutes in prayer today asking Him to reveal how much He delights in you.

**Day 3**

**Read Matthew 6:5-13**

Here we have one of the most famous sections of scriptures on the planet, commonly referred to as “The Lord’s Prayer.” Many recite this out of rote obedience, but never truly tap into its depths. I like to think of these verses as a springboard for my prayer life rather than a container for it. The Lord Jesus masterfully provided us with enough guidance to pray without leading us into simply reciting a set of words.

While I think this prayer is important to memorize, I don’t think it is just for memorization’s sake. I believe it is important to memorize it so that you can internalize it. Internalize the rhythm of it, where it becomes natural to start your prayers just simply extoling Him for His holiness and greatness, and putting your requests in their proper place. Where it becomes natural to lay down your will and to pray, “Your Kingdom come, your will be done.” It’s hard to improve on prayer when Jesus says, “Pray then in this way.” Learn it, internalize it, pray it!

**What does the structure of the Lord’s prayer teach us about balancing reverence and personal requests when we pray?**

**Many times, we struggle with knowing what to pray. How does having a template of sorts provided by Jesus Himself aid you in that quest?**

**"Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name"—how do you think starting with an acknowledgement of God’s Holiness and “otherness” sets the proper foundation for the rest of your prayer? Have you ever prayed this way before? How can you grow in this?**

**Jesus includes both personal requests and requests for others (ex: "Give us this day *our* daily bread"). Is this significant? How does this shape the way you pray?**

**Activation:** Take the Lord’s prayer and pray through it as it’s laid out

**Day 4**

**Read Luke 5:12-16**

When we observe the life of Jesus in the Gospels, we see that no matter how busy or famous He became, He always found time to slip away and pray. He made regular time to be with the Father, no matter how chaotic His schedule became. Usually, our biggest “struggle” when it comes to praying is “finding” the time. And yet none of us is the Savior of the world, with crowds of thousands pressing on us regularly looking for a breakthrough. His model shows us that prayer is an essential element of the Christian life, not an add-on that is only used when needed.

He had a rhythm of drawing away, then releasing life to others. Draw away, release life. How should our lives look any different? If we want to see life released when we go to minister in His name, I imagine it would mean significant time spent “away” with Him. Yet we don’t get alone with Him just for the sake of being effective. We get alone with Him for the sake of relationship. Effectiveness is just a byproduct, a fruit of the relationship. Draw away with Him today.

**Jesus often withdrew to pray (Luke 5:16). Why do you think Jesus, being fully God, still made prayer a priority? What can we learn from His example?**

**The disciples saw Jesus perform regular miracles and works of power, yet they didn’t ask Him to show them how to do the same. They simply asked Him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). Why do you think this is significant?**

**How can you find a way to draw away and pray regardless of your schedule? Do you have a regular prayer time set in your life?**

**What do you want your prayer life to look like a year from now? What’s something you could do daily to aid you in getting there?**

**Activation:** Find 2 spaces of time in your day to draw away, even 5 minutes, to simply receive from Him

**Day 5**

**Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2**

The bible gives us many different “modes” of praying, all for various purposes. Some prayers are requests, some are expressions of gratitude, and some are for effectiveness. Often, we get stuck in a rut because we only pray one way. The truth is, when you see how the Word talks about prayer, you never run out of ways to pray, or even things to pray about! There’s more to prayer than simply making requests that things in your life will “go well.” When we are diverse in our approaches to God in prayer, we gain a deeper understanding of the various facets of the One to whom our prayers are directed.

When we understand the purposes of the different types of prayer, we can pray with a sense of purpose ourselves. We are no longer just floating along, hoping to be able to generate enough words to say. This understanding is like having a target to aim at. When you get in a rut, change the game and switch up your target! When this becomes natural, you will flow between all these different types of prayer without even thinking about it. Just start somewhere.

**What is the difference between petitionary prayer (making requests) and intercessory prayer (praying on behalf of others)? How can both types play a vital role in your life?**

**Which type of prayer do you feel like you understand the least? What can you do to change that?**

**Which type of prayer tends to be your default? How can you incorporate the other elements into your prayer life?**

**Does having more guidance on how the bible describes prayer fill you with more purpose in prayer? Why or why not?**

**Activation:** Take a stab at each type of prayer today (in your notes). Observe which types come naturally and which seem more difficult

**Day 6**

**Read Acts 12:1-17**

Here we have a beautiful example of what can happen when the church is in unity, praying fervently together. The answer came so suddenly, and with such power, that they almost couldn’t believe that they had received the answer! I definitely believe that personal times of prayer matter a lot. But there’s something unique about praying and agreeing together with other believers for a breakthrough. A culture that prays together will have no shortage of incredible stories just like this.

We must find a way to prioritize prayer, not just in our own lives, but together in our gatherings. We must become proficient in praying around, with, and for our fellow believers. When we truly learn how to do this in unity and come into agreement, everything changes. This was the M.O. of the early church. They prayed together regularly. Let us follow their example!

**In Acts 2:42, the early church devoted itself to prayer. What can we learn from their example in terms of corporate prayer and its impact on the community?**

**How can we foster a culture of intercession in our gatherings, specifically at youth?**

**What is the most impactful corporate prayer moment you have ever been a part of? Why was it so powerful?**

**“There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him.” --William Law**

**“Notice, we never pray for folks we gossip about, and we never gossip about the folk for whom we pray! For prayer is a great deterrent.” --Leonard Ravenhill**

**How do these quotes shape how you see praying for difficult people in your life?**

**Activation:** Pray for blessing on someone you have difficulty with. Pay attention to your heart as you do.