

## Teach Us To Pray (Gather Night SU21)

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### Introduction

We train leaders in the areas of Evangelism, Prayer, and Discipleship. The Lord has pressed on my heart the primacy, urgency, and ministry of prayer this year. If we are honest in this room, many of us lament the state of our prayer lives. When we do pray, we know we should be praying with more fervency. When we do not pray, the grocery list of burdens pile up and make the task of praying feel as though we are standing at the base of Mount Everest—an exhausting climb awaits.

I've read many good books on prayer. I know what the Bible teaches about prayer. I can pray with theological precision and relational warmth. I pray privately and publicly. I recognize much of my pastoral duties happen behind closed doors, on my knees, in prayer. Perhaps you can relate. But I sensed this year that the Lord wanted to take me deeper into an understanding and experience of prayer. I believe he desires the same for you. I'm going to lean on J.C. Ryle, an Anglican minister in the nineteenth century, to point us Godward as we prepare our hearts to hear what Scripture has to say on the subject.

*I have a question to offer you. It is contained in three words: Do you pray? The question is one that none but you can answer. Whether you attend public worship or not, your minister knows. Whether you have family prayers in your house or not, your relatives know. But whether you pray in private or not, is a matter between yourself and God. I beseech you in all affection to attend to the subject I bring before you. Do not say that my question is too close. If your heart is right in the sight of God, there is nothing in it to make you afraid. Do not turn off my question by replying that you say your prayers. It is one thing to say your prayers and another to pray. [I ask again,] Do you pray?*

So, we are going to spend our time together learning from our Lord, Jesus Christ, in the schoolroom of prayer. This teaching will be rooted in the Lord's Prayer. We will look to church history, learning from teachers like Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Spurgeon in the discipline of prayer. I'll also share a collection of lessons I've learned, experiences I've gained, failures I've endured, sin I've repented of, and principles you can apply. It is my [prayer] that you would be led into a deeper experience of communion with him in prayer. Let's open our Bibles to **Luke 11:1-4**.

### **(11:1) "Lord, teach us to pray."**

- A. Context: Jewish rabbis taught their disciples a unique way of praying. All to God, but with varying focuses/nuances/preferences.
  - A. We know that John the Baptist had his own way of praying (Matt. 9:14)
  - B. Jesus' disciples have yet to learn how they ought to pray as his students. *Now he teaches them.*
  
- B. Have you asked Christ to teach you to pray? *The paradox of prayer.*
  - A. Prayer is unnatural. *We must be taught.*
    - A. Rom. 8:6-7; Matt. 26:41.
  - B. Prayer is most natural. *We simply need to do it.*
    - A. Rom. 8:15, 26.

B. J.C. Ryle comments, “Just as the first sign of life in an infant when born into the world is the act of breathing, so the first act of men and women when they are born again is praying. . . How a man can believe [in Christ] and not pray is past my comprehension.”

C. Share: my “teach me to pray” moment.

## The Lord’s Prayer: The Essence and Pattern of True Prayer

### I. A Prayer of Adoption (11:2a)

#### A. “Father...”

1. God addressed as Father a few times (a dozen?) in OT. 160x in Gospels alone.
2. Spurgeon: “To be a child of God is the highest possible position of man.”
3. Having God as Father is an adoptive right, not a natural position (John 1:12-13).
4. Something said only of believers—not the world, not even angels. 1 John 3:1.

### II. A Prayer of Sanctification (11:2b)

#### A. “Hallowed be your name.”

1. From the Greek word *hagiazō*, “To sanctify, make holy; cut off so as to make separation.”
2. Why pray that God’s name be made holy— isn’t it already?
  - a) Luther: “God’s name is holy. [But] in our use of it, his name is not kept holy.”
3. Gal. 3:27: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
  - a) How often do we taint God’s name by living without regard for Christ in us? We are his temple, members of his body, and branches of his vine.
4. Bonhoeffer: “God’s fatherly name, as it has been revealed to the disciples in Jesus Christ, should be kept holy among them, for the entire gospel is contained in this name. May God keep the holy gospel from being tarnished and spoiled by false teaching and an unholy life. May God reveal in Jesus Christ God’s holy name to the disciples forevermore.”

### III. A Prayer of Lordship (11:2c)

#### A. “Your kingdom come.”

1. The kingdom of God has two aspects: “already” and “not yet.” It has been established, but has yet to be fully realized.
2. Augustine: “God is reigning now, but as light is absent to those who refuse to open their eyes, so it is possible to refuse God’s rule.”
  - a) Proverbs: *The wicked are like deep darkness, not knowing over what they stumble.*
  - b) Indeed, even believers can grow cold and become indifferent to the present reign of Christ—besetting sin, holiness. \**Discipleship, bugs on a windshield.*
3. We pray for the kingdom to be established 1) in the world (evangelism) and 2) in our hearts (discipleship)

### IV. A Prayer for Provision (11:3)

#### A. “Give us each day our daily bread.”

1. A call back to Israel in the wilderness (Ex. 16:1-4)

- a) God would give bread each day, but only what was sufficient for that day
  - b) Daily bread creates a humble reliance on God's basic provision
2. *My default is to worry rather than go to God in prayer for basic provision.*
- a) Rom. 8:32: "He who did not spare his own Son, how will he not also give us all things?"
  - b) Matt. 6:25-34.

#### V. A Prayer of Forgiveness (11:4a)

##### A. *"Forgive us our sins, for we forgive everyone indebted to us."*

1. Big idea: a right relationship with God produces right relationships with others.
  - a) Jesus saved his harshest words for the religious leaders, who were shown mercy w/o giving mercy.
2. *1 John 4:20-21. "He who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen."*
  - a) 15x in his first epistle, John equates love of God with love for one another
  - b) As people forgiven freely, we are required to forgive freely.
3. We will never truly forgive others without a right understanding of the gospel
  - a) No one was offended more than Christ, yet no one forgave more freely than Christ.

#### VI. A Prayer of Dependence (11:4b)

##### A. *"And lead us not into temptation."*

1. Three insights from three theologians
  - a) C. H. Spurgeon: The Lord's Prayer is a "descent down a ladder." We begin the prayer as a child of God and conclude as a sinner in danger of committing continually greater sin.
  - b) Augustine: "This is not a prayer that we should not be tempted [tried], but that we should not be led into [give in to] temptation." With great trial comes great blessing.
  - c) Calvin: There are two categories of temptation. On the one hand is riches, power, and honor—these cause us to lose our sense of dependence on the Lord. On the other hand is poverty, suffering, and despair—these cause us to lost hope and forsake the Lord.

Our Lord has taught us to pray, giving us the essence and pattern of true prayer. In the Lord's Prayer, we have a prayer of:

Adoption  
 Sanctification  
 Lordship  
 Provision  
 Forgiveness  
 Dependence

## **Prayer Patterns**

### Private Prayer: **For Bible Reading (IOUS)**

“Incline my heart to you, and not to selfish gain!” (Ps. 119:36)

“Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things from your law.” (Ps. 119:18)

“Unite my heart to fear your name.” (Ps. 86:11)

“Satisfy me with your steadfast love.” (Ps. 90:14)

### **For Prayerful Response to the Bible**

Is there an example for me to follow?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is there an error for me to avoid?

Is there a sin for me to forsake?

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a new thought about the nature or character of God?

### **For Help**

“Lord, save me.” (Matt. 14:30)

### **For Personal Holiness**

“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17)

### Group Prayer: **Confession of Sin**

1 John 1:9

### **Recitation of the Gospel**

Eph. 2:1-10

### **Meditation on Scripture**

Each person takes a turn reading a selected biblical text, prayerfully.

### **Focus on Particular Burden**

Personal holiness, anxiety, pride, provision, marriage, etc.

### **Assignment of Ongoing Prayer**

Each group member prays for group's needs on a specific day of the week.

## **Reference List/Recommended Reading**

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Discipleship*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

Keller, Timothy. *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*. New York: Penguin, 2016.

Ryle, J.C. *A Call to Prayer*. Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust, 2020.

Spurgeon, C. H. *Spurgeon's Sermons on Prayer*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007.