

Real Christianity: The Sermon on the Mount

#25: Attributes of Prayer II

Matthew 6:6-9

Christian, out of all the billions of people praying every day, our Father is only listening to us. (1 Pet 3:12).

I want to talk today again about some attributes of prayer demonstrated in the Lord's Prayer.

"This, then, is how you should pray" (Matt 6:9)

Primary point: Jesus wants us to pray strategically, daily, communally, and humbly.

A) Jesus wants us to pray strategically, not just personally

But the topics of prayer in the Lord's prayer, remind us there are more important things to pray for than just our health or our hamsters. Jewish rabbis have a saying that if a prayer does not include the kingdom of God, then it is not a prayer at all.

My point is that the Lord's Prayer reminds us we need both. On one hand, Jesus tells us to pray for God's glory and kingdom. Those are high and strategic prayers. But he also encourages us to pray for one another's daily bread and forgiveness among us. Those are nigh and personal prayers.

That is the purpose of the prayer slides on Sunday morning. The things listed under our Purposes are generally high prayers. Praying for ministries and core values and kingdom things instead of just individuals.

B) Jesus wants us to pray daily

Jesus clearly implied He wants us to pray every day. In verse 11 He instructed His disciples to pray, *"Give us today the food we need"* (NLT).

What helps you to pray every day? It can help to have a set time for prayer. *"Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service"* (Acts 3:1 NLT). If Apostles followed a daily routine for prayer, perhaps we should.

In the Christian Essentials Yellow Book I have suggested a P.O.W.E.R. plan for prayer

C) Jesus wants us to pray communally

Jesus also implies in the prayer that we should be praying together, not just privately.

The early Christians understood this and practiced it. Here are a few examples: (Acts 1:14) *"They all joined together constantly in prayer."* (Acts 4:24) *They raised their voices together in prayer to God."* Meeting together to pray out loud together was a common practice of the early Christians. In both

of these verses, the Greek word *homothumadon* is used. It literally means "of one mind." These Christians did not just meet in the same place as most translations imply. They also met with the same mind, desires, and priorities. They were united in their prayers. The NLT at least reflects this in Acts 4:24 when it says, "*They all met together and were constantly united in prayer*" (Acts 2:24 NLT).

These Christians were taking advantage of the promise Jesus had given them about prayer. He had told them: "*If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you*" (Matt 18:19). Praying with others makes your prayers more powerful. Why is this? Because God blesses unity more than independence.

D) Jesus wants us to pray humbly

There is a very odd thing about the Lord's Prayer. Why does Jesus tell us to pray every day for things God has already promised to do?

To remind us of our absolute dependence on God. (Deut 8:12-14, 17-18)

C. S. Lewis on miracles: "Everyone wants a miracle, but no one wants to really need one."

Why does God want us to pray? To be closer to Him.

You will always be a needy toddler to your Father in Heaven. God so yearns for this closeness to us, that He will lead us to places where we have no choice but to say, "Help please."

dependence is better than discipline.

Discussion ?'s

- 1) What are things that make prayer hard for you?
- 2) How would each of the four attributes of prayer discussed in this message help your prayer life?
- 3) Which one of the prayer requests in the Lord's Prayer do you more naturally pray for? Why is this? How does it reflect your personality and gifting?
- 4) What helped you be comfortable praying out loud with others?
- 5) The Lord's Prayer tells us to pray for things that God has already promised to do? What was Pastor Kurt's answer to that? What do you think? How does this explain another reason God lets hard things happen to us and our country?
- 6) What was most meaningful to you about the Sunday message?