

Jesus' Gift of the Lord's Prayer

October 16, 2016

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Psalm 145 – A Prayer of Praise

(Here is a psalm/song to help your group as you worship. You can go through it together or in groups in meditation and/or in prayer.)

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| <p>¹ I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.</p> <p>² Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.</p> <p>³ Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.</p> <p>⁴ One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.</p> <p>⁵ On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.</p> <p>⁶ They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and declare your greatness.</p> <p>⁷ They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.</p> <p>⁸ The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.</p> <p>⁹ The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.</p> <p>¹⁰ All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you!</p> <p>¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of</p> | <p>your power,</p> <p>¹² to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.</p> <p>¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. [The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.]</p> <p>¹⁴ The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.</p> <p>¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.</p> <p>¹⁶ You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.</p> <p>¹⁷ The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.</p> <p>¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.</p> <p>¹⁹ He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.</p> <p>²⁰ The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.</p> <p>²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.</p> |
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Icebreaker(s)

Ask: What do you find yourself praying about most of the time?

- OR -

Do a prayer survey of the group: Ask people to respond true or false (by raising their hands to each question), and then use the answers to spark some quick discussion about prayer in your group. As you go through the questions, pick a few that seem to get strong responses, and ask people why they are answering the way they are. Be careful not to chase a single rabbit trail too far; the idea here is to get people thinking about the complexities and practical realities of prayer...

1. I believe that prayer brings about miracles because I have personally seen it.
2. The real value of prayer is in the meditation – quieting down enough to really/objectively evaluate myself and my situation.
3. If I were completely honest, I'm not REALLY sure prayer works.
4. I have lost at least some faith in prayer, because something has gone unanswered.
5. I believe God answers prayers to win sporting events.

Believe it or not, nearly half of the country thinks this is true – in a recent Time magazine poll, nearly 49% of Americans agreed with that statement. Here's some other interesting stats:

- 87% of Americans believe that God answers prayer.
- 54% (a fairly good majority) say that they pray on a daily basis.
- And 29% -- over 72,000,000 -- say that they pray more than once a day.

That's a lot of people praying!!

So, with all of that in mind, HOW do we pray? Matthew 6:5-15 is Jesus' summary.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

HOW TO PRAY THE RIGHT WAY – Matthew 6:5-15

When you pray, don't be like the big showoffs, who love to pray standing in meetings and out in public so that people will be impressed with how religious they are. Don't you be like them! But when you pray, go into your home's most private space, close the door behind you, and pray to your Father in complete secrecy. Your Father, who has good eyes, will see you and reward you! When you pray, don't go on and on and on like the pagans. They think the more they pray, the more answers they'll get. Don't you be like them! You know why? Your Heavenly Father already knows the things you need before you even ask Him. So when you pray, pray like this:

“Our Father, who is in all the skies:
Please show us how wonderful You are.
Please come down and be our King.
Please do whatever you want to do –
everywhere on earth, especially!
Please give us all the food we need today.
And please forgive us the hurtful things we've done;
we're trying to forgive people their hurtful things.
And please don't let us be led into any temptation,
but save us (“snatch us”) from The Evil One!”

“If you forgive people their wrong things, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you yours. But if you don't forgive other people, neither will your Father forgive you!”

Prayer should not be a performance in front of others; instead it should be a conversation between us and the Lord. Nor should prayers go on and on. They should be brief, frequent and intense, for God already knows our needs. When we realize we don't have to pray a lot, we will pray more often!

The Lord's Prayer is intercessory, praying for others from the first word. It is a tender prayer, speaking to God as a young child would. And it is a simple prayer, just how God wants for us to come to Him. The prayer is beautifully balanced. Through three “thy” petitions, Jesus thoughtfully directs our prayers. We ask God that His name be lifted up (so that we might see how unbelievably wonderful He is), that He would help us live the Sermon on the Mount, and that He would do whatever He wants, everywhere. Three “us” petitions follow: Please give people the food they need. Please forgive us the bad things we've done – as we forgive people their bad things. Please don't let us want to do more bad things. Our personal relationships with matter to God and are central to the Sermon on the Mount. In His postscript to the Lord's Prayer, Jesus says our Father will be as willing to forgive us as we are willing to forgive others. So, we are praying a curse on ourselves if we hold a grudge while asking for God's forgiveness. It is dishonest for us to ask for forgiveness if we're not willing to pass it on. And finally, Lord, save us from the Devil!

To pray the Lord's prayer daily will transform our lives. It is the simplest way to accept Jesus Christ as it accepts His way of talking with Him. By simple faith, He gives us perfect acceptance with Himself.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How do we pray?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- 1) Let's think about the prayer in Matthew with a template of "5 Movements".
 - Movement #1: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."
 - What do you think about calling God "Father"? How does that make you feel?
 - What does it mean for us to make God's name "holy" (literal meaning = "set apart")?
 - Movement #2: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
 - Can you share one personal area (job, work, family) where you long for God's kingdom to come?
 - What would it look like for that to happen? (Example: What specifically would you be praying for?)
 - Movement #3: "Give us this day our daily bread."
 - Dale encouraged us to pray briefly, frequently, and intensely. How do you think that relates to the Lord's Prayer?
 - How do you synthesize that with what Jesus says in Luke 18:1-4? (Parable of the persistent widow.)
 - Movement #4: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."
 - How do you respond to this statement?
 - Movement #5: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."
 - This is about God's protection over us. Is there a place you can identify right now that you would love to see God's protection "show up" in your life?
- 2) Use the attached guide to lead your group through praying the Lord's Prayer together. If your group is up for it, challenge them to try this prayer experiment together for the next week, and do a check-in at your next meeting to see how it went.
- 3) Next Saturday, October 29th is our CG New Leader Training. Who are two people in this group who can attend the training and prayerfully consider helping lead aspects of the group?

New Leader Training

Saturday, October 29th: 9:00am – 12:15 pm

<http://pacificcrossroads.org/event/13/community-group-new-leader-training/>

Note: Attending does not commit you to leading, but if you are interested in leading a group this is the necessary first step.

The Lord's Prayer:
A Seven Day Experiment

To begin each day “orienting” yourself to God and His purposes for you is an excellent way to train your soul to become a submitted participant with God in His on-going Kingdom work. Using the Lord’s Prayer as a guide, this 10-15 minute daily experience will help you begin each day with such an orientation.

Step 1:

Each day, engage in the six “movements” of Jesus’ prayer by saying the words of the prayer aloud, phrase by phrase, followed each time by reflecting on the specifics of the day ahead of you.

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...”

- Take a moment to acknowledge God’s authority over you during the day ahead.

“Your Kingdom come, you will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...”

- Mentally go through your schedule for the day ahead. Take each major time block/activity, and specifically ask God that His kingdom would be manifest and that His will would be supreme in each of the major activities of your day. (“God, may your kingdom be expressed and may your will be done in my meeting with my boss today...” or “...as I get the kids ready for school...” etc.)

“Give us this day our daily bread...”

- Again, mentally go through your schedule for the day ahead. This time, ask for God’s provision (“God, please give me what I need as I meet with my boss...” etc.) for each of your major activities/time blocks. Don’t get bogged down asking for specifics here – remember this is an orienting exercise – just ask for God’s provision (He knows what we need!).

“And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

- Mentally review the major events/time blocks of the *previous* day. Ask God to point out where you may need to ask Him or others for forgiveness. Ask Him to point out any relationship that you may need to repair.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”

- Once again, mentally go through the day ahead. With regard to each time block/activity, ask for God’s protection over you.

“For yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory...”

- Complete your prayer/orientation time by mentioning one part of your day where you will specifically trust God (“God, I will trust you to take care of me in my meeting with my boss...”). Thank God for being trustworthy, and again, acknowledge His authority over you (and now also, His presence with you!) in the day to come.

Step 2:

At the end of the week, take 10 minutes to review your week. Write a couple of short paragraphs about how your prayer life in the past week helped change your orientation, and helped you engage more deeply with God. Be ready to share your thoughts at your next Community Group meeting.

Optional: Email your paragraphs to dcobia@pacificcrossroads.org; David will send a compiled list of responses to those who wish to share.