

Kingdom Call – Prayer

Prayer is something that every Christian agrees that we should be doing, but hardly everyone will ever say that they pray enough. As a result, we do not often find good models of prayer that we can learn from. Church prayer meetings are often the least well-attended meetings of the week. This should surprise us because Christians often talk about our faith as a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. However, for any relationship to function well, communication is vitally important. Yet, prayer (communication with God) is the one area that Christians struggle with the most. More often than not, we also struggle to know what and how to pray to God.

In our passage today, Jesus teaches his disciples how *not* to pray, and also what they should be praying about. This is in light of what he has just taught his disciples – that their giving should be in secret. Their prayer life is also supposed to follow that example. Let us see what Jesus says.

Launch

- 1) Why do you think Christians struggle to pray? Why do you?

Praying as Jesus Taught

Read Matthew 6:5-13

- 2) Who is Jesus teaching in this passage? (cf. Matt 5:1)
- 3) What three ways of praying that Jesus said we should *not* be doing? (v5, 7-8) Why?
 - a. How do those ways of praying demonstrate a person's lack of trust in God?
 - b. Try to describe how praying in those ways today will look like.
- 4) How and where should we be praying? (v6)
 - a. Does this verse mean that we should not pray together with one another? Why or why not?
- 5) Matthew 6:9-13 is often referred to as "the Lord's Prayer". Take the time and read the prayer a few times out loud together as a small group.
 - a. What struck you about this prayer you as you read it out loud?



- 6) What is the focus of the prayer in v9-10?

- 7) What are the things that we should be asking for according to the Lord's Prayer? (v11-13)
 - a. What do these things have in common? (v11-13)

- 8) Based on the two sections of the Lord's Prayer (v9-10 and v11-13) and your answers to questions 6-7a, what are the two principles that you can glean from the Lord's Prayer on prayer?

- 9) How do your prayers compare to the Lord's Prayer?
 - a. Which aspect of the Lord's Prayer that you have neglected the most in your own prayer?

- 10) Take the time and write out a prayer that is either based upon the two principles you listed in Question 8, or write out a prayer that is a paraphrase in your own words of the Lord's Prayer.
 - a. Once you have done that, take the time and pray that prayer with your small group

A vital component in our communion with God is prayer. Simply put, prayer is just talking to God. We all recognise that communication is key in a healthy relationship between two parties, and it is not different in our relationship to God through Christ. The highest blessing of the Gospel is that through Christ, we now have God as our loving heavenly Father and that we are his children. Praying to our heavenly Father then should be as natural as talking to our earthly fathers. When we are praying to God, we are merely his spiritual children, approaching the Father who loves us and has called us into his family.

However, we are such sinful creatures that even when we *do* pray, we often make it all about us. We rattle off a list of petitions to God and hoping that he will fulfil all our wishes. However, in the Lord's Prayer, we are called to focus upon God and his glory, and trust him to provide all that we need here on earth. There's no need for long prayers, for we do not need to "nag" God. He knows what we need before we even ask him. Let us trust him, and pray for his glory and also to trust him in our needs.