

Teach Us To Pray

Introduction

- I. Few subjects have greater prominence in the Bible than prayer.
- II. There is a tendency in our day to minimize the power of prayer.
- III. “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1–13).
 - A. It was the regular custom for a Jewish Rabbi to teach his disciples a simple prayer which they might habitually use.
 - B. John had done that for his disciples, and now Jesus’ disciples came asking him to do the same for them.
 - C. This is Luke’s version of the Lord’s Prayer—it is shorter than Matthew’s account, but it will teach us all we need to know about how to pray and what to pray for.
- IV. Two essential elements in a Christian’s character:
 - A. Obligation: binds us to discharge our duties; can create self-satisfaction.
 - B. Dependence: like a little child dependent on parents.
- V. Let us notice the model prayer given by our Lord.

Discussion

I. **The Model Prayer (Luke 11:2–4)**

- A. *Reverence*: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.”
 1. “Hallowed” mean “sanctified” or “set-apart.”
 - a) Before anything is asked for ourselves, God and His glory, and the reverence due to Him, come first.
 - b) Only when we give God His place will other things take their proper place.
 2. Recognition of His rule and authority (Acts 17:24–26; James 1:17).
 3. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7).
 4. “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace...” (Heb. 4:16).
- B. *Desire for God’s will to be done*: “Your Kingdom come...”
 1. God’s Kingdom had been promised (Dan. 2:44; Mark 1:15; Mark 9:1).
 2. The Kingdom, God’s rule among men, did come (Col. 1:13).
 3. My prayer is that God’s will might be done by me!
- C. *Dependence*: “Give us this day our daily bread.”
 1. Bread comes with or without prayer—disciples recognize the source.
 2. We are to be content with what God provides (Matt. 6:19–21).
 3. Paul had learned “in whatever state I am, to be content” (Phil. 4:11).
- D. *Forgiveness*: “Forgive us our sins, as we forgive everyone who is indebted...”
 1. Shown in the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt 18:21–35).
 2. Forgiveness is based on true repentance (Luke 17:3–4).
- E. *Guidance*: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”
 1. God does not tempt us (James 1:13), but He can permit us to be led into temptation, or He can shield us from it.
 2. “...the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment...” (2 Peter 2:9).

3. “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Cor. 10:13).
 4. Trials should not be looked at as being all bad (Jas. 1:12).
- F. *Praise*: “For Yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” (from Matthew’s account in Matt. 6:13).
1. This was not a request, nor thanksgiving, nor informing God of needs.
 2. It is an affirmation of the exalted position He holds.
 3. Prayer of David: “Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears” (2 Sam. 7:22).

II. The Friend At Midnight (Luke 11:5–8)

- A. Travelers often journeyed late in the evening to avoid the heat of the sun.
1. In Jesus’ story just such a traveler had arrived towards midnight at this friend’s house.
 2. In the east hospitality is a sacred duty—it was not enough to set before a man bread and water.
 3. In the villages bread was baked at home.
 4. Only enough for the day’s needs was baked because, if it was kept and became stale, no one would wish to eat it.
- B. The late arrival of the traveler confronted the householder with an embarrassing situation, because his pantry was empty and he could not fulfill the sacred obligations of hospitality.
1. Late as it was, he went out to borrow from a friend.
 2. The friend’s door was shut.
 3. In the east no one would knock on a shut door unless the need was imperative.
 4. In the morning the door was opened and remained open all day, for there was little privacy; but if the door was shut, that was a definite sign that the householder did not wish to be disturbed.
 5. But the seeking householder was not deterred—he knocked, and kept on knocking.
- C. The poorer Palestinian house consisted of one room with only one little window (wealthier people had marble floors).
1. The floor was simply made of beaten earth covered with dried reeds and rushes.
 2. On a raised part of the floor a charcoal stove burned all night, and round it the whole family slept on sleeping mats.
 3. Families were large and they slept close together for warmth.
 4. For one to rise was inevitably to disturb the whole family.
 5. In the villages it was the custom to bring the livestock, the hens and the goats, into the house at night.
 6. Is there any wonder that the man who was in bed did not want to rise?
 7. But the determined borrower knocked on with shameless persistence, until at last the householder, knowing that by this time the whole family was disturbed anyway, arose and gave him what he needed.

- D. The lesson of this parable is not just that we must persist in prayer.
 - 1. It is not that we must batter at God's door until we finally compel Him in weariness to give us what we want.
 - 2. The point is: if a irritable and unwilling householder can in the end be coerced by a friend's shameless persistence into giving him what he needs, *how much more* will God who is a loving Father supply all His children's needs? (Luke 11:9–13).
- E. This is similar to the parable of the unjust judge (Luke 18:1–8).
 - 1. The poor widow was weak, and had no bribe to offer.
 - 2. You are not going to “wear God down” by constant asking

III. What Should I Pray For?

- A. Civil government (1 Tim. 2:1–2).
- B. My enemies (Matt. 5:44).
- C. Preachers of the word (Eph. 6:18–1).
- D. Wisdom (James 1:5).
- E. The furtherance of the gospel (2 Thes. 3:1–2).

IV. Things To Avoid In Prayer

- A. Putting on a show (Matt. 6:5–8).
- B. Bargaining with God (Luke 18:9–14).
- C. Preaching through prayer—it is not the time to preach a sermon!

Conclusion

- I. Prayer is not a substitute for obedience (Acts 22:16).
- II. Think of the song, *Did You Think To Pray?*

*“Ere you left your room this morning, Did you think to pray?
 “In the name of Christ our Savior, Did you sue for loving favor as a shield today?
 “O how praying rests the weary! Prayer will change the night to day;
 “So when life seems dark and dreary, Don't forget to pray.”*