

Pray Like Jesus: "An Introduction to Prayer"

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Whether we admit it or not, prayer is either one of the most encouraging and strengthening parts of our lives, or it is one of the most discouraging and weakening part of our lives. There really seems to be no middle ground on the issue. It is either all good, or all bad.

The general subject of prayer in Scripture seems to present three important challenges for all of us:

1. As a church, how do we become a "House of Prayer" church as taught in Scripture? Jesus never said that the church was a house of preaching, music, entertainment, or anything else.
2. How do we live our daily lives in such a way that fulfills the biblical requirement of 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that says, "Pray without ceasing"?
3. How should we respond when God says "No" or "Wait" to any of our prayers?

This is why it is vitally important to have a biblical understanding of who God is and what it means to live each day in light of His sovereignty and supremacy.

Have you ever thought about your prayer life? Have you ever examined it closely and desired for it to be better? Have you ever felt like your prayers were just hitting the ceiling and bouncing right back down? These are common concerns and thoughts of all Christians everywhere.

The purpose of this message series is not to put you on a guilt trip or to make you feel bad. Our purpose is to challenge you to be more like Jesus by learning to pray like Jesus.

UNDERSTANDING HOW GOD ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS

It is vitally important to understand that God answers all prayers in one of three ways. He either says "Yes", "No", or "Wait". He always says "yes" when our prayers are prayed in accordance to His divine and perfect will. He always says "no" when our prayers are self-centered, unscriptural and are not according to His will and orderly way. Sometimes He says "wait" when the timing of our request is not according to His sovereign time table. Whenever He says "no" or "wait" to any of our prayers, it is always because He has a greater plan and purpose for our lives.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is "communion" or "communication" with God. It sometimes includes audible communication with our spoken words spoken to God and sometimes includes our silent thoughts and words. Because prayer is communication, it includes:

1. Speaking to God
2. Listening to God

THE PURPOSE OF PRAYING LIKE JESUS

The purpose of learning to pray like Jesus is for us to be conformed to His Glory and image (Romans 12:1, 2). The very best way to become like Jesus is to learn to pray like Jesus.

THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

The purpose of prayer is not to try to change the mind and will of God and try to convince Him to do something that He may not want to do. Prayer, when prayed according to God's will always accomplishes His will and will ultimately change the hearts of men and women everywhere. Most importantly, prayer changes our hearts to become more like the heart of God. It brings us into agreement with Him so we can trust Him more.

WHO DO WE PRAY TO?

First and foremost, we pray to our God. According to Scripture, God consists of three distinct persons who make up what we call the Trinity. They are:

1. God the "Father": (Romans 8:15; Mark 14:36)
2. God the "Son": (1 Timothy 2:5)
3. God the "Spirit": (Galatians 4:6; Luke 11:1, 13; Luke 10:21-22)

HOW DID JESUS PRAY IN SCRIPTURE?

1. He expressed "thankfulness" in His prayers (Matthew 11:25, 26)
2. He quoted "Scripture" in His prayers (Mark 15:34; Psalm 22)
3. He sometimes prayed "short" prayers (Mark 6:41)
4. He sometimes prayed "long" prayers (Luke 6:12)
5. He prayed "painful" prayers (John 12:27, 28)
6. He prayed a "dying" prayer (Luke 23:46)

WHO DID JESUS PRAY FOR?

1. He prayed for "Christians" (John 17:9)
2. He prayed for His "disciples" (John 17:6)
3. He prayed for the "church" (John 17:20-26)
4. He prayed for His "enemies" (Matthew 5:44; Luke 23:34)
5. He prayed for His "friends" (Luke 22:31, 32)
6. He prayed for "children" (Matthew 19:13)

WHEN DID JESUS PRAY?

1. He praying at "mealttime" (Matthew 14:19; Mark 14:13; Luke 22:19)
2. He prayed "early in the morning" (Mark 1:35)
3. He prayed "daily" (Mark 12:29, 30)

WHERE DID JESUS PRAY?

1. He prayed "alone" (Mark 6:46; Luke 9:18; Luke 5:15, 16)
2. He prayed in "public" (Luke 3:21)
3. He prayed with "small groups of people" (Luke 9:28)

WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR AS CHRISTIANS?

1. Pray for "those who sin against us" (Mark 11:25)
2. Pray when we have "personal needs that only Jesus can meet" (Matthew 7:7, 8)
3. Pray for pastors, evangelist, and church planters" (Matthew 9:37, 38)
4. Pray against "temptation" (Matthew 26:14)
5. Pray in "Faith" (Matthew 21:22)
6. Pray according to "God's Will" (John 16:23, 24)
7. Pray "humbly" (Luke 18:8-14)
8. Pray "fervently" (Luke 18:1)

WHY SHOULD I PRAY?

1. Because we are commanded to pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
2. Because prayer strengthens our spiritual lives
3. Because prayer develops our relationship with God (Zechariah 13:9; John 15:7)

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY IN PRAYER?

Romans 8:26, 27

WHY WOULD GOD NOT ANSWER MY PRAYER?

1. Disobedience (Deuteronomy 1:45; 1 Samuel 14:37)
2. Secret sin (Psalm 66:18)
3. Indifference (Proverbs 1:28)
4. Stubbornness (Zechariah 7:13)
5. Doubt and insecurity (James 4:3)