

# A Praying Church

Matthew 6:5-13

“How should we pray?” – August 25, 2019



## Introduction

Prayer may not be complicated, but due to sin, it doesn't come *natural*. For that reason, the disciples asked Jesus, “Teach us to pray” (Lk. 11:1) – a question we *too* must ask. Thankfully Jesus instructs us and God has preserved His words in the pages of Scripture. When we think about how to pray the focus is not so much on *procedure* (however important and helpful those are) but first on our hearts.

## Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

## Sermon Outline

- I. Don't pray like a hypocrite (6:5-6)
- II. Don't pray like a pagan (6:7-8)
- III. Pray like a child of God (6:9-13)
  - a. Pray God-centered prayers
  - b. Pray God-dependent prayers

## Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [Matthew 6:5-6](#)

Jesus call to *not* pray like a hypocrite is not so much about public prayer as it is about loving the wrong thing. A hypocrite is someone who looks *godly* but uses prayer (or other religious activities) as a cover for seeking what they're really after: the praise of man. Living for the praise of man and being concerned about others' opinions of us is enslaving! Therefore Jesus says to us, you don't have to pray or live that way – *I'm your Father. Because of Jesus, you already have my approval!* Do you find yourself more concerned about the praise of man or the opinion of God? Our God is one who sees what's 'in secret'. To help overcome the fear of man, seek the *greater* reward – not the praise of man, but of God! The reward of God Himself (Hebrews 11:6) is what *truly* satisfies.

Additional Reading: Proverbs 29:25, John 3:16, 17:3

- 2) Read [Matthew 6:7-8](#)

A Gentile or pagan (as in the NIV) is someone who doesn't know God. Not knowing God, this person assumes they need to gain the attention of a God who is distant, distracted or not paying attention with 'many words.' Again, the issue is not so much the length of the prayer, but a wrong view of God. God is not distant, cold, uninformed, or reluctant to help. God is

not a vending machine to give us what we think best but our loving Father who already knows our needs. When you pray, are there times you're tempted to think of God as distant or reluctant? Are there times you don't pray because you're not sure it 'works' (I pray, but nothing happens)? What if the reason isn't God's reluctance or prayer being broken but your wrong view of God? What if the thing you're asking for *isn't* what's good for you and God's saying 'no' is an expression of His love and care for you (even our parents did this in love). How could seeing God as a loving Father reshape the way you pray?

Additional Reading: James 1:17, Matthew 7:7-11

3) Read [Matthew 6:9-13](#)

In the Lord's prayer, Jesus reminds us we call on God as our *Father in heaven*. This reminds us of His care and compassion (Father) *and* His power and authority (in heaven). Once we've established in our hearts *who* we call upon, we're ready to make our requests. Jesus begins with God-centered prayers (for His name to be honored, kingdom to come, and His will to be done). Do your prayers center on God and His glory? A life centered on God does not mean the neglect of His children but the loving concern for them! When our focus is on Him...we'll boldly come to Him with our needs (for provision, pardon and protection). What needs do you have that you need to bring to our Father today? How do our requests result in honoring God?

Additional Reading: Psalm 50:15, Galatians 4:4-5, Psalm 115:3

### **Prayer of Response**

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at

<https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

<b>*Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <b>Matthew 7:7-11</b> "Why should we pray?"
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