

# A sermon outline on Prayer

“Don't be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present yourselves to God  
(Phil 4:6)

## What's the point of prayer?

Relationship with the Father leads to Kingdom revelation, which leads to lives renewed.

*Bible reading suggestion: Matthew 6*

**Intro:** Prayer is...

about a relationship

about a new perspective

about lives renewed.

**Relationship:** Our Father in Heaven

Too often we approach prayer with a consumer mentality. Prayer is not a pick 'n' mix counter.

Key fact about prayer is not how we do it – as the 'religious' people of Jesus' day thought – but rather who we pray to.

## The Lord's prayer

The first half has nothing to do with what we want or need. The first section of *Matthew 6: 9-10* is all focused on God:

- Our Father in Heaven
- hallowed be YOUR name
- YOUR Kingdom come
- YOUR will be done.

## A reflection of the 10 commandments

Both the 10 commandments and the Lord's prayer are set in two sections but express the same priorities, a focus on God followed by a focus on others, then a focus on ourselves.

Having a God perspective is especially helpful in troubled times – bereavement, redundancy, marriage difficulties, illness, work pressure, and so on. Times when we feel out of control.

Prayer brings the Kingdom of God into our lives and radiates out to those around us.

Jesus stresses that prayer puts us in relationship with God (*Matthew 6, Matt 7:11; 18:14; Mark 11:25; Luke 10:21; 11:13*). Prayer is how we connect with the God of the Universe.

When we pray we pray to this Almighty God who is our Father. Jesus mentions the word 'Father' 5 times in *Matthew 6!*  
**Vs: 6,8,9,14,15.**

When we pray we enter into an intimate relationship with God – maybe it's obvious, but do we still have that awareness and spark as we pray?

Jesus didn't tire of prayer even though He was God!

- 40 days/nights in the desert – praying.
- When staring death in the face – praying.

Why? Because the Trinity is relational at heart. For Jesus, spending time with His Father was the most important thing in His life.

If Jesus prayed like this, it demonstrates that we need to be disciplined and pro-active in our time and attitude towards spending time with God in prayer. It is good to make a prayer journal and reflect on it every so often to see how God is working in our lives.

**Exodus 17:8-13** – The battle between the Amalekites and Israelites. When Moses raised his hands in prayer the Israelites were winning, when he lowered them they were losing the battle. Moses discovered the importance of prayer. Similarly, if we take our focus off God how can we expect Him to work in and through our lives? Yet, if we spend quality time in prayer we will see him work in ways we could only dream about.

**John 15** – Jesus says we need to remain in Him, to be in relationship with Him. Only then can we request things of him. How often do we try to short-circuit that? If we remain in Him before we ask, our Father in Heaven will give us His best – what a thought!

**Matthew 7** – Jesus, with His sense of humour, stresses that a Father will always give a ravenous child a slap up meal, rather than a stone! The point being that our Heavenly Father is wanting to lavish on us his blessings. He delights to spend time with His children and longs for us to feel the same.

## Kingdom Revealed:

As we spend time with God, we see things from His perspective. As we pray for the Kingdom to come, we get Kingdom values, values that the world would consider mad but make complete sense to those who know the Father.

Prayer brings about a desire to live our lives for God, not for ourselves.

### Our value system is turned upside down

- loving the unlovely
- having a heart for the poor
- giving and sharing generously
- not protecting and conserving what we consider to be 'ours'

This is true in all circumstances, even in acute economic down-turn. We long to be involved God's mission, eager to see others come to faith, to see people healed, and so on.

## Lives renewed:

Prayer changes lives! It changes us, it changes the lives of those we pray for and it changes the situations we bring before God. Prayer is a mystery – we will never fully understand why OUR prayers should release the outpouring of God's blessing and intervention, but throughout Scripture we see that is the case. The same God who heard the prayers of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, Hannah, Job and Paul hears our prayers today.

Prayer changes circumstances and relationships. God does not always operate in the way we expect!

He issues a personal invitation to us, to call on Him anytime, anywhere and about anything. Prayer transcends borders, countries, religions, poverty, prison walls, and so on.

## A check-list to prayer:

- Would His name be hallowed (honoured)?
- Would my prayer advance His Kingdom?
- Would it help people?
- Would it help me to grow into deeper relationship with God?

When we work, we work; but when we pray, God works. Prayer makes a difference!