

Name: _____

Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church Confirmation

The Lord's Prayer: What is Prayer?

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to:

- Define prayer.
- Describe why prayer is an act of worship.
- Describe how God “speaks” to us in the context of prayer.
- Write out a prayer using the four main elements of prayer.
- Describe situations in which prayer is appropriate.
- Describe reasons for unanswered prayer.
- Know our memory verse: *Philippians 4:6-7 - “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

In this unit of study we will take an in-depth look at the Lord's Prayer. It contains seven petitions (or units), and can be described as a model for prayer, for it sets forth for us an example of how we are to pray. Its fullest description is found in **Matthew 6:9-13**, and an abbreviated form is given by **Luke in 11:2-4**. Our study will use Matthew's gospel.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Before we begin our study of the Lord's Prayer, let's take time to look at some of the ‘basics’ of prayer. First, what is prayer? In its simplest sense, *prayer is communion or talking with God*. It is amazing to ponder, but the God who created all things desires to fellowship with you through prayer! The God we serve is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. It is important that we also see prayer as an act of worship. Through prayer we recognize and honor God as our helper in every need. Through prayer, we acknowledge our need for and dependence upon Him. Through prayer we come to Him with not only our needs, but also the needs of those around us. Through prayer we see that our God is a personal God, one desiring fellowship with us. Prayer is one of our greatest blessings and yet so many people neglect it and misunderstand it.

Is prayer *one-way* or *two-way*? Does God *speak* to us as we pray? Yes and No. On one hand we understand prayer to be primarily one-way. We should not sit around in prayer waiting to hear God's voice boom from heaven or whisper in our ear some secret message. Scripture describes prayer as primarily the place we come to talk to God from our heart, not the place He speaks to us. However, with that said, God does use the context of prayer to speak to us. God has given us His written Word (the Bible) as His voice, message, and conversation with us. We should not be looking to hear God's voice apart from the words of Scripture: He has spoken everything we need there. As we are studying God's Word, meditating on it, and praying for its application to our hearts, God IS speaking to us. God's Word is how He speaks to us and this comes about best in the context of prayer. So *prayer* is not the means by which God speaks to us - *His Word* is! However, prayer is the context by which the Holy Spirit applies that Word to our hearts and minds. This might appear to be splitting hairs, but it is important we

understand what Scripture has taught us about prayer and then act upon it. God does not want us looking for Him to give us direction in the wind blowing in trees, in some secret message only we hear, or in a gut feeling we get. Instead, He wants us to hear Him speak to us in His Word!

Prayer is the conversation of a believing heart with God, and in the absence of prayer, spiritual life will wither. Hopefully this unit of study will help and encourage you to become a people of prayer.

1. What is prayer in its simplest sense?
2. The following passages in the Bible are prayers. Read them and note who they are addressed to, and what they are about.

Genesis 32:9-11-

Psalm 19:14 -

Psalm 86:1-7-

Psalm 95:1-7-

3. Read Matthew 4:10; to whom must all true prayer be addressed?

4. When should we pray? Read the following passages as you answer.

Matthew 26:41 –

Luke 18:1 –

Ephesians 6:18 –

1 Thessalonians 5:17 -

5. What are reasons to pray according to the following passages of scripture?

Psalm 32:6-7 –

Psalm 105:4 -

Isaiah 55:6 -

Philippians 4:6 -

Hebrews 4:16 -

WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

One question many have is what should we ask for in prayer? A good rule to remember is that we are to ask for everything that tends to the glory of God and to our own and our neighbor's welfare. This includes both bodily (physical) and spiritual needs and blessings. Yet, the tendency is for us to become self-focused in our prayer life. We will grow in our prayer life dramatically if we keep in mind the following areas (in addition to ourselves) that are worthy of our attention in prayer. These areas include our fellow Christians; the Church of Christ (especially your local congregation); all people (even enemies); our government and those in authority; your school; and missionaries and pastors. Including these areas regularly in your prayer time will result in a well-rounded prayer life.

THE “ACTS” PRAYER

It is helpful to identify some of the main features that are to be found in our prayers. Often, we do not know “how” to pray; but keeping in mind the four main elements of prayer listed below will guide us in our prayer time. This is called the “ACTS” prayer.

A - Adoration -- Appreciating God for who He is.

C - Confession -- Acknowledging to God our sinful nature and specific sins and seeking His forgiveness.

T - Thanksgiving -- Appreciating God for His graciousness to us.

S - Supplication -- Interceding or asking for our needs, and the needs of others, according to God's will.

6. What does the Bible say about how we are to pray? Look to the following Scriptures as you answer.

Matthew 6:5-7 - (this gives us an example of how NOT to pray)

John 16:23 - (in whose name?)

1 John 5:14 -

GOD'S ANSWER TO PRAYER

Many people wonder about God's answers to prayers. Does He answer every prayer? It is important that we understand that indeed God hears and answers every proper prayer, yet IN HIS OWN WAY and in HIS OWN TIME. He does not always answer in the way we think He should, or even the way we want Him to. In fact, He may answer in one of three ways:

1. By granting the request or petition in His timing;
2. By giving you something better than you even asked for;
3. By giving you strength and grace to carry on and endure the trials, burdens, or chastisements He has permitted in your life.

7. Even as the Bible is clear that God desires, hears, and answers prayer, the Scripture also shows to us situations in which God has promised NOT to answer or hear prayers. Look up the following passages and write when this occurs.

Psalm 66:18 –

Proverbs 21:13 –

James 1:6-7 –

STUDENT & PARENT QUESTIONS: *for the student and a parent to discuss and answer together*

1. Evaluate your own prayer life on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best it can be. Is prayer a normal, regular, and consistent part of your day? If it isn't, why? What can you do to improve your prayer life?
2. Review the ACTS prayer described in this lesson, and then write out a brief prayer together that includes each of the four main elements of prayer.

STUDENT & PARENT SIGNATURE:

By signing below, we affirm (1) this lesson is complete and that (2) we completed the "Student & Parent Questions" section together

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____