

When You Pray

2026-02-15 - Luke 11:1-13



Jesus modeled prayer for his disciples throughout his earthly ministry. He was often praying through the night and praying in isolated places. As his disciples saw him praying, they asked him to teach them how to pray. This week, we are looking at how Jesus taught his disciples to pray and what we can learn from it for our prayers today.

Well, good morning. If you've got your Bibles, I want to invite you to open to Luke chapter 11. This morning we are in Luke chapter 11, verses 1 through 13, and we are going to be looking at when Jesus teaches his disciples to pray. As we talk about prayer this morning and how Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, I wonder if you think ever, often, sometimes, maybe a little bit, "I wish I was better at praying."

I've thought that many times in my life. The most often I've ever thought that in my life was when I was in seminary because of the pressure. You know, we had a teacher that actually had us write out prayers and then he graded them. Yeah. Yeah. Right. That sounds brutal. It's especially brutal when he put it on the overhead projector and he was doing red lines. I say this in like a silly way, but it's also one of the most formative moments of my life because I started to see how I could read Scripture and it wasn't impacting my prayer.

There is a professor by the name of Dr. Thrasher. If you've ever heard of him, Dr. Thrasher is a prayer warrior, and he also happens to be a Moody professor. When I was at Moody, one of my favorite things in his class is someone would share something on their heart and he would say, "Well, brothers and sisters, let's take a moment to pray." When he said a moment, it was a mo-o-o-o-oment. But I never felt like we were losing time in class. Because when he finished praying, you felt like the Lord had been there. I wonder, do you ever think, "I wish I was stronger in my prayer life"? This is something that we should desire. We should desire this corporately, that we are a praying church, that we gather together to pray, and we should, in our households and individually, we should be thinking, "How do we grow in how we pray?" Today, that is what we are going to look at. We are going to look at how Jesus teaches his disciples to pray. From that, we are going to see some things we can learn about the structure of prayer and the posture of prayer.

Now, I just said the structure of prayer. Some of you may say, "Well, Pastor Matt, you can't tell me how to pray. Prayer is a personal thing. It's between me and God." You're right. But I can also tell you there are things that when we look in Scripture that pop out, that should be elements in our prayer, often if not every time.

Why should you pray?

What should you include in your prayer?

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

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We're going to look at that today and we're going to try and answer three questions:

- Why should you pray?
- What should you include in your prayers?
- And how should you approach the one you are praying to? How should you approach God when you are praying to him?

To that end, I'm going to open us up in prayer. Before I pray, I just have to say, Michael, who led worship, me and him didn't coordinate this, but his prayer was like an A plus. I just want to say that because he talked about who God is, our purpose as we follow him, how we're called, it was just amazing. You'll see that as we go through, but I just want to mention, we saw it in action just a few moments ago, and now I'll do my best to keep it going. Will you bow your heads with me?

Father in heaven, we thank you for this day. Father, we thank you that you are all-knowing, you are all-powerful. We thank you that you are everywhere. You are here with us now. We thank you that you are loving and gracious and merciful and just. We thank you, Lord, that you are eternal and unchanging. We thank you, Lord, that you are the beginning and the end. We thank you that as we pray and as we cry out to you, we can trust you because of how you have revealed yourself to us. We praise you that we can gather together to study your Word, to come to know you better. We pray, Lord, that your Spirit would be moving in our midst as we do so, that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear what your Word has to say. Father, we come before you and confess. I confess that there are times I do not pray as often as I should, and I know that everyone here probably feels that at times. But we pray that as we come before you today, that you would lead us. Father, I pray that you would speak through me and speak to me, that these would be your words and not mine. We thank you that we have an example of how to pray from your son, Jesus. Through his faithful following of you, we have your spirit that we can have confidence that you hear and respond to our prayers. We pray all of this in his holy and precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Well, we're going to talk about

- Why should we pray,
- What we should include in our prayers and
- How we should approach the Lord when we are praying to him.

Let's start with why you should pray.

Why should you pray?

He was **praying** in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples."

Luke 11:1 CSB

Luke 11 verse 1: **Jesus was praying in a certain place.** And when he finished one of his, and I'm just going to stop there. We'll read the rest of it in a moment. Do you know why you should pray? Jesus prays. That's it. This first point is going to take us a moment.

Why should you pray?

He was *praying* in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples.”

Luke 11:1 CSB

Yet he often withdrew to deserted places and *prayed*. (5:16)

During those days he went out to the mountain to *pray* and spent all night in prayer to God. (6:12)

While he was *praying* in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” (Luke 9:18)

Throughout the gospel of Luke, throughout all of the gospels, Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, he who has all power and might and wisdom and strength, he who created the earth by speaking, He who holds all things together. When he was on this earth, do you know what he modeled? In Luke 5:16, *he often withdrew to deserted places and prayed. During those days, he went out on the mountain to pray and spent all night in prayer to God* (Luke 6:12). Before he appointed the disciples, he prayed all night. We looked last week while *he was praying in private with his disciples*. Today, again, he's *praying* in a certain place with his disciples. There should be no other argument. We're commanded to pray as well in Scripture, but the one we follow prayed and he was perfect. If he prays, this should be enough reason for us to pray. We're not going to spend much time on this first point because it should be compelling enough that Jesus prayed, therefore we should pray. He modeled prayer. Did he need to pray? I don't know, but he did pray. He has all knowledge, he is fully God and fully man. But he prayed. If he needed to pray, certainly we need to pray.

So Jesus is praying. He finishes praying. One of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples.”

Why should you pray?

What should you include in your prayer?

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

Here we'll move to our second point of

- What should you include in your prayers?

When the disciple says, “teach us to pray,” we need to remember what prayer looked like for the religious leaders in that time. If you were here last week, we talked about in Luke 18, Jesus told a parable of a Pharisee and a tax collector, and the Pharisee's prayer was, “Lord, look how great I am. Look how great my tithing is. I'm not like that tax collector.” Remember we talked last week about that? If you read carefully through the gospel, something you see is Jesus regularly says, don't pray like the Pharisees and religious leaders, because they pray loudly to tell everyone about who they are. They are at the center of their prayers, and if they are at the center of their prayers, God is not. The disciples asked Jesus, and we don't know which disciple, but one of the disciples says to Jesus, “How should we pray?” Jesus gives a clear example here, and it's what we're going to focus most of our time on.

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So what should you include in your prayers?

What should you include in your prayers?

He said to them, “Whenever you **pray**, say:

Father,

Your name be honored as holy.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us,

And do not bring us into temptation”

Luke 11:2–4 CSB

Jesus said to them, “Whenever you **pray, say:**

Father,

Your name be honored as holy.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us,

And do not bring us into temptation”

(Luke 11:2–4 CSB).

Now, first and foremost, we're in the CSB, and some of you might be like, where's the word hallowed? I'm going to struggle as we go because I'm going to accidentally say hallowed, but we preach out of the CSB here. But I mentioned that because this is part of a very famous prayer, and it's the Lord's Prayer. It's in Luke. It's also in Matthew. In Matthew, Jesus says, “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Jesus gives this command that this is how we should pray. Some people take that extremely literally and say, this is the prayer you should pray. And they say this is the prayer you are supposed to pray. I do think we should pray these words. I think this is a fruitful and good thing. But I also want to point out, as he's praying this, he's laying out a structure of prayer based on elements you should have.

What should you include in your prayer?

Your name be honored

Your kingdom come

Give us our daily bread

Forgive our sins

Lead us not into temptation

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- Your name be honored,
- Your kingdom come,
- Give us our daily bread,
- Forgive our sins, and
- Lead us not into temptation.

Five elements are going to be built out as we talk here. It's important to note, when you pray, you should have these elements.

What should you include in your prayer?

Your name be honored – Focus on God and who the Bible reveals He is

Your kingdom come

Give us our daily bread

Forgive our sins

Lead us not into temptation

When we talk about

- “Your name be honored,” this is talking about focusing on God and who the Bible reveals he is.

When you pray to God, and I mentioned, Michael, I'm hyping you up for your prayer at the end of worship, but when you pray to God, you should be praying about what scripture has said about him. “God, you are unchanging. You are all powerful. You are the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” You should be praying back to God what you see about him in the word. When Jesus says, “Your name be honored,” the language of, or hallowed be thy name, however you read it, whatever translation you have, the big idea is, “God, you are above all, you are before all. You are God most high on the throne that is above every throne.” When you pray that, you are acknowledging at the start of your prayer who it is that is most important in the conversation. You are putting the focus of your prayer on God in heaven. The Pharisee's prayer in Luke 18 is, “look how much I tithe. Look how great I am.” A real, true prayer to the Lord, a prayer that is fruitful, is going to start by acknowledging who he is. “Your name be honored.”

When I pray, I usually start my prayer time by thinking of all of the attributes of God that I can. “God, you're loving, you're merciful, you're just.” If I'm praying in a season of stress, when I feel far from the Lord, one of the things I might pray, it's from Genesis 16, when Hagar is off in the wilderness and she thinks she's about to die, and then God sends an angel of the Lord as a messenger, and after Hagar interacts with that angel, she returns back to Abraham, but she prays to God, “You are the God who sees.” So often I will pray, “God, I thank you that you see me.” When I pray with other people, when they've struggled with health issues, I'll pray, “God, you are a God who heals.” He may not answer the prayer request the way that I asked, but when I start the prayer, I am focused on who he is. When you pray, the start of your prayer should be focused on him. It should be focused on who he is. It should be focused on his greatness and

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his goodness. It should be focused on his wisdom, not yours. When you pray, make sure it is focused on God and who the Bible reveals Him to be.

Now, there's an underlying assumption here. This means you have to be in the Word. If you're not in the Word, you're not going to be able to say, "God, here's what your Word says about you." But the Word is our primary way God has revealed Himself, and so we should be speaking that back to God.

What should you include in your prayer?

Your name be honored – Focus on God and who the Bible reveals He is

Your kingdom come – Recognize He rules and our purpose is to follow

Give us our daily bread

Forgive our sins

Lead us not into temptation

- "Your kingdom come." The second one is focused on recognizing that he rules and our purpose is to follow.

You may say, "Matt, that's the same as the one above it." But no, now we start to, all right, "God, you reign and I submit to your reign." ***Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*** But the imagery here is about how it is his rule and not our own.

This is incredibly important because we are not in this life trying to see ourselves seated on a throne and someday when we die God will be on the throne but it is he who is on the throne now. When we pray we need to pray with that in mind. If we don't pray with that in mind our prayers are going to turn into "God here's a laundry list of all the things I need you to do" but that's not the point of prayer. By the time we get to the bottom of this, you're going to see that there's not very many places in this prayer where we should be focusing on, "God, I need a new car. I need a PS5. God, I need a new job. God, I need my neighbor to just calm down." Whatever that might be. "God, I really hope my car starts this morning." What ever that might be.

The point here is that at the start,

- We're going to focus on him and then
- His reign and his purposes.

What should you include in your prayer?

Your name be honored – Focus on God and who the Bible reveals He is

Your kingdom come – Recognize He rules and our purpose is to follow

Give us our daily bread – Understand our need of His sovereign provision

Forgive our sins

Lead us not into temptation

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And then as we keep moving down, we start to focus on him and then we recognize he rules and our purpose is to follow.

- Then we get to “give us our daily bread.” This is where we start to focus on and understand our need of his sovereign provision.

When it says our daily bread, this is not just referring to food. How do I know this? Remember in Luke chapter 4, when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness, turn these stones into bread, he says, *man does not live on bread alone, but on the very word of God*. Throughout the Gospel of Luke, there's imagery tied to this. The idea of daily bread here is the idea of God giving you the provision you need for the day. Ultimately, by the end of this passage, I'm going to try and convince you he's talking mostly here about our need of the Holy Spirit and the provision that we have of God providing us what only he can provide us.

In this point I want to encourage you, you should pray the things that you think you need. You should pray to God asking that God would provide for you. You should pray to God saying “God if you've got health issues pray to God that he would heal you. You should pray for all of those things. I would encourage you to pray for those things open-handedly. This week, I've had four meetings with congregants, and two of the meetings were meetings where somebody was telling me about a prayer answered beyond their belief. Two meetings were with congregants telling about prayers unanswered. By unanswered, I don't mean God didn't answer, but God's answer to this point is no. No is an answer to prayer. We don't like that. We, before God, our Father, are often like my toddler, I guess my children aren't toddlers anymore, my six and my four-year-old. When they hear no, sometimes they stomp off and then my son will re-ask the question a hundred times until he gets the answer he wants. Sometimes it's like, “No, bud.” Eventually it's like, “No, bud. I'm gonna take a toy away if you keep asking.” He'll try and think of a different way to ask the same question. Sometimes we pray and God gives a clear answer and we say, “Well, I'm not gonna settle for that answer.” You may say, well, the persistent widow prayed and God eventually. You can keep praying, but recognize that when you're praying, you're praying for his sovereign provision. He knows what you need better than you do. If as you're praying, he is not answering the prayer the way that you want, that is not a sign that God is not answering the prayer.

Often, I think God will, it builds up our patience and our perseverance as we wait upon the Lord. Over and over in the Old and New Testament, we're called to wait upon the Lord. But it's also important to note that when God does answer, you can't say, well, the prayer went unanswered. You might say, well, he didn't provide what I thought I needed, but he knows better than you what you needed. Again, I go back to children. If my kids could pick their meal every day, not even pizza. I wish it was pizza. No, it'd be, well, I guess my son has good taste, but it'd be a lot of sugar is the point.

- “Give us our daily bread.” We need to understand our need of his sovereign provision

When we are praying to him and when we are crying out to him to answer our prayers. The point of this is not that we get what we need, but that we trust that he gives us what he knows we need.

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Now I want to point out we've seen God answer no to his own son Jesus in the garden said "Father if there's any other way take this cup from me but not my will but yours be done." and God in his sovereign provision knew what was needed for his plans and purposes and Jesus died on the cross. So if you ever think well it's unfair God didn't answer my prayer the way I wanted be glad that God answers prayer the way that is needed for His glory and for our good.

What should you include in your prayer?

Your name be honored – Focus on God and who the Bible reveals He is

Your kingdom come – Recognize He rules and our purpose is to follow

Give us our daily bread – Understand our need of His sovereign provision

Forgive our sins – Confess our sin and consider His righteousness, praising Christ for what He has done

Lead us not into temptation

This brings us on to

- "Forgive our sins." We need to confess our sin and consider His righteousness, praising Christ for what He has done.

It is so important when we pray that we acknowledge to God, "Hey God, here's an area I failed. I've squandered my time. I've allowed my eyes to wander. I've taken time this week—that, I keep saying, squandered my time; that's another—but, Lord, I haven't spent time with you this week." Time is the main one I think about right now, because I feel that battle every day: there's so much to do and so little time. There are times where I don't pray nearly as much as I should, and then this week, it's been convicting spending time in Luke 11 and thinking, "Man, I really need to refocus on prayer."

But in whatever case you are in, in whatever it is that you are walking in darkness in, you need to confess it to the Lord. This is why, when we take communion, what do we do? We take some time before we take communion to pray and confess, that we would come before the Lord's table in right relationship with the Lord, confessing our sin.

You may say, "Well, didn't Jesus die for my past, present, and future sins?" The answer to that is yes. But if we want to walk in the light, 1 John tells us we need to confess our sins. This is to God, and this is also with one another. If you pray to God and you pretend like, "Well, God doesn't know about that thing I did," you forgot that "your name be honored"—that He's all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere, right? He knows. You want to have a right relationship with Him, you're going to need to talk to Him about where you're struggling. We need to confess our sins before Him. You confess them in confidence, knowing that He has forgiven you of that sin through the blood of His Son. You confess them knowing that when He sees you, you may feel like a failure, but when He sees you, if you are a believer, He sees you covered by the blood of His Son as His child. It is such a wonderful thing.

What should you include in your prayer?

Your name be honored – Focus on God and who the Bible reveals He is

Your kingdom come – Recognize He rules and our purpose is to follow

Give us our daily bread – Understand our need of His sovereign provision

Forgive our sins – Confess our sin and consider His righteousness, praising Christ for what He has done

Lead us not into temptation – Declare our need of his direction

This leads us to the last point here,

- “Lead us not into temptation.” We need to declare our need of his direction.

This is we need to say, “God, lead me.” Because how often do we get into bad situations where when we look back on how we got into the situation, the reason we got into the situation is because we did not start in prayer. We got halfway into the situation, we realized something was not working out, and then we started to pray, “All right, God, lead me.” God’s like, well, head backwards. Some of you, a lot of you are looking at me like I’ve never felt like I was headed the wrong direction. I’m worried about you, because the reality is, is that we need the Holy Spirit to guide us. If we lead in our own strength, ***unless the Lord builds the house, the weary workers build in vain.*** If we seek to do things in our own strength, what we’re going to find in the end is utter frustration and confusion at why we thought we could do it on our own. Each and every time you pray, you should be acknowledging that you need the Holy Spirit from the Lord. You need his guidance. You may say, “Well, Pastor Matt, don’t we always have the Holy Spirit?” The answer is yes. But how often in our lives do we not listen to the Spirit? How easy it is for us to quench the Holy Spirit. When we pray, we are praying that the things God has given us, that we would see them and that we would follow in what he has called us to do. God has given you everything you need, and yet so often you and I, we don’t look and see the world the way we should see it because of all that God has given us. You are a child of God by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and you are sealed by the Holy Spirit if you are a believer, which means you should have confidence at all times that he has given you everything you need. Yet how often we walk in our own strength.

When you pray,

- You should start by focusing on God and who the Bible reveals him to be.
- You should recognize he rules and your purposes to follow.
- You must understand your need of his sovereign provision.
- You must confess your sin and consider his righteousness, praising Christ for what he has done.
- You must declare your need of his direction.

Now, there’s going to be a thing that happens right now where some of you are going to say, “Matt, you’re making this a very formulaic way of praying. If I don’t have all five elements, am I going to get like a lower grade on my prayer?” No, no, that’s not the point. But I wonder if as you read this, and as you think about this, and as you hear this, you’re thinking, “I don’t often spend time in my prayer focused on who he is.” If

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that's the case, supplement that, add that in, put a focus on that. I'm not saying if a prayer doesn't have all five of these elements, it doesn't count. But I am saying that these are the elements for a deep and rich prayer life. Go read the book of Psalms. There's 150 examples that give glory to God's name, that talk about God's purposes, that talk about God providing for us what we need, that talk about our need to confess our sin and talk about following in the Lord's guidance. When you pray, these are elements that should show up in your prayer, not because if you use all five elements, the promise is God will answer your prayer, but because as you pray to God, every time I'm struggling in a deep way in my life, when I start praying the attributes of God to God and start saying, "God, you are all-powerful, all-knowing," all of a sudden, whatever the strife or trial or whatever I'm facing in my life is, it starts to kind of minimize as I think about the God who spoke creation into existence. This is about aligning our hearts with God who reigns, who is in control. This is about following after him.

So I'm not telling you every time you pray, make sure you write out each of these things. But I am saying these should be evident in your prayer life. I also want to mention something here that some people can turn prayer into something formulaic. "I'm going to say the rosary every day a certain number of times, and then I'm good." My kids, when we pray at meals, we always sing the same thank you God song. Those aren't the rosary, don't do that. But the praying the simple song with our kids is a good way of just acknowledging God provides our meal for us. That's something we do every time we eat. But don't allow your prayer to become,

"I'm just going to repeat these words, and that's a good prayer." Don't allow it to become a formula like that. But on the other side, and I'm going to be very judgmental for a moment, and it's not anyone in here, it's not anyone from this church, but there was a man that I used to serve with at another church, and he would say, "Yeah, me and these were his words. When I talk to Jesus, it's like the two of us are out having a beer at the bar." He would speak of Jesus. "He's your buddy, right?" He had such a low amount of reverence. He was also the person who said most often, "Here's what God told me." Do you know what came over time? It turns out he was a heretic. You might be surprised by that. I hope you're not. I mentioned this because his picture of who God is was just utterly devoid of truth. When you pray, it should be founded on scripture. I speak that example because sometimes people say, "God told me this, God told me this, God told me this." Well, God tells us through his word. If all the things you are saying that God has told you aren't coming from his word, but are coming from your prayers, the foundation is off. That sounds a lot like a Pharisee saying, "look at what I've done." This is important when we talk about prayer, because if we're not careful, prayer can go off the deep end.

Why should you pray?

What Should you include in your prayers?

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

When we pray,

- We should focus on him,
- Recognize he rules,

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- Understand our need of his sovereign provision,
- Ask for the forgiveness of our sins, and
- Declare our need of his direction.

That's how we should pray or what we should include in our prayers.

What should you pray?
What should you include in your prayers?
How should you approach the one you are praying to?

Now let's talk about [how we should approach the one we are praying to](#).

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

- Boldness
- Confidence
- Trust

After Jesus gives this example of prayer, he goes on to say these things.

He also said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me and I don't have anything to offer him.' Then he will answer from inside and say, 'Don't bother me! The door is already locked, and my children and I have gone to bed. I can't get up to give you anything.' I tell you, even though he won't get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his friend's **shameless boldness**, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

Luke 11:5-8 CSB

He also said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me and I don't have anything to offer him.'" Now, in an ancient honor, shame, hospitality-oriented culture, the most shameful thing you could do is if someone showed up at your doorstep, have nothing to give them. So the friend visiting the friend at midnight is putting the friend in a terrible position. The friend going to the other friend at midnight is putting the other friend. Do you see, it's like a weird hospitality issue. So the friend says, "I don't have anything to offer him." He's knocking on the door. Then the friend from inside will answer and say, "Don't bother me. The door is already locked and my children and I have gone to bed. I can't get up to give you anything." Now, today, when you hear this in our modern culture, you're thinking, why didn't he just go to a 24-hour supermarket, right? Or why didn't he just mute the notifications on the Ring camera? No, in their day, the kids would sleep in the living room, and that knocking for the guy who's like, "Go away," it's going to wake his kids up. He's like, "Go away, I don't want to help you." But the idea in their day of saying no to someone is shameful in that situation.

*So I tell you, Jesus says, even though he won't get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his friend's **shameless boldness**, he will get up and give him as much as he needs. The word in Greek behind **shameless boldness** is one that is kind of perplexing because it's hard to bring into English. **Shameless boldness** is a good or audacity. But it carries with it the **shameless boldness** of you're going to put me in*

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shame as well if I don't answer you. Jesus here is saying, when you pray to God, pray with boldness to him, pray with desperation to him.

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

- Boldness – Be bold as you pray to our Father (5-8)
- Confidence
- Trust

Be bold as you pray to our Heavenly Father. I talk often to believers when they are struggling in their walk where they say, “Well, I haven't prayed to God in a long time. I'm not sure He wants to hear from me.” No one wants to hear from their friend at midnight, “Give me some bread.” Yet Jesus uses that as an example of saying, “Pray with boldness.” Whatever your character, he's going to give you what you asked for. When I say he's going to give you, this is where it's going to get tricky. Because you're going to say, “Does that mean he says yes?” No, that does not mean he will say yes, but it means he will give answer. It means he will hear and he will respond. By the way what's the issue at hand? Bread. and Man does not live by bread alone. The imagery we're going to see will keep going in this direction. Be bold as you pray to our Father. Be bold as you pray.

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

- Boldness – Be bold as you pray to our Father (5-8)
- Confidence – Have confidence that our Father will answer (9-10)
- Trust

The next thing we see is confidence as Jesus keeps going. Have confidence that our Father will answer.

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Luke 11:9-10 CSB

Jesus goes from saying, not that, to saying, ***“So I say to you, ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and the one who knocks, the door will be opened”*** (Luke 11:9–10). Jesus is saying, be shameless in your boldness and pray to God in confidence that he will respond. Pray to God in confidence that he will respond.

Again, I have to hedge these things because in our modern world, the thing people think is, well, is he going to give me exactly what I asked for? “I prayed for this and God didn't give me what I asked for.” That's not what this passage is promising. This passage is promising that he will respond. By the end of the passage, we're going to see that the promises you will receive the Holy Spirit and you will receive from the Holy Spirit as you pray to God. But you pray with confidence, knowing that the one you are praying to, when you knock, when you ask and when you seek, he's not in heaven saying, ah, he's not going to ghost you. He's not going to sit there like, “I don't care for this person. They haven't done enough for me.” It sounds silly, but how often in your life are you nervous to pray before God? How often are you like, “I don't think I deserve that”? How often do you think, well, “I'm not in a good place with him. I feel far from him. I got to work my way back into his good graces and then I'll pray to him.” I'm sure many of you know what

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I'm saying here. But when you pray and when you ask, when you seek, when you knock, you can have confidence that he hears and he does respond.

I've been working in churches and pastoral ministry for about 10 years. Something that I know is very common when I talk to believers is when they're struggling with something, if I say, "well, have you prayed about it?" The answer is not always yes. Often the answer is, "well, I don't know. What if it's not God's will?" Well, if you don't ask, seek and knock, you got to start there. I hope this makes sense. I hope as you hear this, it fills you with confidence to pray to him. Again, he may not give you the answer you want, but he will answer. God in heaven, seated on the throne, hears each and every prayer request. So have confidence that our Father will answer.

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

- Boldness – Be bold as you pray to our Father (5-8)
- Confidence – Have confidence that our Father will answer (9-10)
- Trust – Trust that how our Father answers our prayers will be good and better than how we would answer them (11-13)

Lastly, trust that how our Father answers our prayers will be good and better than how we would answer them. That and better than how we answer them is very important.

What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give **the Holy Spirit** to those who ask him?"

Luke 11:11-13 CSB

Jesus concludes this portion of the passage with, "***What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish?***" This isn't modern like, "Oh, my son wanted a pet. He asked for a fish. I got him a snake instead." Because when I was like 10, that's how I read this. That's not what this passage is. This is about food. If your son asks for a fish, we'll give him a snake. They couldn't eat snakes. They were ritually unclean. They were not allowed to eat them. Or if he asks for an egg, we'll give him a scorpion. "***If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?***" (Luke 11:11–13). We can trust that God who is good and perfect in every way, when we pray and cry out to him, he is not up there in heaven like "This'll really mess him up. Here's a scorpion." I can say this in silliness because this is an extreme example Jesus is using to illustrate the good and perfect gifts that come from our Father above. Notice, ***how much more will the Heavenly Father give***, what? ***The Holy Spirit to those who ask him.***

Something I am confident above all else when we pray is that our expectation when we pray shouldn't be that God will answer every prayer request the way that we want and every need we think we need. But as we pray and as we seek him, as we study his word, and as we cry out to him, the Holy Spirit will open our eyes to his will and his purposes. As that happens, we will look back on our life and we will not look back in surprise. We will look back with confidence that what he did was far better than what we would have done had we gone in our way. This is the key as we come to the end of this.

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

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- Confidence – Have confidence that our Father will answer (9-10)
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As we trust in our Father, we trust that he will help us to see the way that he sees. We will trust that it is for his glory and it is for our good. If we are believers, we know that in this life we will suffer. We saw that in Luke 6. For those who follow Jesus, we should expect that we will be hated, reviled, excluded on account of his name. Yet that's good because as his name is glorified, we know our reward is great in heaven. We in this life may struggle with how God might answer our prayers. But as we seek him out, we will see over and over that his way is far better than ours.

Why should we pray?

What should you include in your prayers?

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

So why should you pray?

- Jesus prayed and we're commanded to pray.

Jesus prayed is enough, but we are commanded to pray.

What should you include in your prayers?

We looked at those five elements, giving God glory, first focused on him, focused on following after him and his purposes. Then our daily bread, focus on his sovereign provision, confession of our sin, and crying out for his direction in our lives. That should be in our prayers.

How should you approach the one you are praying to?

With boldness, confidence, and trust, because he hears us and he responds and his responses are far better than anything we could ask or imagine.

Now, what do you do with this? **Pray**, right? I hope that's clear, right? You should pray. If you're here and you're a non-believer and you're thinking, "Well, God only hears the prayers of believers," we have examples in scripture of God hears when anyone cries out to him. I would encourage you to cry out even now "God, open my eyes that I could see the truth." If you ask for that, if you seek that, if you knock, the door will be opened.

If you're a believer, I want to encourage you. I've got a few practical things for this week.

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What to do with this:

- Commit twice a day this week to spend time in intentional prayer following the structure and posture that Jesus taught in Luke 11
- Households should model this type of prayer together at least once a day
- Join us on Wednesday night at 7pm as we pray together
- Join us at 9 a.m. before our next combined service as we gather to pray (March 8th)

Twice a day this week, which means two times today, because today's part of this week, okay? Take some time to pray. To spend intentional time in prayer following the structure and posture that Jesus taught in Luke 11. Now, you may be saying, "Matt, you told us it doesn't have to be a formula," but I would encourage you this week to look at that list. It's in your bulletin of those five things. I used to have like an acronym or an acrostic that I would always follow because I was told to do that. I thought it was really good. Eventually I just forgot what it was because I started praying more and more on my own. I've grown a lot in how I pray. Now I kind of instinctively do those things as I've grown because praying is a skill that we develop.

If you're in a marriage, you know that a marriage, the relationship takes time because both parties, you have to learn to communicate. On one side of the equation of your relationship with God is an all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect God who is unchanging. On the other side is you. He knows how to communicate. You need to work on it, right? I hope you see that. But as you pray to him, he is a patient and loving and kind father who gives us good and better than we could ask or imagine.

So twice a day this week, take time to pray. Take time to pray at length, and length can mean different things for different people, but I would encourage you, don't just pray the six sentences here, but spend some real time in quiet. Jesus, in this passage at the start, I gave some quotes of where he prays. He usually prays in solitude. He prays in a quiet place. As I talk to you about praying, I wanna challenge you. Something that I do that I don't think it's wrong to do is I'll pray while I'm driving to work, and I'll pray while I'm driving home, that's good. But I also I felt convicted in the fall about I need to pray in solitude which if you're driving you're not in solitude because you're wondering why that person turned into your lane and stuff and so I set aside time where I pray in a quiet place. I just kind of close all the doors and a lot of times it's in here or when I'm at work or when I'm at home a lot of times I just sneak off for a little bit to pray.

Parents households do this on your own but then once a day do it together with your whole household spend some time in prayer with one another. With my kids I mentioned that we have like a simple prayer we do for meals we do a family devotional each night and after the family devotional I try and model this as much as I can for a four-year-old who's like all right it's time to brush teeth and go to bed. But I do everything I can to say all right I'm going to show them that how we talk about who God is and our purpose and our provision and confession and asking for his direction. I try and do that with my kids. So as they get older, they will know this and they will follow after it.

I want to encourage you to join us on Wednesday nights. We pray in the prayer room. We would love to have you join us. If you think my prayers aren't good enough for that space, I want to encourage you that we have people of varying levels of skill in prayer, but confidence in how they pray. One of the best blessings of that prayer ministry that we have on Wednesday nights is I have listened as people have gone

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from, "Lord, I pray for this one thing" to people have gone to where they pray paragraphs and then pray for a few minutes and more and more people when they come, they're praying longer and longer. There's like a point where with one person, "Well, let other people in for a bit and then pray a second time," you know, like that. It's a wonderful thing. You'll grow in your praying as you pray with other believers. We also coming up on March 8th, this is the last thing I want to mention. Last month we had a combined service and we prayed at 9 a.m. We had about 50 people here and it was amazing. We're going to do that again on March 8th there will be an e-mail this week we haven't announced this yet so I'm announcing it right now but on March 8th we're going to do it again and so come early pray with us lift up our nation, lift up our church, lift up each other, as we pray together. It is important that we spend time in prayer Jesus did it he modeled it we are called to do it I want to encourage you to take seriously and to spend more time in prayer. You're not going to regret time you've spent in prayer, but often you will regret after the fact that you did not lift something up to the Lord. Let us be a church that prays for one another and that recognizes that the Lord provides each and everything we need.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you. We thank you that as we pray, we can pray with confidence. We can pray trusting that you hear our words. We can pray trusting that you are a God who is all powerful, all knowing and everywhere. We can praise you because you who know all and see all, you who are before all, you who are the beginning and the end. You have given us your spirit that we can see and trust in your plans. We pray, Lord, that as we go out this week, that we would go out in boldness and in confidence, not in us or our abilities, but in strength that comes from your Holy Spirit. We pray, Lord, that we would be a people who are known by the way we confess and cry out to you and in the ways that we depend on you as you lead and guide us. We thank you, Lord, that we can trust in your promises, and we pray even now and praise you that you hear us. We pray all of this in the holy and precious name of your son, Jesus. Amen.



Digging Deeper – **When You Pray** – Luke 11:1-13

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

Read Luke 11:1-13

2. What stands out to you as you read through the passage?
3. Below is the structure of how Jesus teaches the disciples to pray. Take some time as a group to consider the following questions and ways in which you already incorporate this in your prayers or could add it when you pray. For all five elements, I would encourage you to take a long time. This will be most of the discussion today. If you find yourself moving quickly, ask each other about ways that you pray and ways other believers have taught you to pray.

One more note: for each question, try to say how you already say it (For instance, I often start my prayers by announcing the attributes of God that come to mind... “God, you are all powerful, all knowing, everywhere, and you are merciful and just...”)

- a. Your name be honored - Focus on God and who the Bible reveals He is
 - b. Your kingdom come - Recognize of his rule and our purpose to follow
 - c. Give us our daily bread – Understand our need of His sovereign provision
 - d. Forgive our sins – Confess our sin and consider His righteousness, praising Christ for what He has done
 - e. Lead us not into temptation - Declaration of our need of His direction
4. How would you answer someone who asks: “Why do we pray if God already knows what we are going to pray for?”
 5. In the second half of the passage, Jesus uses different parables to explain how God regards us when we pray. What do we learn about how we should pray in each? What do we learn about how God responds in each?
 6. Take some time as you close to pray following the five elements Jesus put in his prayer. Share prayer requests and lift each other up.

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This sermon is based on **the Gospel of Luke 11:1–13** (CSB translation) and explores prayer through the Lord's Prayer, where Jesus teaches His disciples, as well as the parables that follow. Pastor Matt first emphasizes that Jesus Himself constantly set an example of prayer, and states that the primary reason believers should pray is to follow Jesus. The pastor shares his own struggles with prayer and his desire to grow in prayer both personally and as a church.

The sermon addresses three main questions:

1. **Why should we pray?** Because Jesus prayed, and as followers of Jesus, the perfect Son of God, we ought to imitate Him.
2. **What should prayer include?** Jesus' model (the Lord's Prayer) suggests five important elements: (1) Honor God's name, focusing on His attributes as revealed in Scripture; (2) Submission to God's kingdom and will; (3) Ask for daily bread (understanding God's sovereign provision broadly, ultimately referring to the Holy Spirit); (4) Confess sins and seek forgiveness, forgiving others as well; (5) Seek to avoid temptation and depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These are not strict formulas, but essential elements for a rich, biblically-grounded prayer life, contrasting with self-centered or superficial prayers.
3. **How should we approach God?** With boldness and shameless persistence (as shown in the parable of the friend at midnight), with the assurance that God hears and answers ("Ask, seek, knock"), and with trust that God's answers—often the gift of the Holy Spirit—are good, wise, and better than we expect.

The sermon concludes with practical encouragement: use this structure to pray intentionally twice daily, pray with your family, participate in group prayer, and trust God's provision and guidance. The church is called to become a people of dependent, reverent, and bold prayer.

Core challenges from the sermon

* This week, pray twice a day (including today—aim for at least two prayer times!).

* Use the structure and attitude Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2–4 CSB):

"Father, may Your name be honored, may Your kingdom come. Give us the bread we need each day. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who owes us. And lead us not into temptation."

* Don't just repeat words—go deeper: Pastor Matt emphasized taking real time for each of the five main elements, without rushing.

1. **Focus on God** — Begin by honoring His name: use God's attributes from Scripture to praise Him (e.g., Almighty, full of love, unchanging, the God who sees you—see Genesis 16).

2. **Submit to God's kingdom** — Pray, "May Your kingdom come. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," aligning your heart with God's rule and purpose over your own plans.

3. **Ask for daily bread** — Seek God's sovereign provision—not just material needs but ultimately the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

4. **Confess sins** — Honestly admit your failures, seek forgiveness through Christ, and forgive others.

5. **Seek guidance** — Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you, avoid temptation, and guide your steps (see Psalm 127: "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain").

* Don't treat this as a strict formula (there's no "score" for prayer!). Let these elements shape richer, Scripture-rooted prayers.

* Length: Don't just finish with short phrases, spend intentional, unhurried time (at first, even 10–20 minutes per session is fine). Include time for quiet listening and reflection.

* Whenever possible, in solitude: Pastor Matt noted that Jesus often prayed in quiet, solitary places. Seek undistracted moments (not just while driving or multitasking, if possible).

Additional practical tips suggested by him

* One session alone: set aside personal time (for example, morning and evening, or whenever fits your schedule—before work and before bed).

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* One session with family: if possible, pray with your household or spouse once daily. Set an example for children and spouse (e.g., after family devotions or meals). He said he uses simple prayers to teach his young children these same elements.

* Group prayer: join Wednesday night prayer rooms (or similar gatherings at your church). He emphasized that praying with others helps you grow—even if it's short at first, eventually you'll pray longer and more confidently.

* Upcoming opportunities: There will be a joint prayer time on March 8 (like last time, starting around 9:00 AM)—to pray for the nation, church, and each other. If applicable, check your emails or notices.

Quick start for today

Today counts too:

* **Session 1** (now or soon): Begin by praising God's attributes (e.g., "Father, You know everything, You are merciful, You are the beginning and the end..."), entrust the day to His will, seek provision (including the help of the Spirit), confess worries, and seek guidance.

* **Session 2** (later today, e.g., evening): Review the day—give thanks, confess if needed, pray for others, and finish by trusting that God's answers are good (even if they're different from what you expected).

The goal isn't perfection, but consistency and dependence on God. As Pastor Matt said, you'll never regret the time spent in prayer, but you might regret not entrusting something to the Lord. Try tracking your progress this week—he said that prayer is a skill that develops over time and can become a lasting habit.