

Teach us to pray

Matthew 6:5-15

Praying is like exercising. We all know it's good for us but most of us do it far less than we should! Here, Jesus gives us a coaching session.

How do we know Jesus assumes his disciples will pray everyday?

Religious hypocrites

How do we know Jesus assumes his disciples will pray everyday?

How did religious hypocrites at that time pray in order to be seen by men?

APPLY

Do you ever find yourself hoping that others will notice your acts of service and piety... and get irritated if they don't?

What religious duties or kind deeds are you most tempted to do for the praise of people?

Secret service

How should Jesus' disciples perform their good deeds instead (v6)?

Who will reward unseen righteous behaviour (v6)?

What does this approach to good deeds show about our view of who God is?

PRAY

Ask God to reveal any people-pleasing motives currently driving your moral and religious actions. Repent of the idolatry of people's affirmation!

Plead with God to fuel your desire for his approval and shrivel your appetite for human praise.

Ask God to give you an opportunity today to serve him or others in an unseen way, and the purity of heart to take it.

Babbling pagans

How did the pagans pray (v7)?

What does this reveal about their view of the gods?

Jesus is teaching his disciples not to pray with mindless words, not to speak to God without thought.

Why should the disciples not pray like pagans (v8)?

Our Father

Know who you're speaking to. Your view of God will profoundly shape how you pray.

Read Matthew 6:7-9

How could our understanding of God as "Our Father in heaven" (v8-9) affect our praying?

How does praying "Hallowed be your name" (v9) affect our praying?

PRAY

Thank God for adopting you as his child through Christ. Ask him to give you a deeper awareness of his Fatherly love and his holy name.

A Model Prayer

Now that we have oriented our hearts to God himself, let's consider specific requests. Since this is a model prayer, think of each of these requests as categories for praying.

Read Matthew 6:10-13

What should the disciples pray first (v10)?

Why is it important to pray for this before we pray for our own needs?

What kinds of things could be included in the category of daily bread (v11)?

Why do we need to pray the last request (v13) regularly

PRAY

Pray for God's will to be done today in your home, school, neighbourhood or workplace. Think about what you are most in need of today. Ask God for daily bread. Consider what sins are currently most tempting you. Pray for deliverance from temptation and the tempter.

Forgive

Read Matthew 6 v 12, 14-15

What are the two sides of forgiveness we must address in prayer (v12)?

Why is it so critical that we pray about the second aspect (v14-15)?

APPLY

How have you failed to obey God recently?

How will you change?

Who has sinned against you?

Are you bearing a grudge? Will you forgive?

How has Jesus' model prayer both excited and challenged you about your own prayers?