

OPEN

This is the first week of our new Plugged into Prayer series. Over the next four weeks we will learn how God wants to shape our lives around the practice of prayer. Throughout this series we will look at various prayers of Jesus and the apostle Paul in the New Testament.

This week like the disciples in Matthew 6, we are going to sit with Jesus and learn from him how to pray. Although called the “Lord’s Prayer” it was actually the “disciples prayer” which became a model of prayer and life for followers of Jesus. As we examine this prayer we are going to learn that the kind of prayer that Jesus taught is one that begins not with our needs and wants but with God’s. Jesus’ model for prayer begins with God; a focus on God, the worship of God, and invites us to participate with the kingdom of God as he works out his will in this world and in our lives.

REFLECT

- Read Matthew 6:1-14. When you get to the Lord’s Prayer stand and read it together.
 - What parts of the Lord’s Prayer stand out to you?
 - Which do you find yourself praying most in your own life?
- Prayer is to be practiced in both the *public* and *private* areas of our lives but in both cases the focus should always be on him not us. Which area of prayer (public or private) do you struggle the most with and why?
- Read Mark 1:35. For Jesus prayer was not simply something he did but was a way of life. For your life would you describe prayer as a thing in life or a way of life? Explain.

DISCUSS

- The prayer Jesus taught opens with an invitation to call God *our* Father. The word for Father is Abba (daddy) which was an intimate term used by children to their earthly fathers.
 - What does this teach you about how God wants us to view him in prayer? Why is this significant?
 - Tim Keller defines prayer as “**being intimate with the infinite**”. How do you feel about prayer as an intimate connection between us and God? When is a time you have felt relationally intimate with God in prayer?
- Through prayer we get to experience the presence of God but also participate in the plans of God as he brings his kingdom into this world. Phillip Yancey wrote that we need to shift our thinking to view prayer “**less as trying to convince God to do what I want done and more as a way of discerning what God wants done in the world, and how I can be a part of it.**”
 - What excites you about shifting your view of prayer in this way? How would it grow your relationship with God if you began prayer seeking his will instead of yours?

APPLY/PRAY

As a group pray through the Lord’s prayer in three steps:

1. Adoration (Matthew 6.9)

Begin your prayer time focusing on God and his perfect character. Thank God for *who he is* focusing his characteristics how he is *holy, creator, faithful, all powerful, infinitely wise (example Psalm 148)*.

2. God’s Will (Matthew 6.10)

Pray that God’s will is accomplished in all areas of your life. Pray that your thoughts, will become God’s thoughts, pray that your will, will become God’s will, that your passions, desires and longings will all come from God.

3. Requests (Matthew 6.11-13)

What is the greatest need you want Jesus to meet? Pray as a group for each need. *Check out www.prayercast.com this week as a resource to help you pray for global needs.*