

SERMON NOTES

March 25 & 26, 2023

Am I the Problem? Prayer Life

Matthew 7:7 - 11

1. I _____ prayer.

a. I think my prayer should _____ a _____ way.

b. I think someone more _____ should pray.

2. I am _____ focused instead of _____ focused.

Matthew 7:7-8

a. I seek what is _____ at the expense of experiencing _____.

b. I _____ praying because I did not _____ what I prayed for. **Matthew 26:39b**

c. I pray for God to _____ with my _____ instead of using prayer to help me align with _____.

Matthew 26: 38-39

3. I focus on how _____ to pray instead of how _____ to pray.

Matthew 6:5

4. I believe I am praying to a God who wants to _____ me.

Matthew 7:7-11

5. I limit prayer to a _____ and _____ instead of seeing it as a _____.

1 Thessalonians 5:16

6. I think prayer is about _____ and _____.

Matthew 5:5-8

7. I view prayer as a _____, not a _____.

Matthew 5:5-8

Prayer Practices

- Say things to God silently or verbally.
- Read scripture and listen for a sound from God.
- Meditatively walk the stations of the cross.
- Light a candle in church or at home.
- Allow music to draw your spirit closer to God.
- Affirm beliefs while reading or reciting creeds.
- Review your day and notice God's presence and activity in it.
- Meditate on Scripture and think about its possible meanings for your life.
- Fast so your hunger turns toward God.
- Name your blessings and express gratitude.
- Move prayer from conscious to unconscious by repeating a mantra.
- Partake in CommunionGo for a long walk and talk to God.
- Confess sins and acknowledge forgiveness.
- Go on a contemplative walk that moves you from self-occupation to God's Consciousness.
- Sit in silence.
- Read other people's prayers.
- Meditatively speak the Lord's Prayer.
- Breathing exercise to draw in and release God in the air around you. Sing or ponder the words of a song.
- Meditate on a work of biblical art.
- Allow your heart to soar in unworded praise in response to a sunset, storm, flower, or tree.

Life Steps

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Monday

Matthew 7:7-8

Reflect: In your opinion, why is there a gap between a meaningful prayer life and people's everyday experience? What was most helpful to you from the weekend message?

Prayer: Express gratitude to God for your church home and family.

Tuesday

Matthew 7:7-11

Reflect: Why should we expect that our prayers will be answered? What word picture does Jesus use to help us have confidence in prayer? How does this word picture encourage and challenge you?

Prayer: Name as many adjectives as you can that describe who God is to you. Speak them out loud..."God you are..."

Wednesday

Luke 22:39-44

Reflect: Shortly after the scene in this passage, Jesus experienced not receiving the answer he wanted to his prayer when he was arrested. How did Jesus pray when faced with a very painful future? What from Jesus prayer shows that he trusts the Father?

Prayer: God, I don't know what the future holds, but I trust you are holding me.

Thursday

I John 5:14-15

Reflect: How much do you trust God in the practice of your daily life?

Prayer: I trust you God, but help my lack of trust.

Friday

Matthew 6:8 | James 4:2b

Reflect: If God already knows what we need, how does asking help us? Why does God want us to pray if he already knows what we are going to say and ask?

Prayer: Ask God for whatever is on your heart, especially as it comes to your relationship with God and others.

Saturday

Psalms 46:1-2 | Matthew 7:11

Reflect: What makes it easier to trust God in difficult circumstances? How does considering the perspective of a parent help us trust our Heavenly Father more?

Prayer: Thank God for your parents, even if only for the fact they gave you life.

Sunday

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Reflect: What might "pray continually" look like in your daily life? Search for and identify opportunities to give God thanks in the midst of your most pressing and challenging current life circumstances.

Prayer: Consider who you are planning on inviting to join you for Holy Week services, especially Easter, then pray. God, thank you for the gift of _____ in my life. Make me aware of any needs in their life and show me how to invite them to join me in **worship so they can connect with you and my amazing church family.**