

Lesson 4 | June 27, 2021

A Pattern for Prayer

Study Text: Luke 11:1–13

Central Truth: Jesus Christ modeled the best way to pray.

Key Verse: Luke 11:1

Lord, teach us to pray (KJV).

“Lord, teach us to pray” (NIV).

Learning Objectives

- Examine and learn from Jesus’ teachings on prayer.
- Realize that prayer is the means by which we communicate with God, seeking Him and praising Him for His care and blessing in every area of life.
- Commit to making prayer a regular practice.

Introducing the Lesson

Say: Many Christians consider prayer a last resort rather than the first line of defense. Jesus has used prayer for 2,000 years interceding for Christians. Learning to pray is not a matter of saying the right words or following a formula. But there are elements of prayer that will help us grow closer to God, creating a more effective prayer life. Last week, we looked at Nehemiah’s prayer, noting that he could pray “in the moment” because of his relationship with God. Today, we will listen in as Jesus teaches His disciples the principles of prayer.

In Romans 8 and Daniel 6 we see the Holy Spirit helps us pray for what we need and Daniel let nothing stop his prayer even death by the Lions’ den.

[Eph 6:18 KJV] 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

[Eph 6:18 NKJV] 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

[Eph 6:18 NIV] 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.

[Eph 6:18 NLT] 18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

Opening Activity—How To?

Ask: What tasks or projects have you needed to do for which you sought “how-to” information? Where did you look for that information? Examples might include projects

around the house, fixing a car, growing garden plants, etc. Students may have checked out books or looked on the Internet for instructions or “how-to” videos.

Say: When we begin a project that is new to us, we may consult an expert or a book or video to show us what to do. The disciples had watched Jesus pray and knew that He was connecting with God. They had seen the results of His prayers, and they wanted to learn to pray as He did. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

It has been said that you can examine prayer with the following one-word questions: “Who, what, when, where, why, and how?” **Who should pray?** Everyone! **What should we pray about?** Everything! **When should we pray?** All the time! **Where should we pray?** Wherever we are! **Why should we pray?** So much depends upon it! **How should we pray?** With confidence, power, and boldness! Prayer must be a continual, ongoing part of our lives. Like Jesus’ disciples, may we, too, plead, “Lord, teach us to pray!”

Part 1— Christ Teaches How To Pray

Jesus Demonstrates Commitment to Prayer

Luke 11:1

[Luk 11:1 KJV] 1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Say: The first and most important principle of prayer is that we make prayer a regular practice. Scripture records that prayer was central to the lives of God’s people. Throughout the Old Testament, Abraham, Moses, the prophets, and many others engaged in prayer. Yet the concept of connecting with God on an individual level may have seemed somewhat foreign to them. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In reading this important chapter on prayer, it is easy to quickly move past verse 1 and focus on Jesus’ familiar pattern for prayer. Yet it is worthy to note Luke’s statement that after Jesus was praying one day, His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. **Though He is God the Son, Jesus carefully and regularly set aside time to pray, setting an important example. Jesus sometimes arose very early while it was yet dark and went to a solitary place to pray** (see Mark 1:35). On one occasion, He climbed a mountainside for a time of prayer (Mark 6:46). **In another particular instance, prior to selecting His disciples, Jesus prayed all night on a mountainside** (Luke 6:12). **Luke 5:16, states, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (NIV).** Clearly, prayer was a vital and integral part of His life and ministry. In time, Jesus’ disciples began to take special note of Jesus’ devotion to prayer, which led to their request to be taught.

[Luk 5:16 KJV] 16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

*Some scholars have noted that in biblical times it was customary for a rabbi to give his followers a prayer that they might pray regularly. The prayers were simple and could be repeated with ease. So it is possible that, in keeping with this custom, Jesus gave His disciples the prayer that is found in this passage. **Yet, there is no question that what we call “The Lord’s Prayer” has borne great significance in helping every generation since then understand key elements of effective prayer.***

In Sunday’s devotion, Bayless Conley says, The prayer of faith is a prayer that:

1. Does not waver. It doesn’t vacillate, moving back and forth. It is anchored on the promise of God.
2. Is followed by corresponding actions.
3. Is prayed from right motives.

TEACHING TIP: The Pattern for Prayer

Take a moment to write this on the board in such a way as to form the acrostic, **PRAY**: **(1) Praise and adoration; (2) Repentance of sin; (3) Asking for God’s help; (4) Yielding to God’s will.** Talk about what each of these points means in practice when we pray, emphasizing that they are essential elements of prayer.

Discuss

? What does Jesus’ example tell us about the importance of the pattern of prayer we establish in our own lives?

? Who are some people you might identify as “people of prayer?” How can you develop a stronger sense of passion for prayer?

Jesus Describes Vital Elements of Prayer

Luke 11:2–4

[Luk 11:2-4 KJV] 2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Say: Much has been written on these verses and the parallel passage in Matthew 6:9–13. People have memorized it, and some congregations recite it every Sunday. It has been set to music that has moved hearts in worship. **The principles it contains are**

essential, not just for the words we say in prayer, but for the way we live our lives. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

At the outset, in Luke 11:2, Jesus said, **“When you pray” not “If you pray.”** Herein is established an underlying principle regarding the prayer life of the believer: **Prayer is meant to be a non-negotiable discipline for Christ’s followers through all generations.**

As Jesus delivered the pattern for His followers to use, He focused first on the importance of acknowledging that **prayer means entering the presence of the Heavenly Father, who loves His people with an everlasting love and has great compassion toward them.** (See Psalm 103:13–18.) Furthermore, **His name is hallowed, or holy, and worthy of reverence and adoration** (Luke 11:2). **While Christians are invited in Scripture to come boldly and confidently into His presence (Hebrews 4:16), we must also enter with reverence and humility.**

Jesus further instructed His people to pray that God’s kingdom will come (Luke 11:2). While Christians are to be focused on the final consummation of all things, living in light of Christ’s return, we must also pray that God’s kingdom will reign in our hearts here and now. In so doing, the enemy will not have dominion over us, and our priorities can remain in line with God’s purposes.

Once Christians have entered into God’s presence with adoration and reverence, and have acknowledged the priority of accomplishing His will, God invites us to petition for our day-to-day needs, expressed in the words, “Give us each day our daily bread” (verse 3, NIV). God is our Source, our Provider for the things that we need to strengthen us physically, to enable us to go about our daily duties, and to serve Him. God’s provision, however, is not without condition. In Matthew 6:33, we are promised that, if we seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness, the things we need will be added unto us.

Sin is a major hindrance to Christians with regard to doing God’s will and receiving His blessings and provision. Therefore, as we pray, we must always be careful to ask forgiveness for sins we have committed (verse 4). Repentance and contrition over sin clears the way for God’s purposes and provision in our lives. Being forgiven also calls us to practice a forgiving attitude toward those who have wronged us. Only with an attitude of forgiveness can we, in turn, receive forgiveness and maintain spiritual victory and vitality. (See Matthew 6:15.)

Maintaining a right relationship with God and others is also a key focus in praying the concluding plea of the Lord’s Prayer: “And lead us not into temptation” (verse 4, NIV). While God himself does not tempt us to sin (James 1:13), we are continually faced with things that can draw us away from our devotion to God. We need God’s guidance and discernment to avoid the pitfalls of temptation.

Discuss

? Why is it important to begin prayer with adoration and praise?

? This pattern for prayer includes worship, repentance, petition, and yielding to God. Which of these is most difficult for you? Why?

Part 2— Christ Teaches Persistence in Prayer

The Need for Persistence

Luke 11:5–8

[Luk 11:5-8 KJV] 5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? 7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. 8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

[Luk 11:8, 13 NKJV] 8 "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. ... 13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Say: At the first reading, this passage may be misinterpreted by some to mean that God is reluctant to answer our prayers or that He is annoyed by our asking. Some might even say, "I don't want to bother God with my requests." **But the point of this passage is to teach persistence in prayer.** If an earthly friend will eventually respond to the repeated pleas of his friend, how much more will our loving Heavenly Father respond to us? (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As we read Jesus' continued teaching on prayer, it is clear that the Lord's Prayer is not the only prayer we can pray. **Jesus followed that teaching with a focus on the importance of persistence in prayer. We pray in different ways according to the situations or challenges we face.**

In Luke 11:5–8, Jesus posed to His disciples a hypothetical situation that reflected the customs of the day: A man came to a neighbor's house at midnight pleading for some bread to feed a guest. **According to custom, setting out some food for a guest was common courtesy, but the man had none to share. So he awakened his sleeping friend for three loaves. The late hour was problematic. In many households of that day, it was customary for the family to sleep together in a common room. The**

father would sleep at one end and the mother at the other with the children in between. At such an hour as this, everyone would have been tucked away for the night.

Thus, the man inside argued with his friend that the hour was late and everyone was in bed. Yet his friend persisted with his request. According to Luke's account, the homeowner finally relented, not because of friendship with his neighbor (though such friendship was certainly sincere), but because of his friend's dogged persistence. The neighbor in need sought an answer to his plea despite the effort required or the possible consequences of inconveniencing his friend. His determined resolve reflects confident hope that supply for his need was available. **The man's confidence was rewarded as his friend produced the needed bread for his guest.**

Discuss

? Jesus used a parable to teach about persistence in prayer. Can you write a modern-day parable that might teach the same lesson?

? Since God knows all things, including our needs, why is it important that we persist in prayer?

Keep On Asking, Seeking, Knocking

Luke 11:9–10

[Luk 11:9-10 KJV] 9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Say: Depending on the nature of our needs, our prayers might vary in intensity. However, God does not take lightly the needs that we bring to Him, even as His timing is often not the same as ours. **If He responded to everything we asked immediately, we might never learn the lessons of seeking and knocking. (And most importantly, we might miss God's greater purposes.)** The more intense the need, the sooner we may move from simply asking to seeking and knocking. **But the message we get from this is that we must never give up.** Even if we don't see immediate answers, God is still hearing our prayers and working behind the scenes. His answer may not be what we expect, but we can trust Him to answer in the way that is best. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Following through on the theme of persevering in prayer, Jesus delivered His very familiar instruction, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9, NIV). **The tense of the verbs in the original Greek text implies ongoing action—keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking.** There may also be a progression in terms of prayers

offered and God's response. At times, we may ask God to meet a particular need and the answer comes readily. At other times, it is necessary to not only ask but to seek Him through earnest petition. **While asking results in receiving, seeking results in finding, perhaps implying the discovery of God's will and purpose in a matter. If the answer is delayed further, it may be necessary to persevere at length. Knocking results in an open door, which may suggest a specific direction to be taken or a particular means of fulfilling God's will.** In any case, the message is to keep pressing for the answer, whether the need is immediate or long-term. **Diligence and sincerity are keys to receiving God's answer.**

Resource Packet Item 1: Just Twenty More Minutes, Lord

Read or ask a student to read the true story, "Just Twenty More Minutes, Lord!" from the Adult Resource Packet. Discuss how this story from a missionary pilot in Alaska relates to the neighbor's plea for bread and the command toward asking, seeking, and knocking. If time permits, invite students to share personal testimonies of answers to prayer.

Discuss

? What examples can you give of times when your prayers could be described as "keeping on seeking and knocking"?

? Have you ever been prompted by the Spirit to pray for someone when you did not know what their need was? Share your experience.

Part 3— The Father Gives the Holy Spirit Even Earthly Fathers Give Good Gifts

Luke 11:11–12

[Luk 11:11-12 KJV] 11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if [he ask] a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? 12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Say: One of the most understandable illustrations of the Heavenly Father's pleasure in responding to our needs is the attitude of loving earthly parents. Jesus used the love of a good, loving earthly father to illustrate the Father's love for us. When children are in need, a good father takes pleasure in meeting their needs. It gives children great joy when they know they can come to their father with any problem, and the father will do his best to help them. However, human resources are limited, but God's resources are limitless. His love is even greater than our love for our children. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As Jesus concluded His teaching on prayer, focusing on God's willingness to answer persistent prayer, He brought an application down to the human level,

posing these questions to fathers: “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?” (Luke 11:11–12, NIV). At the absurdity of these questions, the resounding reply would be “Of course not!” Although even the most loving earthly father cannot even come close to the holiness and righteousness of God, no father who cared at all for his children would remotely consider doing such things. Even in their human weakness and propensity to fail, good fathers will do what is best for their children. The logic Jesus presents here is inescapable. Our Heavenly Father has unlimited resources, and He loves His children intensely. Truly, then, He knows how to give good gifts.

Resource Packet Item 2: God’s Answers to Prayer

Distribute the work sheet, and divide your class into small groups. If possible, make the groups different from the way students would normally divide up so they are working with people they might not normally work with. Give them a few minutes to answer the four questions on the sheet, then ask the groups to share their answers. Depending on the size of your class, you may want each group to share answers to a different question.

Discuss

? How can you explain the heavenly Father’s love for us to someone who may not have had a good earthly father?

? If you are a parent, how does this teaching of Jesus help your understanding of God?

The Heavenly Father Gives Greater Gifts

Luke 11:13

[Luk 11:13 KJV] 13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

[Luk 11:13 NKJV] 13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Say: Jesus was preparing His disciples for the gift of the Holy Spirit that would be given after His resurrection. At this point they did not understand the full significance of the gift He was promising. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Upon establishing an earthly father’s natural tendency for benevolence toward his children, Jesus then brought the issue “home” by exploring the fundamental principle of what He taught. He asked, “If you then, though you are evil, know

how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13, NIV). There could be no argument. Jesus’ question was clear and would logically elicit this kind of response: “Of course God would give the gift of the Holy Spirit to His children! He gives good gifts!”

Here described is a gift beyond comprehension. It is believed by many that Luke’s reference here to “receiving the Holy Spirit” does not pertain to the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit that follows salvation, but rather to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We know that not all believers have received Holy Spirit baptism. So, while the Spirit does abide with and come alongside all who receive Jesus Christ as Savior, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a subsequent gift, after salvation, that provides power to witness. In referencing this amazing gift, Luke was not only establishing that God will not withhold good gifts from His children, but that He also is ready to provide a gift of immeasurable value to any who will seek this blessing.

Discuss

? How does this teaching of Jesus on the Holy Spirit apply to believers today?

? Give opportunity for students to share their experiences in receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the difference it has made in their lives.

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Luke 11 begins with Jesus teaching us how to pray, continues with promises of answers to our prayer, and concludes with the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit in response to the prayers of believers. This sequence is an excellent way to teach prayer in discipling new believers today.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Begin a prayer journal to record your prayer requests and the answers God provides.
- Find one or more prayer partners to agree with as you pray for the needs of each other.
- Make a list of the things for which you should thank God before beginning your petitions.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Determined Prayer.
Genesis 32:22–32

[Gen 32:22-32 NKJV] 22 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. 23 He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. 24 Then

Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" 27 So He said to him, "What [is] your name?" He said, "Jacob." 28 And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." 29 Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell [me] Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why [is] it [that] you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. 30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." 31 Just as he crossed over Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which [is] on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.

Tuesday:

Earnest Prayer.

1 Samuel 1:9–18

[1Sa 1:9-18 NKJV] 9 So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the LORD. 10 And she [was] in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish. 11 Then she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head." 12 And it happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth. 13 Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 14 So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!" 15 But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I [am] a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16 "Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now." 17 Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him." 18 And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer [sad].

Wednesday:

Courageous Prayer.

Daniel 6:4–11

[Dan 6:4-11 KJV] 4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he [was] faithful, neither was there any error or

fault found in him. 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find [it] against him concerning the law of his God. 6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. 7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree. 10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. 11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

Thursday:

Receive the Spirit.
Acts 19:1–7

[Act 19:1-7 KJV] 1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard [this], they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid [his] hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Friday:

Pray in the Spirit.
Romans 8:26–28

[Rom 8:26-28 KJV] 26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God. 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.

Saturday:

Effective Prayer.

James 5:13–18

[Jas 5:13-18 KJV] 13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. 14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. 17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.