

Text: Acts 1:14

Title: “A Pattern for Prayer”

ILLUSTRATION – Husbands and wives, what kind of relationship would you have if you were so busy all the time that you didn't have time to just sit down to talk and listen to one another? What kind of relationship would you have if there was some offense between the two of you where you don't even want to talk to each other? Dads and moms, what kind of relationship would you have with your kids if you hurried through the day of getting ready for work and school, rushing through an evening meal, consumed with homework, but you never had time to just listen to and talk to your kids ... where you actually felt like you know what was going on in their little lives? Relationships are built on communication ... talking, listening, and sharing your hearts with one another. And the same thing is true in our relationship with God. And prayer is the essential to building our relationship with God.

Open your Bibles to Acts 1:14. The first followers of Jesus were people of prayer. And we saw last week that that enabled them to position themselves to receive the power that Jesus promised to give by the Holy Spirit. They prayed alone and they prayed when they were together. **Read Acts 1:14.**

We're going to see in our study of Acts that those believers prayed all the time. A little later in Acts 1 they prayed when they had important decisions to make. After the death of Judas, in order to replace him they had to choose between two men ...

Acts 1:24 - Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen

And after Pentecost prayer became an even more vital part of the life of the church.

Acts 2:42 - They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Turn back to Luke 11. The followers of Jesus were people of prayer because Jesus lived and taught a life of prayer.

Luke 11:1 - One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

Jesus lived with a holy connection to the Father. Over and over we see Jesus in prayer. And the disciples saw something about the prayer life of Jesus that they knew they needed. So on an occasion they asked, “Lord teach us to pray...” Note carefully the wording of their request ... “teach us *to* pray.” That's the first thing ... teach us to turn to God in prayer rather than trying to fix things or figure things out on our own.

Jesus did that. He taught His followers about the importance of prayer, but He also taught them the mechanics of prayer ... how to pray. And in Luke Jesus goes into what we know as the Model Prayer or the Lord's Prayer. Luke's version of the model prayer is abbreviated, but Matthew has a

fuller version of the prayer Jesus used to teach His followers to pray. It's found in what we know as the Sermon on the Mount. Turn to Matthew 6.

Jesus teaches them something about "when" to pray.

Matthew 6:5a - "And when you pray..."

He doesn't say "if you pray." He says "when you pray." So it will be a routine and a pattern in our lives. Then Jesus teaches them something about "where" to pray.

Matthew 6:6 - But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

So we are helped to pray if we have a place where we can go, close ourselves off from distractions and focus on our relationship and our conversation with God. But then Jesus teaches them something about "how" to pray.

Matthew 6:9a - "This, then, is how you should pray..."

Now again, I'm showing you this because when you see believers in the book of Acts you see people of prayer.

Acts 1:14a - They all joined together constantly in prayer...

And this all goes back to Jesus, who taught His disciples *to pray ... when to pray ... where to pray ... and how to pray.*

What I want to do here is to walk us through what is called the Model Prayer. Some of you know it from memory. It's very familiar, but maybe it's so familiar we don't take it as seriously as we should. Maybe you have trouble knowing what to say when you start to pray. Maybe you get alone with God to pray and you find your mind going all over the place and you don't know what to say. That's why the Holy Spirit gave us this passage of Scripture ... so we would know how Jesus wants us to pray.

I will walk us through this prayer then we're going to close by just doing what Jesus said to do. So here we go. Let's start by reading it aloud together.

Matthew 6:9 - "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Matthew 6:10 - your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:11 - Give us today our daily bread.

Matthew 6:12 - Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 6:13 - And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

So Jesus shows us how to pray. Jesus shows us a pattern to use when we pray. I want to give you five phrases that each start with a “P” so you can easily memorize this and pray whenever or wherever you are. First, Jesus teaches us to pray...

1. THE PRAISE OF GOD

Matthew 6:9 - “This, then, is how you should pray: ““Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

God is our Father if we have put our trust in Jesus. He is the Father of the Family of God. He is in heaven, at the control center of the universe. His name is to be “hallowed.” When we say “hallowed be your name,” we are demonstrating reverence toward God. We honor God for His holiness. There is none like Him. He is in a class all by Himself.

So we pray the praise of God. Next Jesus teaches us to pray...

2. THE PURPOSES OF GOD

Matthew 6:10 - your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The kingdom of God is the reign of God over all of the universe in time and in eternity. Every time a person is saved, the kingdom expands ... the rule and the reign of God expands. One day the Kingdom of God will capture every square inch of this universe in a visible way. Now the kingdom of God is mostly invisible. One day it will be completely visible and all consuming.

So we want God’s will, His purposes, to be done on earth, not our will to be done in heaven. It’s not a cop-out to pray, “God may your will be done.” It means whatever we think we need or want must conform to the will of God.

Next Jesus teaches us to pray...

3. THE PROVISION OF GOD

Matthew 6:11 - Give us today our daily bread.

Bread means any kind of nourishment. Daily bread is what we need day by day. So we learn to live day by day by faith in the provision of God. We don’t take it for granted; we acknowledge our dependence on God for all we need for life.

Next Jesus teaches us to pray...

4. THE PARDON OF GOD

Matthew 6:12 - Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

When we come before a holy God we need cleansing that comes through confession and repentance.

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The forgiveness and pardon of God needs to be *experienced* in our lives and it needs to be *expressed* in our lives. Jesus says here that there's no *experience* of the forgiveness of God without a corresponding *expression* of the forgiveness of God. That's what Jesus means when He says in...

Matthew 6:14 - For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Matthew 6:15 - But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

So if you haven't *expressed* the forgiveness to others, Jesus says you won't *experience* His forgiveness. Of course our sins are all covered by the blood of Jesus, but the full experience of forgiveness in our relationship with Jesus waits for us to forgive others.

Next Jesus teaches us to pray...

5. THE PROTECTION OF GOD

Matthew 6:13a - And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one...

Temptation is powerful. And we know that God never tempts us to sin, so why does Jesus teach us to pray like this? It's more like, "Do not allow us to be led into temptation." We have an evil enemy for whom we are no match apart from the power and the protection of Jesus.

Then we come back to...

6. THE PRAISE OF GOD

Now the next phrase is omitted in many translations, or it is included in a footnote at the bottom of the page. But some translations do have it and so I choose to include it here:

Matthew 6:13b - For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

So we've come full circle. We start with the praise of God and we close with the praise of God.

Now we're going to just do what Jesus said to do when we pray. This may seem a little awkward to you at first, but here's one thing that will help you. When I pray I like to think that as I close my eyes I am going into my closet of prayer and closing the door behind me, so it's just me and the Lord. You're surrounded by hundreds of people today, but as you close your eyes just focus on God ... just you and God.

I want you to be as focused on this as you can be ... even our boys and girls. I'm going to ask you to use your whole body today to connect with God in prayer. It's good for us to learn different postures in prayer because the Bible describes all kinds of different postures and movements in prayer. So...

STAND WITH FACE UP, TURNED TOWARD HEAVEN – PRAY THE PRAISE OF GOD.

Matthew 6:9 - “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

STAND WITH HANDS RAISED (THE UNIVERSAL SIGN OF SURRENDER) – PRAY THE PURPOSES OF GOD.

Matthew 6:10 - your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

SIT DOWN WITH PALMS OPEN (AS IF TO RECEIVE) – PRAY THE PROVISION OF GOD.

Matthew 6:11 - Give us today our daily bread.

SIT WITH YOUR HANDS OUTSTRETCHED, LIKE YOU HAVE A BIRD OR A BUTTERFLY IN YOUR HAND THAT YOU ARE RELEASING) – PRAY THE PARDON OF GOD.

Matthew 6:12 - Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

SIT AND HOLD UP YOUR ARM LIKE YOU ARE HOLDING A SHIELD OVER YOUR HEAD – PRAY THE PROTECTION OF GOD.

Matthew 6:13a - And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one...

STAND ONCE AGAIN AND PUT YOUR HAND OVER YOUR HEART (LIKE YOUR TOUCHING YOUR SOUL) – PRAY THE PRAISE OF GOD.

Matthew 6:13b - For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.