

# LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

Luke 11:1-13

Key Verse: 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.’”**

Today is the last day of summer vacation! Tomorrow, CPS teachers go back to school and this year, I really want things to be different. I want my students and my coworkers to see Christ in me and I want to be a blessing to them. When I thought about all the new challenges we will be facing this fall, I became overwhelmed and burdened. But God planted two words in my heart. First, the battle is the Lord’s. Second, that battle is fought through prayer. Through prayer, even one person can make a difference. Lord, let it happen through me! The same thing goes for our fall ministry. In order to fight the spiritual battles on our campuses, we must pray. Weak and feeble prayers won’t do. To win the victory, we must pray like Jesus. Today, we will learn from Jesus what we should pray and how we should pray it.

**First, Jesus’ life of prayer (1).** Verse 1 says, **“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.’”** Didn’t the disciples already know how to pray? When they were little, didn’t their mothers teach them “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.”? Prayer was an important part of their culture. Several times a day, the religious leaders would stand on the street corners and say long, elegant prayers. So why did the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray? What was different about the way Jesus prayed?

Let’s take a look at what the disciples saw. One day, near the beginning of his ministry, Jesus went to the home of Simon and Andrew. After healing Simon’s mother-in-law, the whole town gathered at the door and Jesus healed many who had various diseases and he cast out demons. It was amazing and the next day, the disciples wanted to do it all over again. But Mark 1:35 says, **“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”** The disciples went and looked for Jesus and when they found him, they exclaimed: **“everyone is looking for you”**. It is almost as if they asked, “Lord, what are you doing out here in the middle of nowhere, wasting your time praying?” The disciples didn’t understand, but one day they would. Powerful ministry requires powerful prayer.

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Luke 5 says that after healing a man with leprosy, **“the news about Jesus spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.”** We see that Jesus was busy. In fact, he was *very* busy. Day and night, crowds of people demanded his attention. So what did Jesus do? Luke writes, **“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”** The disciples saw that no matter what, Jesus made time for prayer.

In Luke 6, we read about how Jesus chose the 12 apostles. These 12 men would affect the history of the whole world. So how did Jesus make such a decision? Luke says, **“Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.”** Through prayer, Jesus found guidance and direction.

Now let's turn to Luke 3. Luke writes, **“When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’”** We see that three things happened as Jesus prayed: the heavens were opened, the Spirit came down, and the Father's love was poured out. But here is a wonderful secret. Jesus shares all of this with us! When God's children pray, heaven is opened! Hebrews 4:16 says **“Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.”** It is also true that when God's children pray, the Spirit falls upon them. And when the Spirit falls, we are filled with the love of the Father. In Christ, all the blessings of the heavenly realms have been made ours and they come to us when we pray like Jesus.

Now let's take a look at Luke 9. Luke writes, **“About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.”** What happened as Jesus prayed? His divine glory was revealed and it was so great, their eyes couldn't bear to see it. When we pray, this happens to our faces as well. The closer we draw to the God, the more our hearts begin to change. We begin to share his values and his character. His will and his vision become our own and the knowledge of his great love grows deeper and deeper. As our hearts change, our faces change as well. We glow with the glory of Christ. Ephesians 5:8 says, **“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”**

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Look at Jesus. Look at how he prayed and what happened when he prayed. Let's come to him and ask him to teach us to pray.

**Second, what should God's children pray (2-4)?** Look at verse 2. Jesus says, **"When you pray, say: 'Father'..."** The word Jesus uses for "Father" is "Abba", which means "Daddy" or "Dearest Father". It is a name that implies a close and tender relationship. So who is your Father? Children like to boast about their fathers. Some kids brag about how strong their father is or how handsome he looks. My kids brag that their dad is a math teacher. To be honest, I'm not sure if anyone is impressed. Our Abba is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is all knowing, all powerful, and always present. He is full of grace and truth and love. He has redeemed us and restored us and made us his children. What a blessing it is to come to our God and call him "Abba"!

Jesus goes on to share 5 prayer topics. The first is **"hallowed by your name"**. To **"hallow"** God's name means to make it holy. It means that we attribute to God the holiness that is His and His alone. This is what we find in Isaiah 6. In his vision, Isaiah saw the LORD, **"high and exalted, seated on a throne and the train of his robe filled the temple."** He saw seraphim flying above the throne, calling **"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."** This is what it means to hallow God's name. Sometimes, though, we get stuck and we stumble in our praise and worship. When that happens, all we have to do is take God's word and pray it back to him. Psalm 145 is a good example. Take it and read it to God: **"Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts."** We can use the whole Bible to worship God in prayer. But one thing is true: it is impossible to worship God and disobey him at the same time. We hallow his name not only with our praise, but with our obedience as well.

Next is **"your kingdom come."** When we pray **"your kingdom come"**, we express a sincere and intense yearning of our hearts for Christ to come again. We yearn for what we studied in Revelation 21 at the ISBC. We long for a new heaven and a new earth. We long for God's dwelling place to be among his people and for every tear to be wiped from our eyes. We long for there to be **"no more death or mourning or crying or pain"**. By praying **"your kingdom come"** we also pray for God to reign in the lives of all the people around us. I pray for God's kingdom to come to my daughters and I pray for God's kingdom to come to the students at my school. Did you notice that Jesus tells us to pray **"Your kingdom**

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**come**” and not “my kingdom come”? Many of my prayers are focused on God accomplishing what I want and not what he wants. I’ve prayed again and again for a new basement in my house. I don’t want much – just a whirlpool, another bedroom, a Foosball table, and maybe a treadmill. But a new basement is part of my kingdom, not his. Jesus taught us the right perspective when he said, **“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”**

Jesus says **“Give us each day our daily bread.”** He reminds us that God is the giver of all things. Our God is a wonderful provider. Psalm 104 says, **“All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.”** Jesus teaches us to pray according to our need, not our greed and to depend on God one day at a time. By saying **“Give us our daily bread”** instead of “my daily bread” Jesus teaches us to pray for the needs of others. We are to pray for the children in our city who lack food and shelter. We are to pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who need God’s provision and protection. To be honest, it is hard to pray for the needs of others without doing whatever we can to help them. We can’t really pray **“give us our daily bread”** without being willing to share our blessings with others.

Jesus continues with the fourth petition: **“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.”** The forgiveness of sins is the most expensive and costly gift we could ever ask for. The forgiveness of our sins required the shedding of Christ’s blood on the cross. But the good news is that God is willing and eager to forgive our sins. 1 John 1:9 says, **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”** God has forgiven all our sins - past, present, and future.

Though forgiven, we still sin and our sin hinders our relationship with God. As you know, I have three beautiful daughters. Two of them decided a while ago that they would get some alcohol and throw a little party while my wife and I were gone. Now, my wife and I knew something happened, but we didn’t know what. Even though they were still our daughters and we were still their parents, our relationship suffered and our hearts were broken. Eventually they confessed everything and we assured them of our love and forgiveness. I believe it is the same with God. When sin gets between us and our relationship with Him, he wants nothing more than for us to come to him, repent of our sin, and be restored.

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Jesus says, **“for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.”** It is impossible to hold a grudge and seek forgiveness at the same time. It simply can't be done! Jesus says in Matthew 6:14-15, **“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”** If we want to draw close to God, then we must be willing to forgive others the way God has forgiven us.

The final petition says “lead us not into temptation.” James writes, **“When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone...”** So what does Jesus mean when he tells us to pray this way? When God's children pray **“lead us not into temptation”**, it is their sincere and humble prayer that God would keep them from falling away from him. God does send trials into our lives and trials can involve periods of severe and intense temptation. When our marriage is going through difficult times, a simple hug of a coworker at our job can lead us down a path of adultery. When we face tough demands at our job, we might be tempted to cut corners and lie about the results. By praying **“lead us not into temptation”**, we ask God to protect us from our own weaknesses and to help us to stand firm.

We see that these five petitions are more than just prayer topics. They encompass our whole lives and they teach us how to live as children of God.

**Third, the way God's children should pray (5-13).** After teaching us *what* we should pray, Jesus teaches *how* we should pray. Jesus teaches us that we should pray with boldness, confidence, and high expectations.

First, praying with boldness. Look at verse 5. **“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’”** In our time, we would never wake up our friends for 3 loaves of bread. We are so blessed! There are many places and ways we can get food in our society. However, in Jesus' time, this was a real problem. There was nowhere else this man could go and showing the proper hospitality to his guests was of utmost importance. The man was doing the right thing, seeking whatever way he could to provide for his guests. Jesus continues: **“And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.’”** You know, we've all been there. There were times when I read over a dozen books trying to

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get my daughters to sleep. I totally get what this man was saying. Friendship wasn't enough to get him out of bed. So how did the man get what he needed? How did he get the bread? Look at what Jesus says in verse 8: **“I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.”** The man knew his friend would get up if only he persisted and knocked again and again. This is the way Jesus teaches us to pray. Why? Is it because God is stingy? Is God reluctant to give us what we need? Not at all! Persistent, bold prayer is for our benefit, not his. Jeremiah 29:13 says, **“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”** We see that God wants our hearts. He also wants our faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, **“without faith it is impossible to please God”**.

Secondly, in verses 9-10, Jesus teaches us to pray with confidence. **“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”** Jesus describes intense, passionate prayer with each step being more urgent than the last. When we pray like this, Jesus says we can be confident that our prayers will be answered. Jesus says, **“For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”**

Third, we are to pray with great expectations. Jesus says, **“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?”** O.K., I have to confess I've given my kids some gifts they didn't want. Every Christmas I would try to slip in some educational toys here and there so they would do well in school. To them, it was like asking for a fish and getting a snake. Look at what Jesus says next: **“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!”** Psalm 84:4 says, **“No good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless”** and the very best thing we could ever receive from God is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the gift of God himself. By His Spirit, God lives in you and he lives in me. The benefits of this wonderful gift of God go far beyond our imaginations. The Spirit sanctifies us and makes us more like Jesus. The Spirit bears fruits in our lives. He produces love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The Spirit helps to grow in the outward direction as well. He empowers us to be witnesses of Christ wherever we go. Acts 1:8 says, **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in**

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**Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** We are to ask God for the Spirit, seek God for the Spirit, and knock on His door for the spirit. We can be confident that God honors such prayers. All we have to do is ask and the heavens will open and the Spirit of God will fall down upon us.

There was a time in the early church when believers prayed according to the way Jesus has taught us. The scene is described in Acts 4. Peter and John were seized and thrown in jail for proclaiming the resurrection of the dead in Jesus. The next day the religious leaders ordered them again to stop, but the apostles refused. And then, the believers prayed. This is what they said: **“Now, Lord, consider the threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”** This is the way we must pray for our fall ministry. We must pray for boldness in preaching. We must pray for God’s hand of healing upon the students. This is a prayer that God will certainly honor. Acts 4:31 says, **“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”** They asked for the best gift, and God gave it to them.

This morning, let’s pray that God will shake our ministry and fill us with the Holy Spirit. Let’s pray to be bold, gospel witnesses and for the Lord’s healing to come upon our campuses and our nation. Lord, give us your Spirit so we can live as witnesses of Jesus wherever we go. Amen!