

“(un)common”

week #3

INTRODUCTION

Among those things that the early church devoted themselves to was prayer. Prayer can be puzzling. Even Jesus’ disciples weren’t sure how they should pray, and so they asked Jesus to show them. In response he gave them what we refer to as the Lord’s Prayer. It is a model, not a formula, and an uncommon prayer in many respects. Because we also need to know how we should pray, this study takes a look at what Jesus taught his disciples about this uncommon prayer.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

What is the first prayer you remember learning?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

How not to pray

Q1. Read Luke 11:1, Matthew 6:1, 5-8

Before responding to the disciples’ request to be shown how to pray, Jesus told them how not to pray. We already know that God looks on the heart rather than the outer appearance. What wrong motivation was He warning his disciples to avoid in Matt 6:1, 7? In Matthew 6, Jesus instructs the disciples to go to their inner chamber and shut the door before they pray. Who does Jesus identify as the only audience for your prayer? What would you say are some other wrong motives for our prayers and what is a right motivation for prayer?

Who God is

Q2. Read Matthew 6:9-10, Galatians 4:6, Isaiah 6:1-5,

We respect God as our father, but we also call him by what endearing name in Galatians 4:6? Matt 6:9 also states that God’s name is holy or hallowed. What was Isaiah’s reaction when he stood before the holiness of God in Isaiah 6:5? If you were to pause as you begin your prayers to envision the holiness of the one you are addressing, how might it change how and what you pray for? Who do you think is being referred to when this pray refers to “our” and “Us” or “We”? What important attitude of the heart is reflected in verses 10? How does this influence the things for which we might petition God?

What God Provides

Q3. Read Matthew 6:11-13

Grace is a gift we haven’t earned and mercy is not receiving the punishment we have earned. How do verses 11 and 12 represent seeking both grace and mercy? This petition is not for what I want, and it is not for what I alone need. This petition is for “our” daily bread and “forgiveness”. Although we have individual needs and responsibility for our sins, God views us as one body. How do Matt 6:14 and John 20:23 connect the importance of our forgiveness with the forgiveness we offer others?

Read James 1:13; James 1:3-4; Matthew 6:12; 26:41

Even though God does not tempt us to cause us to fall as Satan might (James 1:13), he does allow us to go through testing that challenges us and causes us to grow in our faith. Jesus told the disciples to watch and pray that they would not enter into temptation. What are some of the ways we are enticed to join with others as they fall into temptation? (You might consider gossip, or anger that can gain traction in a group setting). In Matthew 6:12 we see that God wants to meet our greatest need - be sure to include asking God for forgiveness of corporate sins also.

Wrap-Up

The early church devoted themselves to prayer, both together and individually. When Jesus instructed his disciples on how to pray he told them to pray privately to avoid wrong motives but to continue to think in corporate terms by referring to “our”, “us” and “we.” When we address God as his children, we have access to the Holy One just as if he were our “daddy”, the provider of all that we need. But we must also recognize his holiness, and sovereignty by aligning our requests with His will, relying on Him daily to provide for his church all that we need and to forgive us as we forgive one another.

Memory Verse

But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:6 ESV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:

Challenge: *This week as you pray, find a quiet place and focus your prayers on the corporate, rather than the personal needs you bring to God.*

