

Teach us how to **pray**

Notes Guide



Our Father in Heaven Question Guide

Way in

If you were to rate your prayer life out of ten, how would you score? Why?

Why do you aim to spend time with people who are close to you? What are some of the reasons that you talk with them?

Read **Luke 11:1-11**

Jesus' disciples had grown up in a culture that was centred on prayer, and yet they asked Jesus to 'teach us to pray.' He clearly prayed in a way that they had not experienced before, and so they wanted to know the best way to pray. It is noticeable that Jesus talks about the content of prayer rather than talking about practicalities (i.e. posture, time, regularity etc). Jesus knows that who you pray to and how you pray to him is the most important thing for his disciples to learn.

1. Jesus' response to the disciples' question in verse 1 is familiar to many of us. But as you compare Jesus' prayer (v2-4) with your own prayer life, what strikes you?

2. Are you surprised that Jesus prayed? Surely as the Son of God, he was the one person who wouldn't have to pray? Why do you think he prayed so much?

5. Jesus seems to know that we are likely to give up praying. How does the story Jesus tells in Luke 11:5-8 encourage us to pray with expectant hearts?

6. How does Jesus teaching in verses 9-13 raise our confidence further still?

7. As you look back over these verses, how could you pray differently over the next few days?

Reflection | Read Mark 1:35, Luke 4:42 & Luke 11:1

The most common reasons for not praying are that we are too busy or that we get distracted. How did Jesus cope with greater pressures than we will ever face? What practical steps can you take to cope with distractions? If we need to pray in the busy times more than ever, how can we do this?

Quote for **Reflection**

'When you stop trying to control your life and instead allow your anxieties and problems to bring you to God in prayer, you shift from worry to watching. You watch God weave his patterns in the story of your life. Instead of trying to be out front, designing your life, you realise you are inside God's drama. As you wait, you begin to see him work, and your life begins to sparkle with wonder. You are learning to trust again.' (Paul E. Miller)

How is God working in your life at the moment?

How to pray like a Child

Question Guide

Way in

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Read **Romans 8:12-16**

In v12-14 Paul describes the 'obligation' we have to live for Christ, rather than just living for ourselves (what he calls our 'sinful nature'). Jesus has died for us and we now have a great future because of his resurrection (v11). As a response to this great news we are now called to live for him which involves a lifelong battle of following the Spirit rather than our sinful desires. Although it's a struggle, it's helpful to remember that the fact that we struggle with sin is a sign that we are God's children. If we didn't have God's Spirit, we wouldn't struggle - we wouldn't want to live for God at all!

1. Of the following 4 struggles we have with prayer, which most affects you?
 - a) the **mess in our lives** (*our sin leaves us too ashamed to pray*)
 - b) the **difficulties in our lives** (*life is so hard we stop praying*)
 - c) we become **cynical about prayer** (*we doubt if prayer works*)
 - d) we don't know **how to pray** (*we're unsure if we're praying 'correctly'*)
2. In the light of this, what difference does it make to know that you are a 'child of God' because of God's Spirit, rather than your own performance? What, according to v15, does it mean to be a child of God?
3. Sometimes we are too ashamed to pray. How does the truth of v14-16 liberate us in our prayer life?

Read **Romans 8:17-25**

Paul continues to describe the benefits of being God's children – it means we are also heirs with Christ. What a great truth! But, it also means that we will suffer; as Christ did. This is not meant to be a great discouragement, however. No, if we suffer like Christ we will also share in his glory. There is a wonderful day coming when creation will stop 'groaning' with pain and our weak and frail bodies will be 'redeemed'. What an exciting future!

4. Life can seem almost unbearable sometimes. We have fragile bodies, and the world appears broken. It seems that struggling is the norm, which can have a dramatic affect on prayer. In what ways has your own suffering impacted your prayer life? Do you ever pretend that life is OK when you pray?

5. In v17-18, Paul describes our status as sons and heirs with Christ – we will inherit the family fortune! According to v18, this future changes everything for us now. How does this future hope give us confidence when we pray?

6. Your friend says to you, 'Oh you don't pray do you? It never did me any good, what's the point?' What would you say?

Read **Romans 8:26-27**

Just as the Spirit guarantees for us hope, he also helps us when we pray. What a wonderful relief!

7. Paul tells us that God's Spirit intercedes for us. In other words, he prays what we should be praying! In what ways might this truth change the way you pray?

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