

Flipped: The Upside Down Kingdom (A Pattern for Prayer)

Andy Deane · 10/22/2023 · Matthew 6:5-15

The Lord gives us another tool to grow our relationship with Him: private prayer. Today we'll see how prayer is much more of a tool for our spiritual formation, than it is a tool for us to request things from God.

#1 WHEN PRAYING: Guard Your Heart

5 *"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.*

- Caution #1: Don't be like the hypocrites (who perform instead of pray).
- They were using prayer as a means to impress people.

#2 WHEN PRAYING: Find Some Privacy

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 how do we pray? Secretly, if possible, but not legalistically because public prayer for the right reason is good.
- This makes no sense unless God is real and you believe He wants to talk to you.
- What's the reward? God Himself! He is waiting there to welcome us!

#3 WHEN PRAYING: Engage Your Mind

7 *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

- Caution #2: Don't be like pagans (whose words are mindless & many)
- They think that the more they say, the more likely they will be heard, as if God is impressed with them.
- We should use our mind and think through every thing that we say (whether spontaneous or memorized).
- When we pray we instruct ourselves more than the Lord:
 - We remember: Who God is (creator, father, savior)
 - We unload: Our anxieties & pain on a dear friend.
 - We deepen: Our relationship with a personal God
 - We strengthen: Our faith & trust in God.

#4 WHEN PRAYING: Try the Lord's Model

9 *"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." 14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

- Christians should pray sincerely (not hypocritically) and thoughtfully (not mechanically).
- The Lord's prayer models how and what to pray. We should:
 - PERSONALLY Address God:
 - Pray: as if God was personal (*our Father*)
 - Pray: as if God was powerful (*in heaven*)
 - PRIORITIZE God's Agenda: (notice the "your")
 - Pray: God's name would be known & honored (*hallowed*)
 - Pray: God's kingdom will grow & return (*kingdom come*)
 - Pray: that life on earth may look more like life in heaven (*your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*)
 - PRAY for Your Needs (notice the "our")
 - Pray: for necessities (*Give us today our daily bread*)
 - Pray: for forgiveness & a forgiving heart (*forgive us our debts, as we...have forgiven our debtors*)
 - Pray: for strength to resist temptation (*lead us not into temptation, deliver us from the evil one*)

PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Pray "The Lord's Prayer" daily for a week at home (either read it sincerely, or use it to inspire topics)
- Sunday Prayer (8:30AM in the Next Steps room or after every service up front)
- Moms in Prayer (Tuesdays, 8AM & 9:15AM in the Next Steps room)
- Monthly Prayer Night (11/16, 6:30PM in MPR on the 3rd floor)