

PRAYER MATTERS, PART TWO!

Scripture used: [Matthew 6:6-13 \(NIV\)](#); [Matthew 26:42-46 \(NIV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Tilden blessed us with the second of his two-part sermon on the power of prayer. This is part of our “Life Values” series. We are learning what it takes to build a meaningful, joyful, life by following the example set by Jesus. Last week we learned about the miracle of the Lord’s Prayer and what it means for us. God sent us Jesus so we could come into God’s family. We are secure in who we are as God’s children, just like Jesus. This miraculous truth means that we can have the same loving, personal relationship with God that Jesus has! Prayer is the mechanism we use to explore that relationship. Prayer helps us connect to God, listen to Him, and be changed by Him. But how exactly do we do this? What should prayer look like in our daily lives? That is the subject of Pastor Tilden’s sermon.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **There are many “ways” to pray, and we have the freedom to find what works well for us.** Our personal relationship with God as the Father is the foundation of prayer. How we pray can change based on the context. We can’t simply copy the style of other people, even pastors or Biblical figures.
- 2) **We can use a framework for prayer.** This loose structure can help us get started when we don’t know exactly what to do or we feel self-conscious about what we’re saying to God.
 - a. **A - Adoration.** Begin by coming to God as the father in heaven. Praise Him for who He is; God, the creator of the universe and giver of all life!
 - b. **C - Confession.** Ask God for forgiveness for all the ways we’ve wounded Him and those around us.
 - c. **T- Thanksgiving.** Thank God for both blessings and forgiveness. As we read in [1 John 1:9 \(NIV\)](#), confession is the key to God’s forgiveness. Acknowledge all the ways He is moving in our lives.
 - d. **S - Supplication.** Ask God to meet us at our points of need. This includes the requests of the Lord’s Prayer: daily bread; forgiveness; avoiding temptation; and deliverance.
- 3) **Successful prayer requires three ingredients.** Jesus didn’t want prayer to be routine, though. Prayer is the most powerful tool we have to change our lives and the world. We can learn a lot by studying how Jesus prayed at the Garden of Gethsemane in [Matthew 26:39-46 \(NIV\)](#).
 - a. **Total honesty to the point of “shameless audacity.”** Jesus asks God to take away the cup of suffering. He asked if there was another way to fulfill his purpose! This kind of honesty reflects an intimate relationship. Jesus wasn’t afraid to say anything to God.
 - b. **Wholehearted trust.** Honesty with God isn’t enough. We also have to trust Him enough to hand over every decision. We can’t become fixated on the things for which we pray. We also have to be willing to be led by God to those things that will advance His kingdom. This is what Jesus meant in the Garden when He finished His prayer “[God’s] will be done.”
 - c. **Listening reflection.** The combination of honesty and trust brings us to the point where we can now hear God’s response. We have to be willing to listen to God after asking things from Him! This is the time when our hearts begin to change. Whatever God’s plan, we can draw strength from Him and be ready to do what is required. This explains Jesus’ restoration after his third round of prayer, when He returned to the disciples ready to go to His death on the cross.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Both honesty and trust are required for effective prayer. Which one is harder for you? Why?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Do you use any kind of formula or framework for your prayer? Does prayer feel routine to you? When did it feel most effective, or when did you experience transformation through prayer? What were you doing differently at that time? What can you change now to make your prayers more effective?
- 3) **DO** - You have three options for taking action this week. First, you can sign up to [volunteer for 2019 Summer Serve!](#) Second, you can join hundreds of us in San Jose [next Saturday morning for the annual Silicon Valley Prayer Walk](#), starting near our new campus at Trianon Theater. Finally, you can simply commit that this week to the following affirmation: “I will go deeper with God in prayer.”