

“When You Pray...”
Jesus and Prayer

2. Jesus and Prayer

Luke 11:1 reads, "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'" (NIV)

There's much to learn from this passage beyond the significant Lord's Prayer that follows it. For one, we learn that what sparked the unnamed disciples' curiosity to learn about prayer was the fact that he saw Jesus in prayer.

We also learn that John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray and, as a result, the disciples of Jesus were also interested in learning to pray, or at least one of them was! Isn't it interesting that out of all the disciples only one of them asked Jesus to teach them to pray? It sometimes seems the church is in a similar situation today regarding prayer. We talk about prayer, we study prayer, we say our prayers, but how many of us actually seek earnestly for God to teach us to pray?

Why did Jesus pray?

This is sometimes puzzling for Christians. After all, if Jesus is God, why did Christ need to pray?

Theologically speaking, there are at least three reasons that Jesus prayed:

- Jesus prayed as an example to his followers
- Jesus was a practicing Jewish believer
- The nature of the Trinity allows for communication between its members. As God the Son, Jesus could pray to God the Father.

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Jesus prayed for others. In Matthew 19:13, we read, "*Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them.*" In John 17:9 we read, "*I [Jesus] pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given Me, for they are Yours.*" This underscores the need for intercessory prayer.

Jesus prayed for Himself. There is nothing wrong with praying for oneself and one's needs. John 17:1-5 shows us that Jesus began His prayer acknowledging His mission here on earth, glorifying God and asking God to glorify Him, "*“I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*"

Jesus prayed alone. Luke 5:16 reads, "*But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.*" As much as Jesus understood the value of praying with and for others, He also understood the need to pray alone. Psalm 46:10 reads, "*Be still, and know that I am God.*"

Jesus prayed with others. Luke 9:28 reads, "*[Jesus] took Peter, John and James with Him and went up onto a mountain to pray.*" Jesus prayed alone but He also knew the value of praying with others. Acts 1:14 underscores the importance of Christians praying with one another: "*They all joined together constantly in prayer...*"

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Jesus prayed regularly. This insight is gleaned from a passage cited earlier, Luke 5:16: "*Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.*" Prayer was clearly a part of Jesus' regularly daily routine. Can we say the same about prayer in our life?

Jesus taught persistence in prayer. "*Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up*" (Luke 18:1). The parable Jesus shared is not meant to depict a pestering disciple who finally bugs God enough that He chooses to respond, but about persistence in prayer and waiting on God and His timing.

Jesus knew that not all his prayers would be answered as expected. This is a difficult prayer lesson to learn, but the fact of the matter is that not all our prayers are answered in ways we expect. Even Jesus knew this hard lesson as he cried out to God the Father from Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-44). Three times Jesus prayed for God to allow an easier path, but Jesus knew, "*Yet not as I will, but as You will*" (26:39).

Jesus acknowledged and yielded to the will of God in prayer. When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, "*Yet not as I will, but as You will,*" He offered a tremendous but seemingly simple insight into prayer: God is in charge.

Summary

A disciple asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray," (Luke 11:1) and in response was taught the Lord's Prayer. But by studying the prayer life of Jesus, we can learn not only the important truths of the Lord's Prayer, but so much more.

Next week, The Lord's Prayer:

*"Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."*

Excerpts taken from an article by Robert Velarde, the author of *Conversations with C.S. Lewis* (InterVarsity Press), *The Heart of Narnia* (NavPress), and primary author of *The Power of Family Prayer* (National Day of Prayer Task Force).