

# Virtual Bible Study

**INSTRUCTOR:** Rev. D'Mrtri Burke, M.Div. **DATE:** August 3, 2021

## **TOPIC: How to Pray Like Jesus**

The disciples only asked Jesus to teach them one thing: how to pray. Since learned behavior is easier caught than taught, it would do us well to observe how Jesus prayed.

We often read biographies of great people to learn the secrets of their lives. When you read the biographies of Jesus' life, the gospels, you learn one of his great secrets. Jesus modeled prayer. If he prayed, we need to pray. If he needed time alone with God, we need time alone with God. We need to emulate what he did.

### **Let's take a glimpse into the prayer life of Jesus:**

#### **1. Jesus believed that prayer works.**

Jesus believed in prayer. He knew the effectiveness and the power of prayer. He had an intimate relationship with the Father and from Jesus' example we can still have the same motivation and desire to spend time with the Father. We, too, need to believe in prayer.

Have you ever doubted your prayers will work or make any difference? We link, all too frequently, prayer requests and prayer answered and miss the main business of prayer and that is conversation, dialogue, the building and maintaining of a relationship with our Heavenly Father. If we reduce prayer to nothing more than asking for things, we are no different than the spoiled child that comes to their parent only to make demands. Although making requests is one of the needed aspects of prayer, we cannot ignore or take lightly the boldness and confidence with which Jesus spoke about prayer. Over and over again he communicated the effectiveness of prayer.

Matt. 21:22, Matt. 7:7-11, Mark 9:28-29, Mark 11:24, John 14:13-14, John 15:7, John 15:16, John 16:23-24

Jesus believed and acted on the confidence that God answered his prayers. We, too, can have that same confidence. Once we understand the mind and heart of Jesus and then pray accordingly, it will only give us more confidence and boldness to pray for even greater things.

#### **2. Praying did not make Jesus passive.**

Even though he prayed long and often, Jesus was never passive and neither should we be. **He does not separate faith from action.** Jesus prayed and He healed; He believed and He acted; He preached and He lived. **Jesus warns against inactivity and passivity.** The best example is found in his teaching about the final judgment in **Matthew 25:31-46.** Using the strongest possible terms, Jesus rejects a spirituality that is unconcerned about the tangible needs of people around us. People matter to God and their needs are important to God. **Prayer is never an excuse for failing to act. Because of what God has done for us—his action—should compel and motive us to act.**

### **3. Jesus prayed alone.**

Solitary prayer was a habit for Jesus. Luke 22:39

Solitary prayer avoids attention, spiritual pride, showing off. See Matt. 6:5-6.

Solitary prayer avoids distraction Luke 4:42, Luke 5:15-16

### **4. Jesus prayed in community.**

Let's contrast two verses in close proximity to one another. In Luke 9, first, notice that Jesus prayed privately: "While He was praying in private . . ." (Luke 9:18 HCSB). But then he balances private prayer with group praying: "About eight days after these words, He took along Peter, John, and James, and went up on the mountain to pray." (Luke 9:28 HCSB)

**Our relationship with God is personal but not private.** Jesus not only encourages us to get alone to pray; he also wants us to pray with others. Praying with the people of God is foundational to worship. Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there among them." (Matt 18:20 HCSB) . It is no accident that the Lord's Prayer begins not with "My Father," but with "Our Father." We have many recorded prayers of Jesus. Why is that? Because those prayers were uttered in the company of other people. Group prayer strengthens private prayer. Matt. 18:19, Luke 9:28, Matt. 17:1, Mark 9:2

### **5. Jesus prayed before meals.**

Praying before meals was a common Jewish practice. Jesus followed that practice, too. We see that evidenced when:

- he fed the five thousand with the boy's lunch of bread and fish - Mark 6:41
- he fed the four thousand - Mark 8:6
- he shared a meal with his disciples in the upper room the night before his crucifixion - Mark 14:22
- and, following his resurrection, when he shared a meal with Cleopas and his wife in Emmaus - Luke 24:30.

### **6. Jesus offered thanks.** Matthew 11:25-26 NKJV

### **7. Jesus sang some prayers.** Mark 14:26, Matt. 26:30

Jesus sang. Have you ever thought about that? And, amazingly only a few hours before his crucifixion Jesus sang. Following his time with his disciples in the upper room, Jesus sang with his disciples a hymn (Mark 14:26). Most likely this song was the traditional Passover hymn based on Psalms 115-118.

### **8. Jesus prayed before making important decisions.** Luke 6:12-13

### **9. Jesus prayed for his disciples.** John 17:9-26

### **10. Jesus continues to pray for us.** Hebrews 7:25

The most encouraging news found in the Bible about prayer is that Jesus has made it his continuing purpose to pray for us: "He always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25 HCSB). Let's breakdown this verse down word by word:

**"He."** Jesus stands in the gap making petitions to God on my behalf. He is our representative. He is our mediator in salvation and our mediator in heaven.

**"Always."** Jesus never stops praying for us. He is always at our disposal before the throne of heaven pleading our case and sharing our cause with the Father.

**"Lives."** Jesus is alive to fulfill his role. His resurrection proves that Jesus is alive, but what is he doing with all that time at his disposal? He is praying for you and me. Christ's life in heaven is his prayer for us.

**"To intercede."** The word means "to meet, to approach, to appeal, to make petition." Intercession involved our Lord's representation of his people at the throne of God. Through Christ, believers are able to draw near to God in prayer. Sometimes we do not know what to pray or even how to pray, but Jesus does. He goes before the Father with our concerns. Jesus always knows how to pray as he should. Read Romans 8:26-27.

**"For them."** Jesus is praying for us, his disciples, his followers, his friends. Jesus lives for that relationship with God and keeps you and me in mind as he communes with the Father. When we pray, we join a prayer meeting that Jesus is already leading on our behalf.

Jesus is always alert and always ready to pray for me and you. As we incorporate these practices of prayer modeled by Jesus into our behavior, then we will see the power of prayer as manifested in Jesus' life a living reality in our lives.