

Subject: Prayer  
Text: Luke 11:1-4 (cf. 1 Timothy 2:1-8)  
Method: Textual  
**Title: "Lord, Teach Us To Pray" (The Privilege and Power of Prayer)**  
General Purpose: Examine the scripture for instruction regarding prayer.  
Specific Purpose: Encourage and equip for constructive, productive activity in prayer.

Thesis Sentence: Prayer is a blessing and privilege that can enrich man's relationship with God, aid in spiritual development, and positively affect the life and associations of the believer.

Introduction:

- A. Prayer is common in virtually all religions and is especially important in the Bible
  - 1. Understanding of prayer corresponds to understanding of God
  - 2. Prayer is dialogue with God
  - 3. Prayer leads to more meaningful communion with God
  - 4. Prayer leads to a greater understanding of God's will
- B. Prayer is a blessing and privilege for the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12; Jas. 5:16; Psm. 34:15; Prov. 15:29)
  - 1. Righteous have instant access to God
  - 2. Willfully disobedient and unrepentant cannot expect to have prayers answered

Body:

**I. The power and effectiveness of prayer -- God is the moving force (Lk. 11:2)**

- A. God intends for his children to rely on him and be concerned about all humankind
  - 1. Lk. 11:2 addresses intimate communication with the Almighty, reverence for him, respect for his will ("...who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2:4)
  - 2. 1 Tim. 2:1-2 "First of all" sets a high priority for "supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks"
  - 3. Goal: "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"
- B. From the Old Testament -- Israel was a nation established in prayer
  - 1. God heard the cries of his people, was aware of their plight, came down to deliver them (Ex. 3:7-10)
  - 2. Moses maintained constant communion with God (Ex. 3:1-4:17) throughout the wilderness wandering, interceded for Israel's benefit (Ex. 32:11-14)
  - 3. Prayer is prominent in the Psalms
    - a. Psalm 6 -- for healing strength in distress
    - b. Psalm 57 -- seek protection and safety
    - c. Psalm 63 -- praise, express joy in fellowship with God
    - d. Psalm 107 -- thanksgiving for deliverance and vindication
  - 4. Prayer is important in the Prophets -- Moral accountability accompanies genuine, communion with God (Hos. 7:13-14; Amos 4:4-5; Mal. 1:9-11)
  - 5. Fifteen years was added to Hezekiah's life (2 Kng. 20:1-7)
  - 6. Jonah prayed and was heard out of the belly of a fish and was heard (Jonah 2)
  - 7. Daily prayer was important to maintaining contact with God for the Hebrew exiles (Dan. 6:10)
- C. From the New Testament -- Jesus' prayer life encouraged an appreciation for prayer in his disciples (Lk. 11:1-4; cf. Mt. 6:9-13)
  - 1. This prayer emphasizes how to pray, rather than what to pray
  - 2. Set as a contrast to hypocritical, ritualistic prayer (Mt. 6:5-13)
    - a. Not to impress others (Mt. 6:5)
    - b. No long-winded attempts to manipulate God (Mt. 6:7)
    - c. Jesus prayed long (Lk. 6:12) and repeated himself (Mk. 14:36-42,

- esp. v. 39), but with entirely different motive
- 3. Paul prayed (Ac. 20:36; 21:; 1 Thes. 3:9-10 "night and day...exceedingly")
- 4. Replacement of Judas (Ac. 1:24-25)
- 5. During persecution, for boldness (Ac. 4:23-31)
- 6. In preparation for godly service (Ac. 9:40; 28:8)
- D. Other New Testament emphasis
  - 1. It avails much (Jas. 5:16-18; Eph. 3:20-21)
  - 2. Must be in accord with the will of God (1 Jn. 5:14-15)
    - a. David (2 Sam. 12:15-23)
    - b. Paul (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
  - 3. Early church continued steadfastly (Ac. 2:42)
    - a. When Peter was in prison (Ac. 12:1-13)
    - b. Sending evangelists to their work (Ac. 13:1-3)
  - 4. Every prayer answered: "Yes," or "No," or "Wait."

## II. The need for prayer -- God is the loving benefactor upon whom we rely (Lk. 11:2)

- A. Examples of Jesus' dependence upon the Father -- a regular and intense prayer life
  - 1. At the beginning of his ministry (Lk. 3:21-22)
  - 2. He spent the entire night in prayer before He chose the twelve apostles (Lk. 6:12-16)
  - 3. After feeding the 5,000 he went to pray (Mt. 14:22-23)
  - 4. For benefit of others present (Jn. 11:41-42)
  - 5. Upon the night of His betrayal (Jn. 17)
  - 6. Immediately before His arrest (Mt. 26:36-46)
  - 7. While being crucified, prayed at least three times (Mt. 27:46; Lk. 23:34, 46)
- B. Prayer is to be a part of daily life for the godly (1 Thes. 5:17; Rom. 12:12)
  - 1. To overcome temptations (Mt. 26:41)
  - 2. Confession of faults (Jas. 5:16)
  - 3. Forgiveness (Ac. 8:22)
  - 4. Study/truth seeking (Ac. 10:30-31; Jas. 1:5-8)
  - 5. Tribulation (Ac. 16:25)
  - 6. Society (1 Tim. 2:1)
  - 7. Enemies (Lk. 6:27-28)
  - 8. Church/brethren (Jas. 5:16)
  - 9. Leaders (1 Tim. 2:2)
  - 10. Strength/Boldness (Eph. 6:18-20)
  - 11. Thanksgiving (Col. 4:2)
  - 12. Need (Phil. 4:6)

## III. Conditions and attitudes in prayer (Lk. 11:4)

- A. Forgiven and forgiving (Mt. 6:14-15; Mk. 11:25-26)
- B. Faithfully obedient -- positive attitudes and conditions for effective prayer
  - 1. Humility (Mt. 6:2, 5-8; Lk 18:9-14)
  - 3. Faith (Mt. 21:22; cf. Mk. 11:24)
  - 4. Word must be in us, and must be in harmony with word (Jn. 15:7)
  - 5. Must be in accord with the will of God (1 Jn. 3:22; 5:14-15; Jas. 4:2-3; Mt. 26:39, 42; cf. Lk. 22:42)
  - 6. Must be in the name of Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:14; 16:23-24; Col. 3:17; 1 Tim. 2:5)
- C. Negative attitudes and conditions inhibit prayer
  - 1. Hypocritical (Mt. 6:5)
  - 2. Ritualistic (Mt. 6:7)
  - 3. Doubtful (Jas. 1:6-8)
  - 4. Selfishness (Jas. 4:2-3)
  - 5. Corrupted character (1 Pet. 3:12)

Conclusion:

- A. Prayer makes a difference (Jas. 4:2 -- problems go unresolved because divine help is not asked for)
  - 1. It is communion and communication between a father and his children
  - 2. God knows our needs, yet we must ask
  - 3. He is ready to answer, yet we must persist
- B. The faithful are assured that their requests will be heard (1 Jn. 3:22; 5:15)
- C. Prayer is powerful and effective, and has always been important in God's dealings with his people
  - 1. Israel's exodus was preceded by their cries having been heard by God
  - 2. Jesus' life was a consistent life of prayer
  - 3. The apostles and the early church relied heavily on prayer in every situation, both good and bad
  - 4. Christians today are to continue instant in prayer/pray without ceasing
- D. To be assured that our prayers will be answered by God:
  - 1. Biblical conditions and attitudes must be honored
  - 2. Must not be in a condition of unrepentant rebellion
  - 3. Must accept that God will answer in accord with his will
- E. Ultimately, a good, consistent prayer life will aid in these ways:
  - 1. Greater communion with God
  - 2. Greater understanding of his will
  - 3. More fruitful and productive service in the church
  - 4. More confidence, satisfaction, well-being and joy in Christianity

By

Randall F. Matheny  
Washington Street Church of Christ  
P.O. Box 177  
Saint Albans, WV 25177-0177

Biography: Married to Pamela S. Matheny. One child Evan Floyd Matheny. Native of Ohio. Eight year U.S. Air Force veteran, discharged 1979. Bachelor of Arts in Bible from Ohio Valley College. 1983. Preaching the gospel since 1980: Newport Ohio 1981-84; mission work in southern West Virginia (Rainelle and Union) 1985-89; first trip to India 1987; dedicated full time to Lord's work in India under the oversight of the elders of the Washington Street Church of Christ, Saint Albans, West Virginia, 1989 to present. Currently a resident of Cross Lanes, West Virginia.