

Exercise

Please read this prayer, that some call ‘The Lord’s Prayer,’ in **Matthew 6:1-13**. Find the words that express these reasons for praying daily: (a) To praise God, (b) To extend the kingdom of God, (c) To ask for what we need, (d) To ask for forgiveness, (e) To ask for protection from the evil one

Mr. Foolish has been listening at the door of the woodworking shop and enters. “I have been asking God for a larger house and I have not gotten it. God answers prayers only when He has a whim to do so. He does what He does because He is God, and we have nothing to do with it.”

“God does answer us,” Mr. Wise explains. “But answers to our prayers depend on our obedience, as 1 John 3:21, 22 explains. Four sins hinder our prayers: failure to forgive, selfishness, lack of faith, and lack of love for other people. We must confess these sins. If we do, God is faithful and just to forgive us and change our hearts, as 1 John 1:8-10 promises.”

That evening Learner gathers the believers at his house to ask God to protect Mr. Wise from the police. Like the New Testament church in Acts 4:29-31, they pray fervently. They ask God to let them take the good news about Jesus to the people.

Practical Work

- Help your flock to memorize the Lord’s Prayer in **Matthew 6:9-13**.
- Help fathers to instruct each member of their families to pray daily, privately and as a family. The best time normally to pray privately is early in the morning.
- Ask each family to set apart a definite time for daily family prayers.
- Inform the congregation when God answers prayers, to encourage others.
- Show your people how to pray sincerely from the heart without trying to impress people with big words or mindless repetitions.

Command of Christ #5

Pray

A few days later, Mr. Wise is talking to a truck driver at the market place about Christ when Caregiver rushes up and whispers, “The police plan to arrest you! I overheard two of them say so. The authorities do not like the way you speak so publicly about Jesus Christ! Come!”

They walk quickly to Learner’s shop. After they pray with Learner, Mr. Wise states, “I do not know how much longer I will be able to visit you. Before I quit, I want to make sure that prayer is a regular part of your life, and not just for when danger threatens. Jesus tells us to pray in John 16:24, so that our joy may be full. Let me tell you about Jesus’ Most Crucial Prayer when He was facing death.”



Exercise

Please read **Matthew 26:36-46** now to find:

- Where did Jesus pray?
- To whom did Jesus pray?
- What posture did Jesus take in this instance, which showed the great agony of his prayer?
- What was Jesus' greatest desire in His prayer, which led him to yield and give up his first request?

Mr. Wise comments to Learner and Caregiver in the woodworking shop, "Jesus persisted in pleading with His Father until He was ready to face death. He did not want to die on the cross, but He desired even more to obey God His Father. He trusted that the Father's answer, even if it was "no," was the best answer. We, too, should learn to keep praying fervently, trusting God instead of demanding our own desire."

"I prayed that you would not have to leave us," Caregiver says.

"God may want me to. Like Jesus, let us pray to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit, to show us His will, whatever it is. Do you remember what I taught you about prayer last week?"

"Yes," Learner replies. "We pray in the name of Jesus who is our only way to God. His death on the cross makes it possible for us to go directly into the presence of the Father to ask boldly for what we need, as Hebrews 4:16 reveals. Our sinfulness no longer blocks our prayers to God. Jesus is our only mediator."

Caregiver adds, "Scripture also tells us not to pray to the dead, in Deuteronomy 18:11. I did that before I knew Christ. I thought that the spirit of one of my ancestors put into my mind that I should not pay Learner for the chairs he made last year. Jesus has freed me and my family from our fear of those spirits! We know now that He has more power than any demon spirit."

Mr. Wise replies, "We must speak all our prayers only to God. And we pray in the name of Jesus, to whom God the Father has given all power in heaven and earth, as Matthew 28:18 reveals."

Caregiver asks Mr. Wise, "Is there one way to pray that is more powerful than other ways? If I repeat the same prayer many times or say it in a loud chant, will God be more willing answer me? Mr. Foolish told me that God hears our prayers only if we pray the way his cousin's church does."

"We are free to pray in different ways that we see in the Scriptures. God does not care whether we stand, sit, kneel or lie down, shout, pray silently, alone or with others. God wants us to pray from the heart without confusion. He cautioned against praying with fancy words or long repetitions to impress people, in Matthew 6. Before He yielded Himself to be arrested, Jesus prostrated himself on the ground to show His great need and His submission to the Father. Others in the Bible sat, stood, knelt, or raised their hands. People prayed in different ways. They talked, sang, chanted, prayed together as a group, and prayed silently. Our prayer is effective, not because of the position of our bodies, but because we are honest before God and pour out our hearts to Him, believing firmly that He hears."

Learner adds, "Sometimes Jesus went away to be alone to pray to His Father. We also pray alone every day to strengthen our relationship with our Father in heaven. Jesus also prayed publicly, so we, too, can pray out loud with our brothers and sisters in Christ."

Mr. Wise says, "Let me tell you the story in which Jesus Teaches us How to Pray. He gives us several reasons to pray, that are more important than our posture."

