



*Prayer*

*&*

*Providence*

**Lesson 3 – The Constancy of Prayer**



# Learning to Pray from the Psalms

## Prayers of Thanksgiving

- “O LORD my God, I cried out to You, And You healed me.” (30:2)
- “To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.” (30:12)
- “We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near.” (75:1)
- “I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And will call upon the name of the LORD. (116:17)
- “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” (118:1)
- “I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.” (138:2)





*“... pray without ceasing ...”*

*1 Thessalonians 5:17*

*“Watch therefore, and pray always” (Lu. 21:36)*

*“... praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:18)*

*“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2)*



# Prayer in the Life of Jesus

*“men always ought to pray and not lose heart.” (Lk. 18:1)*

- When?
  - in the morning long before daylight, in the afternoon, in the evening, late at night, all night, often
- Circumstances?
  - after the miracle of feeding, at His baptism, in the wilderness by Himself, before choosing the 12, before His transfiguration, in the garden
- Where?
  - on a mountain, in a garden, in an upper room, in the wilderness, gathered with the 70
- By Himself or with others?
  - By Himself often
  - But also: with the 70, amongst a large crowd, with His closest disciples, with 11 apostles at the last supper



## Luke 3:21-22

“When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, ‘You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.’”



## Mark 1:32-35

“At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him. Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”



## Matthew 14:22-23

“Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.”





## Luke 6:12-13

“Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:”

*“If the Lord, who was able to look into the heart of each man and determine his thoughts and character, felt the need to pray all night before selecting these men, how much more do fallible men such as we need to pray long and earnestly before making big decisions in life.”*



"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

Mark 1:35







# Prayer in the Early Church – the Book of Acts

- Apostles and some other disciples; gathered in a room after Jesus' resurrection (1:14)
- Some 120 disciples gathered to select a replacement for Judas (1:24)
- The church in Jerusalem continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and prayers (2:42)
- Peter and John – going to the temple at the hour of prayer (3:1)
- The disciples pray for boldness to speak in the face of persecution (4:24-31)
- The twelve apostles coordinating the selection of servants so they can give themselves to prayer; they prayed and laid hands on the seven at their dedication (6:2-6)



# Prayer in the Early Church – the Book of Acts

- Peter and John went to Samaria and prayed with the new converts that they might receive the Holy Spirit (8:14-15)
- Simon the Sorcerer asks that Peter pray for him for forgiveness (8:22-24)
- Saul after he sees the Lord on the road to Damascus – waits and prays (9:11)
- Peter kneels down over the dead body of Dorcas and prays before she is brought back to life (9:40)
- A Gentile, centurion, Cornelius, who prayed to God often (10:1-2, 30-31)
- Peter on the housetop praying alone at noontime (10:9; 11:5)





# Prayer in the Early Church – the Book of Acts

- Brethren in the early church pray together for the imprisoned Peter, and he is freed by an angel (12:5,12)
- The church at Antioch fasted, prayed, and laid hands on Barnabas and Saul as they sent them on their evangelistic mission (13:3)
- Barnabas and Paul appointed elders in every city and prayed with fasting to commend them to the Lord and to their service (14:23)
- Paul, Silas and Luke went to the place of prayer by the river on the Sabbath (16:13,16)
- At about midnight, while in prison, Paul and Silas are praying and singing hymns to God (16:25)



# Prayer in the Early Church – the Book of Acts

- Paul knelt down and prayed with the elders, just before he departed; and they all wept and embraced (20:36)
- Paul stops to meet with some disciples at Tyre. After their meeting, they knelt down on the seashore and prayed together (21:5)
- Paul and others on the doomed ship prayed for daylight to come (27:29)
- Paul on the island of Malta praying over a sick man, the father of Publius, and then healing him (28:8)



*“... pray without ceasing ...”*

1 Thessalonians 5:17





## ***“... pray without ceasing ...”***

- Prayer is an integral part of our life; it should be engrained in everything we do
- We should live with a continual, prayerful attitude
- Prayer should come naturally to a child of God; we're talking to our Father
- Can pray at any time under any circumstance
- Can be alone, in small groups, or with the church
- Personal prayers do not have to be formal – we can pour out our thoughts to God



# Saying Prayers vs. Praying

- What's the difference between saying prayers and praying?
  - If we're not careful, 'saying prayers' can become simply a rote activity; something expected of you; something you do in checking off your duties as a Christian.
  - Instead, we should be a praying people. Prayer should be a part of who we are. We should be in constant communication with God in all our walks of life.
- Pray without ceasing
  - Both an attitude of life that is ready to go to God at any time of the day, as well as a frequent habit of pouring out your thoughts to the Lord.



*“The greatest tragedy in life is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer.”*

F.B. Meyer





## Next Week – Lesson 4 – Praying for Others

1. What are intercessions? What kind of intercessions were typically made in the Old Testament? How about in the New Testament?
2. For whom should we pray? (reference 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Mt. 5:44-45; Lk. 6:28; Col. 4:2-4; Mt. 9:38; Eph. 6:18-20; 1 Jn. 5:16) What are some things we should pray for on their behalf?
3. In praying for others, how does prayer change me and my relationship with them?
4. Is there someone you find difficult to forgive? A long-harbored grudge perhaps? Consider Lk. 23:34 and Acts 7:60. How can such prayers help us with this?
5. Gale Sayers, a Hall of Fame NFL football player wrote a book titled, “I am third.” What did he mean by that? How does this idea impact your prayers?

+ Daily Readings from the Psalms