

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

LESSON: GETTING PRAYER RIGHT

MATTHEW 6:7-15

JUNE 6, 2021

MAIN POINT

Getting right with others in the only way to get prayer right

CHURCH CONTEXT

We are 3 weeks into taking a detour from our normal routine of studying through a book in the Bible and investing that time in prayer. We desire to be a church who is sensitive to God's leading. Thanks for joining in this journey!

Our goal for Sunday school today is to prioritize prayer. Where the typical or normal Sunday school practice is to teach/discuss a lesson for 40 minutes and pray for 10 minutes, we want to encourage our groups to flip their normal routine. We encourage you to teach/discuss a lesson for 10 minutes and then dedicate 40 minutes to prayer. (Teachers, feel free to cut the lesson short if you notice your teaching time is going to long. Prioritize praying.)

This particular lesson may require time for people to step out of class and take immediate action. Prayerfully lead your people to be doers of the Word, and not hearers only.

INTRODUCTION – TIPS AND EXPECTATIONS (5 minutes)

Praying for 40 minutes might seem daunting. No worries, this is new to most of us. Here are some tips and realistic expectations for how this time might go.

1. We have a guided plan – As class leader this morning, I'll provide instructions and designated segments for us to pray.
2. Everyone is welcome/encouraged to pray – Some of you may feel comfortable praying out loud and perhaps others don't. Just know that during this time, no one is grading prayers, making judgments, or criticizing others. Scripture informs us, "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matt. 6:7-8). Our hope is that you feel comfort and freedom to

pray out loud knowing that you pray to a Father who already knows what you need. If you are guest with us, we are glad you are here. We would love for you to pray, but no pressure.

3. At the same time, our prayer time might feel uncomfortable – And that is ok! This is a new venture for us. There may be extended times of silence. People are welcome to take a different posture than normal. Praying for 40 minutes might seem long for some, and someone might get restless. All this is ok. We can stretch ourselves in prayer and through any perceived awkwardness.
4. Allow yourselves to enjoy it. If I am honest, when going to extended prayer times, I often assume the time will be hard, awkward, pressured, or boring. I hate to admit it, but it is true. However, despite often going begrudgingly, I discover that many extended prayer times surprise me in how refreshing, enjoyable and how fast the time goes by. So, if you are hesitant, allow yourself to be surprised with the joy of prayer.

EXPLANATION // 10 minutes

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says.

Context: Jesus is in Galilee and large crowds from all over the region are following him (Mt 4:23,25). He sits down on a mountainside and is teaching his disciples. Those listening are discovering the way Jesus says to live. Jesus is turning much of what they know culturally on its head. He then teaches them to pray...

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:7-8

Looking at verses 7-8, what stands out to you?

Why does this say the pagans babble in their prayers?

Note: No amount of talking can get a false god to meet your needs. We can talk about what we want endlessly, but only God knows our needs.

If it is not our words God needs to hear, then why does he expect us to pray (note: “when” you pray)?

Note: Class should conclude its about God getting our hearts where they need to be. Not about us getting God to do what we want.

Mt 6:8 – “Father knows what you “need” (ΧΡΕΪΑΝ chreian: Need, necessary). Imagine praying about what you want, what you think you need, while God knows/sees what you really need.

Our prayers then are not to get what we want from God, but for God to do in us what we need.

Does anyone have an example of when God met your need through prayer? Maybe even when He didn't give you what you wanted?

Jesus teaches them a model prayer that would right their heart before God.

We could spend weeks expositing this prayer, but for today we will pan out and look at the basic flow.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:9-13

Note the flow of the prayer:

Vs 9 – **Sovereignty** of God

Vs 10 – **Surrender** to God

Vs 11 – **Supply** in God

Vs 12 – **Sanctified** by God

Vs 13 – **Safety** from God

OR more simply: Posture, Provision, Protection

Prayers begins with posturing ourselves under God's Sovereignty in complete surrender.

It moves to recognizing His provision both in daily need and deepest spiritual need of forgiveness. He supplies all we need for both physical and spiritual life.

He sanctifies us in providing freedom from unforgiveness. More on this later.

We can ask for His protection from a place of surrender. The kind of safety only offered to those are truly trusting Him.

Which of these prayer postures do you most often neglect? Why?

We will practice this prayer pattern today...but first we must finish the text.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:14-15

Just like in Ephesians 6, where prayer is the key to the armor of God; here, forgiveness of others is the key to right prayer.

Getting right with others in the only way to get prayer right

Note the support for unheard prayers:

John 9:31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.

Proverbs 28:9 If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

Psalms 66:18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

Just before this teaching, Jesus had told them how to handle an offended heart when approaching God.

Matthew 5:23-24 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Jesus clearly states a link between God’s forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of others. Why do you think these are linked?

Class should conclude that forgiveness comes to a repentant heart and a repentant heart would not harbor bitterness.

Charles Ellicott (1819-1905) writes, “The condition implied in the Prayer itself is more distinctly asserted. It is, as we have seen, not an arbitrary condition, but the result of the eternal laws of the divine order. **Repentance is the condition of being forgiven, and the temper that does not forgive is *ipso facto* incompatible with the temper of the penitent.** As if for greater emphasis, the truth is presented in both its positive and negative aspects.”

APPLICATION //

If God is to move in us and through us as a result of our prayers...there must be no unforgiveness among us.

The command here from Jesus in one of His clearest teaching on prayer is humility *before* others (Mt. 6:5-13), forgiveness *of* others (6:12-15), and prayer *with* others (note: “*Our Father*”, “*Give Us*”. In Humility we not only pray alone (6:6), but also corporately.

PRAYER – 40 minutes

For this week, our prayer time will consist of three steps: Reflection, Action, Reaction.

Reflection

- Get something out to take notes with
- Consider these texts: Jeremiah 17:5-10, Psalm 51, 139, 1 Peter 3:8-12, 2 Corinthians 13:5-11(emphasis vs 11)
- Sit in silence asking God to make you aware of any offense you hold against someone else

- Write down the person associated with that offense
- Write down the step you need to take to forgive and move on in unity

Action

- Do it. If it can happen right now, do it. Leave the room and make the call. Send the text. Step aside with your spouse. Go get the person out of the pew. Forgive.
- If it can't be done now, commit to taking the first step today.
- Share it. The best accountability is to ask others to pray for your obedience in forgiving. Share whom you need to reconcile with and ask your class to pray over. This is one way we fulfill Galatians 6:2 in bearing one another's burdens.

Reaction

- From a place of confidence that you have left nothing unreconciled, pray through steps Christ gave us.
- For each stage, spend time praying aloud as a group.
- Tips:
 - o Consider reading scripture aloud as prayer for each stage. Some will be listed should you need it.
 - o Consider one word prayers. This is when you ask everyone in the room to say aloud 1 word or 1 phrase that reflects their heart. I will list words people might pray aloud in a one word prayer format.
 - o Consider asking 1-2 volunteers for each stage to commit to praying aloud for the group to agree with. This creates less worry in the group and gives more confidence to the person praying. By asking ahead of time, someone may volunteer to pray who would not speak up in a typical open ended prayer moment.
 - o Just do it. God's people are praying people...don't overthink it. Just pray.

1. – **Sovereignty** of God

Exalt God for He who is described to be in His word.

One Word Prayer Examples: Powerful, Authority, Trust, Ruler, Everlasting, Unchanging, etc.

Text: Psalm 115:3, 1 Chronicles 29:11-12, Job 42:2, Isaiah 46:9-10, Psalm 103:19

2. – **Surrender** to God

Come under the authority of God, holding nothing back from Him.

One Word Prayer Examples: I trust you, A better plan, Letting Go, Your Will be done, Not my Will, etc.

Text: Proverbs 16:9, 19:21; James 4:7; Mark 14:36; Romans 8:28, 12:1; Proverbs 21:1

3. – **Supply** in God

Speak your requests to God for the needs felt in this moment.

One Word Prayer Examples: Hope, Love, Healing, Help, Kids, Home, Job, etc.

Text: Philippians 4:19, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Matthew 6:31-33, Psalm 23:1, 34:10

4. – **Sanctified** by God

Remember God knows what you really need, and it may be to reshape your heart. Ask forgiveness where it is needed and pray over those you have recently had to forgive .

One Word Prayer Examples: Pride, Envy, Bitterness, Laziness, Holy, Restore, etc.

Text: Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 John 1:9, Ephesians 4:32, Luke 17:3-4, Colossians 3:13

5. – **Safety** from God

Pray for God's leading and protection as you live wholly for Him.

One Word Prayer Examples: Cover, Protect, Surround, Guide, Lead, Light my path, renew my mind, strengthen, etc.

Text: Psalm 46:1, Deuteronomy 31:6, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, Isaiah 41:10, Proverbs 18:10, 1 Samuel 22:3-4