

Adult Teaching Resources

July 28, 2019



Season After Pentecost (June 16-November 24)

On the Road with Jesus

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 – “A Mission Trip to Remember”

Luke 10:25-37 – “A Wonder on the Road”

Luke 10:38-42 – “A Better Way to Go”

Luke 11:1-13 – “A Good Way to Pray”

www.nurturingfaith.net

Subscribe to *Nurturing Faith* to access the core Bible content for this lesson.
Find links and videos related to this lesson.

A Good Way to Pray

Luke 11:1-13

FIT Teaching Guide

by David Woody

This adult teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Bible Background

“So I say to you, ‘Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.’” Luke 11:9

Prayer is a part of our lives. We pray before meals. We pray in worship. We pray before we go to sleep. We pray in this class. We pray...

As much time as we spend in prayer and with praying, we can still learn a lot about this important spiritual discipline. Today we explore the Lord’s Prayer from the book of Luke. May our ears be opened to hear these words in a new way.

Opening

After everyone arrives, ask your group to form smaller groups of 3-4. Give each group a pen and a piece of paper. Ask everyone to think about all the different times/situations we engage in prayer and list them. For example: pray at meals, pray at ballgames, pray at church, etc.

Give each group time to make that list.

Then, ask each group to make a separate list with the concerns/issues we pray for. For example: we pray to bless our food, we pray so that our team will win, we pray for God’s presence at worship, etc.

Give each group time to make that list.

Then, make a large list on the board asking for responses from the large group. In one column, list the times/situations we pray. In the corresponding column, list the concerns/issues we pray for in that situation.

Spend some time talking about how many times we go to God in prayer and the focus and intent of those prayers.

What does this list say about us as a praying people?

Reading the Bible

Where was he praying? (in a certain place)

What did one of the disciples say to Jesus? (Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.)

How did Jesus start his prayer? (Father, hallowed be your name)

What was his first petition? (Your kingdom come)

What was his stated desire? (Give us each day our daily bread)

What did he pray for about self and relationship with others? (forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us)

What hope did he pray for? (do not bring us into the time of trial)

What story did Jesus tell to explain prayer? (vv5-7)

What quality did the friend use? (persistence)

What happens when you ask? (it will be given to you) When you search? (you will find)
When you knock? (the door will be opened for you)

What do you give a child? (what he or she asks for, not a substitute)

What will the heavenly Father give to those who ask him? (much more than the evil who give good gifts)

Making Connections

When did you learn how to pray? What do you remember learning about prayer at that age?
What kind of prayers did you pray?

What kind of prayers do you pray today? When do you pray? Have your prayers changed through the years? If so, how?

Is there a special prayer you have memorized that you pray often? What is it? What is special about that prayer?

Have you taught someone else to pray? What did you teach?

What do you think is the most important part of a prayer? Explain your answer.

Our Lesson Writer says, "Praying as children who trust God to know what is best, we learn that the purpose of prayer is not to bend God's will to our will, the other way around. We don't pray so much until God hears us, but until we hear God." How do you listen to God when you pray?

As you read verses 3-4 of this passage, what does Jesus mean with "give us daily bread; forgive us our sins; we forgive everyone indebted to us; do not bring us to the time of trial?" What do those phrases say about God's intention for us?

Making Connections *continued*

When have you been bothered by a friend to do something, very easy for you to do, but kept putting it off until you finally met your friend's need? Share that story.

Have you ever been asked to provide one thing, but then substituted it with something else? If so, what happened? What was the reason for the substitution? Have you ever asked for something and received something different? How did that make you feel?

So What?

For this section, have copies of the “What to acknowledge (vv1-2)” and “What to ask for (vv.3-4)” from the written lesson for everyone to read. Pass out the copies to everyone and have them gather back in their small groups from the beginning of the class.

Ask each group to read these two sections about the Lord's Prayer, paying special attention to the explanation our Lesson Writer gives for each section of the prayer.

Then, give each group time to discuss what they've read and share any insights about prayer they had not thought of or had not been taught.

These questions can help, for example:

The way we begin our prayer is important, as it sets the parameters for our prayers. What do you say to begin your prayer? What parameters does that set?

Hallowed be thy name...what does hallowed mean from our Lesson Writer? How do you translate that phrase to make sense to you?

What is it that you desire from God? God's kingdom to come? Daily bread? More money? A new car?

Do you ask God more or do you trust God more? How is that revealed in your prayers?

How does sin and forgiveness find a place in your prayers? What do you do with those who have sinned against you?

After reading this prayer and discussing it, what have you learned about prayer from Jesus?

The Challenge

This week, write your own prayer, modeled after this prayer. Share it with a friend and pray it every day.

Prayer

Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial. Amen.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Crossed wires—Many years ago, when I was serving as a church pastor, I once drove an aging church van through the winding mountain roads of southeastern Kentucky, near Williamsburg. The van was loaded with youth returning from a night of teaching mission Vacation Bible School at a small rural Baptist church. It was dark, it was pouring down rain, and I could not get the windshield wipers to work. It was slow going.

When we finally arrived back at the motel and I slowly switched off the ignition, the wipers jumped into action began their merry dance. Worn connections in the ignition switch still made contact in the “accessory” position, but not in the “on” position used for driving. Power was available, but the connection was not there.

It occurred to me that our Christian lives are sometimes ineffective and devoid of power largely because our “prayer wires” are crossed or frayed. We don’t make an effective connection with God, and we don’t experience the power of the Spirit’s presence. Like the disciples, we could profit from asking Jesus, “Teach us to pray.”

For what purpose?—When I played football in high school, the entire team would always gather in a huddle and recite the prayer as the last act before game time. Coming to the end, our husky voices would grow more guttural as we chanted in rapid fashion: “*and lead us not into temptation – but deliver us from evil – for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory – forever and ever – Amen.*”

“Arrrrggghhhh! Let’s go get ’em!”

We can cheapen the prayer Jesus taught in many ways, but he gave it to us for a purpose, for our learning. How can we revitalize this prayer and make it a more meaningful?

We note that Jesus was teaching his followers *how* to pray, not just *what words to pray*. Prayer is not about speaking magic words, but about adopting the proper attitude before God.

Hallowed be thy name—Ritual texts in the Old Testament connected keeping the commandments with honoring or sanctifying God’s name (see, for example, Lev. 11:44 and 22:31-33). When people who live in covenant with God behave badly, they bring dishonor on God’s name. Correspondingly, those who keep the commandments honor God’s name.

As Richard Vinson has written, “In other words, keeping God’s name holy was the result of actually doing God’s commandments. In the context of the prayer, “let your name be made holy” is a prayer for people to do the right thing, and therefore for God to do whatever God can do to make that happen” (*Luke* [Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentaries, 2008], 369).

Digging Deeper *continued*

The essence of prayer—You may be familiar with television or radio evangelists who gained their fame (and made their fortunes) by claiming they could teach people to pray with such faith and power that they could get whatever they wanted from God. Does the prayer Jesus taught support that teaching? What is the best thing for us to ask of God?

Daily bread—If we think about it, the request to “give us each day our daily bread” is a prayer for subsistence rations: just enough food for each day. How does that compare with what we normally think of as requirements for a comfortable life? Does earnestly praying this way mean that we should be praying for *less*?

This is an appropriate place to remember that the prayer is designed as a community prayer, not an individual one. “Give us each day our daily bread,” “Forgive us our sins.” We do not pray for ourselves alone, but for others. If we truly ask God to “give *us* our daily bread,” should we not seek a lifestyle that focuses less on our own excess and more on seeing to it that everyone has daily bread?

Praying – and working—We pray for many things other than bread or physical sustenance. We also pray for things like peace and justice. In doing so, we recognize that we pray as participants in God’s kingdom and as co-workers with God.

That means that as we pray, we also work. We can’t effectively pray for justice unless we are also willing to work for justice. The same people who pray for peace are to be at work as peacemakers. The same people who pray for the hungry to be fed are working to provide food. The same people who pray for the homeless to be sheltered can support shelters and soup kitchens and programs that provide housing for low-income families.

Prayer, then, is not a matter of “give me, give me” but of “make me, make me!” When we say that prayer changes things, sometimes the thing that needs most to be changed is *us*.

Has a time of prayer ever led directly to a change in your life?

The insistent friend—Do you read the comics? I have followed Dagwood and Blondie for at least 50 years. Many things have changed in that time: Blondie is no longer a homemaker alone, but she owns and operates her own catering business. The kids now have computers and cell phones. Some things, however, do not change. Dagwood still eats like a starving horse and sleeps half the time, but remains as thin as a rail. Dagwood’s hair still looks like a chicken trying to fly. Dagwood’s boss won’t give him a raise, and next door neighbor Herb continues to borrow Dagwood’s tools with some frequency, but never returns them.

Do you have neighbors who brashly borrow from you, even at inconvenient times? Jesus apparently knew people like that, and one of them became the subject of his parable about prayer, the story of the insistent friend.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Why is Luke's version of the prayer so different from the one we normally recite?

Few of us could recite Luke's version of what we think of as "the Lord's Prayer." There are significant differences, not just the wording but in the location. Matthew puts the prayer in the context of Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew 5-7) as a contrast the hypocrisy of those who offered ostentatious and public prayers. Luke has a shorter but similar "Sermon on the Plain" (Luke 6:17-49), but he does not locate the prayer there. Rather, he puts it in the context of Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem, with greater emphasis on praying with faith, and faithfully.

Here we compare the two:

Matthew 6:9 "Pray then in this way:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.
Luke 11:2 He said to them, "When you pray, say:
Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
3 Give us each day our daily bread.
4 And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial."

The Hardest Question *continued*

Both of these are quoted from the NRSV. As a result, even the version from Matthew is unlike what we're accustomed to, as the prayer is commonly quoted from the King James Version. This brings in the issue of text traditions: the KJV is different at several points, most notably with the conclusion "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen."

The earliest and most original Greek manuscripts such as Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, from the 4th century; and Codex Bezae, from the 5th century; do not include this verse. It probably originated as a formula to close the prayer in the liturgy of the early church. A scribe who was familiar with the addition apparently added it to the copy he was making at a later point.

Over time, an expanded text containing this, along with other interpolations such as the longer ending of Mark (after Mark 16:8), became popular and were copied more frequently. Thus, we have higher numbers of these manuscripts, many of which belong to what is called the "Western" tradition, but they represent a less original version of the text.

Having more copies of the text containing the additions, and not recognizing the superiority of the rarer but older manuscripts, translators of the King James Version largely followed the Western text. Thus, the KJV includes the long "thine is the kingdom" clause in Matt. 6:13, but newer translations tend to omit it (NRSV and NET), or to include it with a footnote explaining that it's probably a later addition (HCSB, NASB95).

In a similar way, the KJV includes the addition of "which art in heaven" to Luke 11:2 and "but deliver us from evil" at the end of Luke 11:4. These are missing from the earliest manuscripts, and were almost certainly harmonizing additions, added later so Luke's version would be more like the one in Matthew. Modern translations stay closer to what are judged to be the earliest and most reliable manuscripts.

The gospel of Mark, used as a source by both Matthew and Luke, contains a related verse about forgiving and being forgiven, but not the entire prayer. There Jesus instructs the disciples: "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).