

Intro

- My one desire: for us to pray more
- I've sat through many things like this and nothing has happened in my life
- We need the Holy Spirit to move in order to pray

I. Why We Pray

why we don't pray...

Some anthropology: when we sin, it reveals a false belief our heart has about God. Things don't "make us" sin, but rather they "reveal" sin within us. Prayer touches a very deep part of who we are. It's a belief issue, not a "time" issue. And so....

- Shame, Doubt (Independence), Apathy, Anxiety, Legalism (we think it's about "prayer". it's not. it's about a person), NOT TIME!

why we should pray...

- we were created for it: the divine spark longs for home
- Our Identity: Sons & Daughters
- We need it (Jesus needed it)
- (Paul Miller, in his book *A Praying life*, makes a statement that has always stuck with me. "When Jesus tells us to become like little children, he isn't telling us to do anything he isn't already doing. Jesus is, without question, the most dependent human being who ever lived. Because he can't do life on his own, he prays. And he prays. And he prays." pg. 45)
- we all desire that "weird" intimacy: Hosea 2, Psalm 63, Brother Lawrence

the "Story" of prayer...

- 1) **Gen. 3.** God walking in the Garden at the time of the evening breezes. He "calls" out to them (with words). Evidence of a broken conversation.
- 2) **Leviticus 26** ~ God tells Moses he will walk with his people and be in their midst when the covenant is fulfilled.
- 3) **John 1:14,18** ~ This promise has come true in Jesus. God in the flesh (tabernacling with the people). The intimacy with the Father is now restored through the intimacy that Jesus has with the Father. The Father is now walking amongst his people in Jesus.
- 4) **Romans** ~ Major theme "union with Christ". We, being in Christ, have the Spirit of adoption and so we cry out as Jesus does "Abba, Father."
 - The use of "Father" for "God" in the N.T. 63% over the 3% in the O.T. is a stark contrast. Why? Jesus is restoring us to this intimacy and relationship.
 - The Spirit and Jesus pray for us because we are weak and **don't know how to pray**. When we go to pray, we should know that our prayers (our desires, hopes, fears, everything that we can't express)

is already being offered for us by the Spirit and Jesus. (Rom. 8)

- This frees us because when we go to pray we aren't trying to break into heaven so that God can hear us. Jesus has already done that for us. As soon as we go to pray, whether out loud or silently in our hearts, we are immediately rushed into the Father's presence. He listens to us as he does Jesus because the Father sees and hears us in his Son. (this might be a little mystical and need more explanation) Our prayers are joined up to the prayers that are already being offered on our behalf.

- It's as if there is a stream of prayer flowing out of us from the Spirit/Jesus to the Father and our prayers are joining this stream. This should encourage us to pray. We are motivated to pray because of the Gospel, not because it's something that we "do" to gain access to the Father. We already have access in Jesus.

- **This is better than the Garden: Revelation 21:1** - "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "*See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them.*"

What we know by faith now will be seen with our own eyes in the end. We have a real taste of this intimacy now.

II. How We Pray

with one other...

- community life overflows into personal, not other way around
- story of person who started praying because of home group
- Sunday morning liturgy: **Communion=perfect prayer** (we come with nothing and receive everything: Jesus)
- "we need to stop praying *for* people so much and start praying *with* people"

with our (whole) selves...

- constant communication, but also dates (marriage analogy)
- out loud (there's no instance of silent prayer in the Bible)
- with our bodies (Lord's prayer example: kneeling, seated, hands)

with freedom...

- cuss in prayer
- "Daddy"
- distractions
- REMEMBER: different seasons, different prayer

with help... (go through my examples)

- pray scripture (Psalms, Lord's Prayer, Letters); be intentional--hard to pray genealogies.
- pray other translations (*The Message, NLT, The Voice*)
- JOURNAL!
- book of common prayer
- church prayerbooks
- valley of vision

- children's bible

[*NOTE 1: Dry Seasons:* Hosea 2, God is in the desert. They test and strengthen our faith. Stay faithful, pray with others.]

III. Let Us Pray

- pray the psalms (Psalm 117)
- pray the letters
- the Lord's prayer (ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)
- **Kenneth Boa: 8 forms of prayer in Lord's Prayer.**

Adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, affirmation, thanksgiving, and closing prayer are all illustrated in this model prayer:

“Father in heaven,hallowed be Your name”—The prayer principles of adoration (praise for who God is) and thanksgiving (praise for what He has done). “Your kingdom come;Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”—The principle of affirmation,that is, agreeing with God’s will and submitting to it. “Give us our daily bread”—The principle of supplication,in which we make requests both for ourselves (petition) and for others (intercession). “And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors”—The principle of confession in view of our need for forgiveness of sins. “And lead us not into temptation,but deliver us from the evil one”—The necessity of renewal as we face the temptations of the world,the flesh, and the devil. “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever”—A closing prayer that honors the Lord and completes our thoughts.

Strategies to begin/enhance prayer life

What to pray

- pray only prayers of adoration for a week
- pray through liberti worship guide
- pray for first newspaper headline you see
- Pray one form of prayer a day
- follow one of the helps for prayer listed

Where to pray

- parks
- “your” beautiful spot in the city
- a spot in the house where you can be alone
- car

When to pray

- try for early morning: there's a unique grace in it (I SUCK at this!)

- yes, pray throughout the day, but seek intentional time
- try late at night
- try and pray the “liturgical hours”:

Books about Prayer:

A Praying Life, Paul Miller

Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament, Richard N. Longenecker editor. (Specifically the article “The Lord’s Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer” by N.T. Wright. This book is a more in-depth theological study of prayer.)

The Practice of the Presence of God, Brother Lawrence

Books to aid your Prayer:

Prayer, Richard Foster

Books of Common Prayer

The Voice of Psalms, Ecclesia Bible Society

The Valley of Vision

Handbook of Prayer: Praying Scripture Back to God, Kenneth Boa