

The Life Challenge

Title: Prayer Engagement
Text: Matthew 6:5-15
Speaker: Matt Ewert
Date: April 26, 2020



WARM-UP

“At its lowest, prayer is shouting into a void on the off-chance there may be someone out there listening. At its highest, prayer merges into love, as the presence of God becomes so real that we pass beyond words and into a sense of his reality, generosity, delight and grace. For most Christians, most of the time, it takes place somewhere in between those two extremes.” —N.T. Wright

- With that statement in mind, reflect on your own prayer life. How would you describe your experience of prayer, and how has that experience changed over the years?

DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 6:5-15

- Put into your own words what it is you believe Jesus is calling people to guard against in prayer.
- What themes do you note in the prayer Jesus taught in this passage?
- Which of these themes are a regular part of your own prayer times?
- Which of these themes do you tend to “miss” when you pray?

In referring to Matthew 5:14-15, Pastor Matt suggested that we should not expect God to respond to prayer and act on our behalf in ways that we are unwilling to act towards others.

- What do you think about that statement?
- Can you think of things you ask God to do for you that you hesitate, or refuse, to do for others (forgiveness, mercy, grace, compassion, meeting needs, etc.)?
- What is one change you could make in how you respond to others that would bring your life more in line with how you ask God to act on your behalf?

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PRAYER

For this week's Life Challenge, instead of just talking about prayer, let's create some space for a more extended time of prayer.

Below is a guided prayer outline based on the prayer Jesus taught in this passage. Either individually, or with others, take time to work through it by declaring each line, and then adding your own prayers as suggested.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...

- *prayers of adoration and thanksgiving*

Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...

- *prayers of longing for God's rule and peace*

Give us this day our daily bread...

- *prayers for the needs of our community*

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...

- *prayers for interpersonal reconciliation*

And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one...

- *prayers for the world and personal struggles with temptation and evil*

For the kingdom and the power and the glory are your forever. Amen.

*Prayer adapted from "The Worship Sourcebook"