



Well Prayed Check Your Motive

Need help navigating an online group session? Reach out to MichaelS@wschurch.org with questions and to get tips for how to stay connected even when you can't meet in person!

Jesus didn't simply TELL us how to pray. He SHOWED us. Knowing how NOT to pray is a good starting point for developing a genuine prayer life. We'll discuss what that looks like in our lives.

Scripture:

5 "When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. 6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

7 "When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. 8 Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! 9 Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,
 may your name be kept holy.
10 May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
 as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today the food we need,
12 and forgive us our sins,
 as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
13 And don't let us yield to temptation,
 but rescue us from the evil one.

Matthew 6:5-13

“These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.”

Matthew 15:8

Icebreaker and Intro Questions:

1. What’s the last thing you experienced that made you laugh or cry?
2. What resonated with you from Sunday’s service? (Sermon, scripture, song, etc.)

Discussion Questions:

3. How comfortable would you be if you were asked to pray out loud for the group right now? What thoughts come to mind when someone asks you to pray out loud?
4. Give everyone a moment to read Matthew 6:5-13 quietly on your own. Take a moment to notice something new about prayer as you read Jesus’ words.
5. Read Matthew 6:5 aloud as a group. What are some examples of “performance prayers” you can think of? How do we make sure we avoid praying in that way?
6. Read Matthew 15:8 aloud as a group. How does this challenge your motives?
7. Read Matthew 6:7-8 aloud as a group. How does this comfort you? How does this challenge you?
8. Spend some time in prayer together as a group.
 - a. To start have everyone take a few moments to pause and pray silently.
 - b. Ask God to reveal himself in new ways in your prayer life throughout this series.
 - c. Then choose someone to pray the prayer Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:9-13.

Prayer Practice for this Week:

- PAUSE –
 - Sometimes we jump into prayer by immediately talking to God about the things we want. **Our challenge this week is to take a moment as you begin praying to PAUSE.** Focus your scattered senses on the fact that God is with you.
 - Take a few deep breaths, and listen to this paraphrase of Jesus’ words: “Here’s what I want you to do: Find a secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.” Matthew 6:6 (Message paraphrase)
 - Try to find a quiet spot once a day (could be in the morning, in the middle of the day, or in the evening), to PAUSE, and to be with God as simply and honestly as you can. Ask him to teach you how to pray.

More Ideas for this Week:

- Like Eddie mentioned, use Jesus’ words this week, praying the Lord’s Prayer once a day. Pray these words slowly, thoughtfully, and allow your body, mind and spirit to be focused on God as you say the words.
- Try some different times and places to pray privately this week – even for just a short moment! See if pausing to pray and turn your attention to God in the morning, in the middle of the day, or before bed in a quiet spot helps you stay connected to His love and presence throughout the week.

- We've put together several excellent resources for you to use during the Well-Prayed teaching series at West Side. Check out several Bible reading plans, video resources, and prayer tools at wschurch.org/resources.

Notes: