

# Prayer

Luke 11:1-4

Introduction: Prayer is an act of faith. A privilege extended only to those who serve the Lord (John 9:31). Yet, few things become so routine and ritualistic than prayer.

## I. Incentives to prayer.

A. God has a personal relationship with man comparable to that of a father with his son (Matt. 7:9-11). We know that he is concerned with our wants and needs.

B. God is willing to grant our requests (Matt. 7:7-8).

C. God is conscious of us (Luke 12:7). He values us more than the other living creatures of the earth.

D. God's power is sufficient to grant anything which we need (Eph. 3:20; Matt. 19:26).

## II. Things for which we should pray.

A. Those who spitefully use us (Matt. 5:44). Not normally an easy thing to do. We must subdue our fleshly tendency toward revenge and pray for our enemies.

B. That we fall not into temptation (Mark 14:38).

C. Problems in life

1. Jesus instructed those living in Jerusalem to pray for their safety during Jerusalem's destruction (Matt. 24:20).

2. Pray for our illnesses and sufferings (Jas. 5:13-15).

3. Pray for one another when we trespass one another (Jas. 5:16).

D. For civil leaders (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

E. For the progress of the gospel (2 Thess. 3:1).

F. For the lost (Rom. 10:1-3).

## III. Things that hinder prayer.

A. Lack of faith (Jas. 1:5-8; Mark 11:24).

B. Asking with the wrong intent (Jas. 4:1-3). Amiss means "evilly" or "out of bounds." It's the idea of praying for the wrong reason. The context shows that some asked in prayer for things after which they lusted and over which they fought. For example, praying to have God teach them a lesson (in retaliation or revenge). Praying to win a ball game or wanting to acquire a sibling's inheritance.

C. Self-righteousness or exalting oneself (Luke 18:9-14). Both show a lack of humility in prayer.

#### IV. Abuses in prayer.

A. Praying for show (Matt. 6:5). Such a person's reward is the praise he receives from those he is entertaining in prayer. Rather, the Lord tells us to pray in private (Matt. 6:6).

B. Repetitions in prayer (Matt. 6:7). It's the idea of repeating yourself over and over again. However, the Lord wants us to be persistent in prayer (Luke 11:5-8).

C. Pretense (Mark 12:38-40). Here, the scribes are making a show of the piety but are actually wicked. Pretense means to cloak. Vines: "It signifies the assuming of something so as to disguise one's real motive." The result of such speech is to appear shining. But it's just show. Here are a few examples:

1. The one who refuses to attend Bible study thanking God for his revealed word.
2. Those that forsake the assembly thanking God for another opportunity to gather together.
3. Those who gossip/slander others while proclaiming love for one another.

Conclusion: Let us exercise the privilege of prayer with caution. It's an honor that we can pray to God at all. Let's not abuse the privilege. At the same time let us pray often for the things he has instructed us to pray (1 Thess. 5:16-18).