

HINDERING OUR PRAYERS

Jesus concluded His teaching on prayer by emphasizing the need for forgiveness. The implication is that if we have unforgiveness in our hearts, our prayers are hindered from being effective.

8. What is the apparent condition to receiving forgiveness from God? (Mat. 6:14-15)
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9. There can be several reasons why prayers go unanswered. Examine Luke 18. What is Jesus encouraging us to do in praying?
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Praying is something that we all need to do more of. How we spend our time is an indicator of what we regard as valuable. If we put private time into prayer, we are saying to God that we think our relationship with God is important. As a church we need to be a people who pray privately. But we also need to be a people who pray and watch together. There is something significantly powerful when a group of people meet together to pray for a common focus. Acts chapter 2 is a good example of this. Let's pray!

Amen.

LIVING DIFFERENTLY

Part Two

This second series of studies on the remainder of the Beatitudes is designed to show us how Christ expects us to live. We have already seen that if the world lived by the standards of Christ, our societies would be radically different. While our societies may not corporately change, we as individuals can. This is what Christ expects. He not only prescribes how we should change, but He also gives us the supernatural power to do so.

CONNECTING WITH GOD

Read Matthew 6:5-15



There were three pillars of religious duty in the Jewish faith. The first was giving, the second was praying and the third was fasting. Each of these were meant to be a secret act. But the Pharisees had transformed them into pious shows.

The best aspect to Christ's teaching on prayer is His example. The disciples knew He prayed. They also witnessed the results.

SECRET PRAYING

What is prayer? To some it is the repetition of chants, mantras, or formal prayers out of a book. But prayer is the language of relationship. It is not the relationship of two equals. Praying involves a person seeking something from someone greater, to whom we are dependant. Praying to God acknowledges that we recognise that He is greater than us, and that we need Him.

1. What do you notice about Christ in these verses?
Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 9:28-29; 22:32; 22:41, 44; ____

2. Note Luke 11:1-4. Why do you think the disciples asked Christ the question contained in verse 2, considering that they would have been instructed how to pray by their rabbis?

As with giving, Jesus said that there were two kinds of rewards available to people if they prayed with a right heart.

3. What kind of reward for praying were the Pharisees looking for? How does this compare to what Jesus said in Mat. 6:6?

We notice that Christ often withdrew to pray. He sought seclusion and quiet. He has told us to do the same. The language of prayer that Jesus is talking about is a dialogue with God that demands we place ourselves in a position to listen as well as to talk.

4. Does praying only involve giving God a list of our needs? Note Matthew 6:8, and consider why God still wants us to pray for our needs to be met.

Pray all the time. Ask God for anything in line with the Holy Spirit's wishes. Plead with him, reminding him of your needs, and keep praying earnestly for all Christians everywhere.

Ephesians 6:18 Living Bible

5. What does Philipians 4:6 advise us to do?

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

The teaching in Matthew 6:9-13 has often been called the "Lord's Prayer".

6. Based on verse 12, why could this prayer never have been prayed by our Lord?

Jesus had already warned His disciples not to pray mindless chants, or vain repetitions (Mt. 6:7). It is hard to imagine then that Christ is giving us this prayer to be prayed as a repetitive chant.

7. Note each phrase in this prayer. What principles can we draw from Christ's teaching on how to pray from this prayer?
Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be your name
Your kingdom come
Your will be done
(On earth as it is in heaven)
Give us our daily bread
Forgive us our sins
(As we forgive others)
Lead us not into temptation
Deliver us from evil