

Why

Do We Church?

Why do we
read the
Bible?

Why do
we pray?

**Finding
Answers For
Following Jesus**

Why do we
need Jesus?

Why do we
worship?

Why do we
go to church?

1ST-5TH GRADE

Day 2: Why do We Pray?

Why do We Pray?

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To teach the students that we pray to praise God for who He is and what He does, and to ask Him for our daily physical and spiritual needs.

Key Verses

Luke 11:1-13—Main Teaching Passage

Luke 18:1

1 Thessalonians 5:17

James 5:16b-18

Memory Verse - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Hook

Review yesterday's memory verse, Matthew 4:4.

Imagine your best friend is coming to your house for the entire day. You're really excited and have a whole list of activities and things that you have planned to do together, but for the whole day your friend is at your house, they don't speak to you, except to thank you for meals. You try to talk to them, but they don't pay any attention. That would be upsetting, wouldn't it?

God wants us to talk to Him, not just at meal times or bedtime, but throughout the day. He also wants us to listen. Prayer involves both! Today we are going to learn why we pray.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

One day after Jesus had finished praying, one of His disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray.” So Jesus told them that when they pray, they should pray after the pattern of what today is commonly known as “The Lord’s Prayer.” He gave them an example of a prayer that taught them they should pray to their Father in heaven and praise Him for who He is. They should ask Him to bring His kingdom and let His will be done on earth. He instructed them to talk to God about their daily needs, like food, and also told them not to forget about their spiritual needs, like forgiveness from sin and protection from temptation and the evil one.

Jesus then told a parable about a man who knocked on the door of his sleeping neighbor late to ask for bread for some hungry visitors. His neighbor told him to go away because his family was sleeping, but the man kept knocking and kept asking. His neighbor finally got out of bed and gave him some bread just to get him to stop and go away! Jesus then explained that, like this man knocking on the door, they should be persistent in their prayer to God. They should keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking, knowing the promise that they will be answered, they will find, and the door will be opened. But God isn’t like that annoyed friend. He is much more loving and generous. He is also a better and more loving Father than any earthly father who give good gifts to their children. He loves it when we come to Him in prayer. He delights to give us everything we need and more. We need only to pray.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

Isn’t it interesting that even though Jesus did incredible miracles and preached amazing sermons, it was the way Jesus talked to God that stood out most to His disciples? Being with Jesus and hearing Him pray made them realize how much their prayer lives were lacking. What is prayer? Prayer is simply talking to and listening to God!

So why do we pray? Well, the simple answer is that we pray because God tells us to (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17), but He does this for several reasons, and we will look at some of these reasons in the Lord’s prayer.

We pray to praise and worship God for who He is. God is our Father in heaven. We are His children, and He loves us. His name is holy, above all names. He is the King of kings, and we are His children. As His children we want to see His kingdom everywhere. We know that when everyone worships Him as the true King everything will be as it should be, so we pray for His kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Can you think of anything else that God is? The list is as infinite as God Himself, and all that He is deserves our praise.

So we pray to God to praise Him for who He is, but we also pray to

LOOK (Continued)

ask God for our daily needs like food and water, things we might take for granted. We ask Him to provide them for us, and remember to thank Him as He does. But Jesus reminds us that we need more than just things to keep our bodies healthy, we need things to keep us spiritually healthy as well. We need clean, forgiven hearts that are willing to forgive others when they wrong us. And we need protection from being tempted to do wrong things. All of this God accomplished when we pray!

Lastly, as we learned from the parable, if it seems like God isn't answering your prayers, it doesn't mean your prayers aren't working or that God doesn't hear you or care. He does! Don't be discouraged ("don't lose heart"—Luke 18:1). Obey! Keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking. This doesn't annoy God, it honors Him and brings Him glory. It shows that we have faith in Him and trust His promise that "the prayer of a righteous person avails much" (James 5:16).

So why do we pray? We pray because through prayer, God allows us to be a part of the amazing work He is doing in us, around us, and throughout the entire world as we praise Him for who He is, ask Him for our daily needs, and seek forgiveness for and victory over sin. He's your Dad, the all-powerful King of the universe. He wants you to talk to Him, but He don't forget that He also wants you to listen. Follow the disciples' example and ask for Him to teach you to pray.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Review the lesson by asking the kids, what kinds of thing does God do through our prayers. What can we pray about? Why do we pray?

Take some time to put this into practice at the end of your lesson. Take prayer requests and have the kids pray for one another.

Pray: Thank God for the gift of being able to come and talk to Him about everything. Thank Him for listening to and answering every prayer.

Parent Question: Why do we pray?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Luke 11:1-13 by David Guzik

A. Teaching on prayer.

1. ([Luk 11:1](#)) A request from the disciples: **Lord, teach us to pray.**

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."*

a. **As He was praying in a certain place:** Jesus prayed as was His custom, but a request came **when He ceased** – the disciples allowed Jesus to finish praying. They stood there and watched Him, drinking in the power of His prayer, until He was finished.

b. **Lord, teach us to pray:** There was something about watching Jesus pray that made them want to learn how to pray as Jesus prayed. There was something magnetic about the prayer life of Jesus, and the way He prayed showed something of His relationship with God the Father.

i. Even as the disciples, we need Jesus to teach us to pray. Prayer is so simple that the smallest child can pray, but it is so great that the mightiest man of God cannot be said to truly have mastered prayer.

ii. "It is on prayer that the promises wait for their fulfillment, the kingdom for its coming, the glory of God for its full revelation... Jesus never taught His disciples how to preach, only how to pray. He did not speak much of what was needed to preach well, but much of praying well. To know how to speak to God is more than knowing how to speak to man. Not power with men, but power with God is the first thing." (Murray)

c. **Lord, teach us to pray:** Most directly, their request was not to learn *how to pray*, but *to pray*. Our greatest difficulty is not with mastering a specific technique or approach in prayer (though that may be good and helpful); our greatest need is simply **to pray** and **to pray** more and more.

i. As the Apostle Paul would later write in [Ephesians 6:18](#): *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*

ii. Apparently John the Baptist had **taught his disciples** something of how to pray; the disciples wanted to learn more from their teacher.

2. ([Luk 11:2-4](#)) Pray after this pattern.

So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

a. **When you pray, say:** On a previous occasion Jesus taught this same basic prayer ([Matthew 6:9-13](#)). The fact that He repeated it here showed how important it is. The fact that He did not repeat it the exact same way as in Matthew shows that it was not to be used as a precise ritual or magic formula for prayer.

i. This prayer is notable for its simplicity and brevity; it is a marvel of powerful prayer put in simple terms.

The Rabbis had sayings like: “Whoever is long in prayer is heard” and “Whenever the righteous make their prayer long, their prayer is heard.” One famous Jewish prayer began: “Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, and honored, magnified and lauded be the name of the Holy One.”

ii. When we try to impress God with our many words, we deny that God is a loving, yet holy Father. Instead, we should follow the counsel of [Ecclesiastes 5:2](#): *God is in heaven, and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few.*

b. **Our Father in heaven**: The model prayer shows us to come to God as a **Father in heaven**. It rightly recognizes whom we pray to, coming with a privileged title that demonstrates a privileged relationship. It was very unusual for the Jews of that day to call God “**Father**” because it was considered too intimate.

i. “There is no evidence of anyone before Jesus using this term to address God.” (Carson)

ii. It is true that God is the mighty sovereign of the universe, who created, governs, and will judge all things – but He is also to us a **Father**.

iii. He is our **Father**, but He is our **Father in heaven**. When we say “**in heaven**” we remember God’s holiness and glory. He is **our Father**, but our Father **in heaven**. To say that God is in heaven says:

· He is a God of majesty and dominion: *O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?* ([2 Chronicles 20:6](#))

· He is a God of power and might: *But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.* ([Psalm 115:3](#))

· He sees everything: *The Lord’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.* ([Psalm 11:4](#))

iv. This is a prayer focused on *community*; Jesus said “**Our Father**” and not “My Father.” “The whole prayer is social. The singular pronoun is absent. Man enters the presence of the Father, and then prays as one of the great family.” (Morgan)

c. **Hallowed be Your name**: **Hallowed** means *set apart*. It is to say that there is no one like God, He is completely unique – not just a super person or a better person. **Name** means that God’s whole character, His whole person, is set apart.

i. “The *name* in antiquity stood for far more than it does with us. It summed up a person’s whole character, all that was known or revealed about him.” (Morris)

d. **Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**: The model prayer shows us passion for God’s glory and agenda. His **name**, **kingdom** and **will** have the top priority.

i. Everyone wants to guard their own name and reputation. But we must resist the tendency to protect and promote ourselves first and instead put God’s **name**, **kingdom** and **will** first. This shows that prayer isn’t a tool to get what we want from God. It is a way to get God’s will accomplished in us and all around us.

ii. Jesus wanted us to pray with the desire that the **will** of God would **be done on earth as it is in heaven**. In heaven there is no disobedience and are no obstacles to God’s will; on earth there is disobedience and are at least apparent obstacles to His will. The citizens of Jesus’ kingdom will want to see His will done as freely **on earth as it is in heaven**.

iii. A man can say, “**Your will be done**” in different ways and moods. He may say it with fatalism and resent-

ment. “You will do your will and there is nothing I can do about it anyway. Your will wins, but I don’t like it.” Or, he may say it with a heart of perfect love and trust: “Do Your will, because I know it is the best. Change me where I don’t understand or accept Your will.”

iv. “He that taught us this prayer used it himself in the most unrestricted sense. When the bloody sweat stood on his face, and all the fear and trembling of a man in anguish were upon him, he did not dispute the decree of the Father, but bowed his head and cried. ‘Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.’” (Spurgeon)

v. One might rightly wonder why God wants us to pray that *His* will would be done, as if He were not able to accomplish it Himself. God is more than able to do His will without our prayer or cooperation; yet He invites the participation of our prayers, our heart, and our actions in seeing His **will be done on earth as it is in heaven**.

vi. “In heaven God’s will is obeyed by all, spontaneously, with the deepest joy and in a perfect manner without a shadow of unfaithfulness. And the believer must pray that such a condition should also prevail on earth.” (Geldenhuys)

vii. Some see the Trinity in these requests. The *Father* is the source of all holiness; *Jesus* brings the kingdom of God to us; and the *Holy Spirit* accomplishes God’s will in us and among us.

viii. Some see the three greatest things in these three requests. To pray **Our Father** requires *faith*, because he who comes to God must believe that He is. To pray **Your kingdom come** requires *hope*, because we trust it is to come in fullness. To pray **Your will be done** requires *love*, because love is the incentive to obey all of God’s will.

e. **Give us day by day our daily bread**: The model prayer shows us to freely bring our needs to God. This will include needs for daily provision, forgiveness, and strength in the face of temptation.

i. When Jesus spoke of **bread**, He meant real bread, as in the sense of daily provisions. Early theologians allegorized this, because they couldn’t imagine Jesus speaking about an everyday thing like bread in such a majestic prayer like this. So they thought bread referred to *communion*, the Lord’s Supper. Some have thought it referred to Jesus Himself as the bread of life. Others have thought it speaks of the word of God as our daily bread. Calvin rightly said of such interpretations, which fail to see God’s interest in everyday things: “This is exceedingly absurd.” God *does* care about everyday things, and we should pray about them.

ii. Yet it is a prayer for **daily bread**, not a warehouse of bread. “The prayer is for our needs, not our greeds. It is for one day at a time, reflecting the precarious lifestyle of many first-century workers who were paid one day at a time and for whom a few day’s illness could spell tragedy.” (Carson)

f. **And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us**: Just as real as the need for daily bread is the need for daily forgiveness. We often *feel* the need for food more; but the need for forgiveness is real whether it is felt or not.

i. “As bread is the first need of the body, so forgiveness for the soul.” (Murray)

ii. Jesus represented **sins** with the idea of being **indebted**. *The sinner owes a debt to God*. “Sin is represented here under the notion of a *debt*, and as our sins are *many*, they are called here *debts*. God made man that he might live to his glory, and gave him a law to walk by; and if, when he does any thing that tends not to glorify God, he contracts a debt with Divine Justice.” (Clarke)

iii. **For we also forgive** *assumes* that the forgiven one will show forgiveness to others.

g. **And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one**: **Temptation** literally means a *test*,

not always a solicitation to do evil. God has promised to keep us from any testing that is greater than what we can handle ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)).

i. “God, while he does not ‘tempt’ men to do evil ([James 1:13](#)), does allow his children to pass through periods of testing. But disciples, aware of their weakness, should not desire such testing, and should pray to be spared exposure to such situations in which they are vulnerable.” (France)

ii. “The man who prays ‘Lead us not into temptation,’ and then goes into it is a liar before God...‘Lead us not into temptation,’ is shameful profanity when it comes from the lips of men who resort to places of amusement whose moral tone is bad.” (Spurgeon)

iii. If we truly pray, **lead us not into temptation**, it will be lived out in several ways. It will mean:

- Never boast in your own strength.
- Never desire trials.
- Never go into temptation.
- Never lead others into temptation.

h. Andrew Murray thought of this prayer as a “school of prayer,” and wrote along that theme in his book *With Christ in the School of Prayer*. In that book he has a wonderful prayer for new students in Jesus’ school of prayer:

Blessed Lord! Who ever lives to pray, You can teach me to pray, me to ever live to pray. In this You love to make me share Your glory in heaven, that I should pray without ceasing, and ever stand as a priest in the presence of my God.

Lord Jesus! I ask You this day to enroll my name among those who confess that they do not know how to pray as they ought, and specially ask You for a course in teaching in prayer. Lord! Teach me to wait with You in the school and give You time to train me. May a deep sense of my ignorance, the wonderful privilege and power of prayer, of the need of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of prayer, lead me to cast away my thoughts of what I think I know, and make me kneel before You in true teachableness and poverty of spirit.

And fill me, Lord, with the confidence that with a teacher like You I shall learn to pray. In the assurance that I have as my teacher, Jesus, who is ever praying to the Father, and by His prayer rules the destinies of His Church and the world, I will not be afraid. As much as I need to know of the mysteries of the prayer-world, You will fold for me. And when I may not know, You will teach me to be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Blessed Lord! You will not put to shame Your student who trusts You, nor, by Your grace, would he put You to shame either. Amen.

3. ([Luk 11:5-8](#)) Pray with boldness and persistence.

And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.”

a. **Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight:** In the custom of that day, a whole family lived together in a one-room house. On one side of the house was a raised platform where they all slept; down on the ground were all their animals – a cow, perhaps some sheep and goats and so forth. There was no way the man could come to the door without disturbing the whole household.

b. **Yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs:** It took a lot of boldness for the man in the story to so shamelessly ask his friend in the middle of the night; he really *wanted* and *needed* the bread.

i. God often waits for our passionate persistence in prayer. It isn't that God is reluctant and needs to be persuaded. Our persistence doesn't change God; it changes us, developing in us a heart and passion for what God wants.

4. ([Luk 11:9-13](#)) Pray with a childlike confidence.

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

a. **Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you:** We are told to *keep on* asking, seeking and knocking. “All three verbs are continuous: Jesus is not speaking of single activities, but of those that persist.” (Morris)

i. These descriptions speak of an earnestness and intensity; all too often, our prayers are merely wishes cast up to heaven, and this is not real prayer.

b. **If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone?** Any human father loves to bless his children, and would never answer a simple request for something good with something evil. If that is case with us, **how much more** will God answer us, though sometimes it doesn't seem so!

c. **How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!** God especially loves to give **the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him**. We never need doubt God's desire to pour out His Spirit. The problem is in our receiving, not in God's desire to give.