

Jesus taught us to pray

We may be busy, but none of us has ever been busier than the Lord. There were times in His ministry when there was so much to be done and so many people crowding around Him that Jesus and His apostles “had no leisure even to eat” (Mk. 6:31). Even so, the Lord did what had to be done to spend significant time alone with His Heavenly Father.

Mark records one occasion when “rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed” (Mk. 1:35). On the very busy day when He fed the five thousand, we are told that “after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray” (Mk. 6:46). Luke tells us that the Lord “would withdraw to desolate places and pray” (Lk. 5:16). Jesus is, of course, our example in everything. And if He taught us anything by His own actions, it is certain that *Jesus taught us to pray*. We can’t be spiritually strong if we neglect the means through which that strength is built.

One of the really unfortunate things about most of our lives is that we spend the least time on the things we say are most important. Perhaps because so many important things are easily procrastinated, we find ourselves spending the bulk of our time doing urgent things that matter very little in the long run. What a difference it would make in our spiritual health if we started putting first things first, devoting amounts of time to our spiritual lives that accurately reflect how important we really believe that side of life is. More time in prayer would be conducive to great progress in our relationship with God.

This week let’s take more time not only for prayer but also for Bible study and meditation. Let’s think about the important fact that our love for the Lord and our diligence in His service depend on whether we take the time to build our spiritual resources. In the physical realm, we understand how foolish it is to expect a machine to run indefinitely without sufficient maintenance. The same thing is true in the spiritual realm. Even if the work we are so busy doing is the Lord’s work, it is still true that we require regular replenishment and refreshment. Prayer is one of the activities through which we gain spiritual strength. If we don’t take plenty of time to pray, we won’t be strong spiritually. Let’s think about it.

Monday: Luke 5:15,16

Key Idea: Jesus often took time to pray in private.

Questions for Family Growth: Is it easy to pray with noise and people all around us? Did Jesus have more time to pray than we do? Consider Mk. 6:31. What can we do if we find ourselves too busy to pray as we should?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 10:13.

Tuesday: John 17:1-5

Key Idea: Jesus prayed for Himself.

Questions for Family Growth: What did Jesus ask for Himself in v.5? In v.4, what did Jesus say He had done on earth? In v.3, what did Jesus say about eternal life? Can we come to know God without praying to Him?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 10:14.

Wednesday: John 17:6-19

Key Idea: Jesus prayed for His apostles.

Questions for Family Growth: In v.8, what did Jesus say He had done with His apostles? In v.15, what did Jesus pray for His apostles? What did Jesus mean by His statement, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (v.17)?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 10:15.

Thursday: John 17:20-26

Key Idea: Jesus prayed for us.

Questions for Family Growth: In v.21, what did Jesus pray for all of His disciples? In v.24, what did Jesus say He desired for those whom God had given Him? In v.26, what kind of love did Jesus say He wanted His disciples to have?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 10:16.

Friday: Matthew 6:5-15

Key Idea: Jesus taught us how to pray.

Questions for Family Growth: According to Jesus, what was wrong with the way the hypocrites prayed? In this model prayer, what kinds of things did Jesus teach us to ask for? On what can we base our confidence that God will answer our prayers?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 10:17.

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