

**Lessons on Prayer**  
Thursday Bible Study  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

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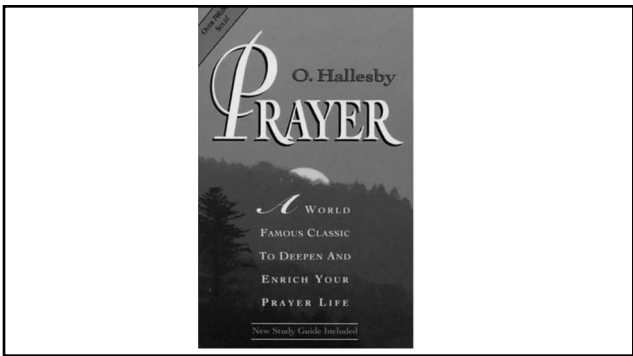
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**What is prayer?**

- Prayer is the expression of the relationship I have with my heavenly Father.
- Prayer is letting Jesus into my needs.
  - The results of prayer are, therefore, not dependent on the one who prays.
  - True prayer is nothing more involved than opening the door and giving Jesus access to our needs and letting him used his power to deal with them.

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**What is prayer?**

- Prayer is something deeper than words – it is an attitude of our hearts. Whether it takes the form of words or not does not mean anything to God. (1 Sam. 1:9-17)
- What is the attitude that God recognizes as prayer? Helplessness. Only the one who is truly helpless can pray.
- Our helplessness is one continuous appeal to our Father’s heart. 1 Thess. 5:17

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**What is prayer?**

- Note! It is not our prayer which moves God to save us. Our prayer is the result of God entering our heart through Christ and inviting you to cast your cares on him.
- Thank God for your helplessness. It is only when we are helpless that we open our hearts to Jesus.
- Prayer is simply telling God day by day in what ways we are helpless.

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**What is prayer?**

- Helplessness must be connected to faith. Heb. 11:6.
- The essence of faith is to come to Christ.
- Faith manifests itself when a sinner, instead of fleeing from God, comes into the presence of Christ with all his sin and all his distress.
- Faith is not something we do to bring God to us, it is the act of dependency on a Father who is already there.

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**What is prayer?**

- Doubt is different than unbelief. “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Mark 9:24
- Bringing our doubts to Jesus is an act of faith.
- For Luther, prayer is not a work of merit, nor is God’s response a reward for coming to him. It is rather an expression of our faith.

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**Difficulties in Prayer**

- Prayer is difficult for all of us. It requires too much effort to do it regularly.
- We have not developed the fine art of prayer through practice and perseverance.
- The art of prayer requires no native ability, nor knowledge, nor money. But to be a real man or woman of prayer requires practice which is attained by perseverance.

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**Mistakes in Prayer**

- We think we must help God to fulfill our prayer.
- The Wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11) serves as a good example.
- We use prayer for the purpose of commanding God to do our bidding. Our prayer life becomes a struggle with God as we try and convince God that we are right. But our prayers are transformed when we learn to leave it all in God’s hands.

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**Mistakes in Prayer**

- We forget to pray in the name of Jesus.
- To pray in the name of Jesus is one of the deepest mysteries in prayer.
- The sinner knows all the reasons why God would not or should not answer his prayer. Rom. 8:26-27.
- We ask God to hear us, not for our sake, but for Jesus' sake.

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**Prayer and the Communion of Saints**

- The Lord's Prayer teaches us that prayer is always done in the context of the Communion of Saints. "Our Father . . ."
- Intercessory prayer is a mark of the church.
- In the communion of saints the believers bear each others' burdens in prayer.

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**The Misuse of Prayer**

- Our selfishness knows no bounds. We see God as the "great dispensary in the sky" to satisfy all our needs.
- "How can I use prayer to the greatest possible advantage for myself?"
- The temptation to misuse prayer is native to us.
- Matt. 20:20-23 – An example of misused prayer.

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**The Meaning of Prayer**

- If we pray for anything according to the will of God, we already have what we pray for the moment we ask It!
- Jesus teaches us to pray daily because nothing in our daily life is so insignificant that God will not help you. But always according to God's will.
- To pray is to let Jesus come into our need.

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**About Unanswered Prayers**

- God in his love will not give us everything we ask for, but only what is best for us.
- 2 Cor. 12:9-10 is a great example.
- God's refusal was not because Paul had misused prayer, but God said "NO" because it would glorify his name more.

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**Forms of Prayer**

- Prayer is an attitude of heart, whether words are used or not. It is a free and spontaneous conversation.
- Supplicatory Prayer – asking God for something. Phil. 4:6
- Prayer of Thanksgiving – Really should be first. We need to learn to thank God for whatever condition we find ourselves.

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**Forms of Prayer**

- **Prayer of Praise** – Like thanksgiving, but here our thoughts are totally on God.
- **Conversation** – The running conversation we have with Jesus.
- **Prayer without words** – The joy of being with someone that cannot be properly expressed in words.

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**Problems of Prayer**

- **Why pray when God already knows our needs?**
- **Prayer has one function**– to willingly involve ourselves with God, submitting ourselves to him in total dependance.
- **God doesn't need our prayer. We need to pray!**
- **Prayer is our way of acknowledging to ourselves and to God that we accept his assignment, that we seek him to use us to bring his kingdom and blessing to others.**

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