

## Following Jesus in Prayer

### Part 1 What is Prayer? (Definition)

To gain a better understanding of what prayer is, read Luke 3:21-23. This is the first record of Jesus praying in the Gospels.

- The Greek word for “praying” in v.21 is – proseuchomai
- According to “The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,” (Kittel & Bromiley) the words in this group “*are the most comprehensive terms for invocation of the deity.* (note the generic nature of this definition, i.e. any deity, any culture, etc.)
- An “invocation” is a formal calling upon.

#### Simple Definition:

Putting this all together, a very basic definition of prayer as it’s used in Scripture is simply to call on, to invite the presence of, or initiate interaction with God

Read these verses again and list 3 things that happened when Jesus prayed:

1. Heaven was opened (v.21)
2. The Holy Spirit descended (v.22)
3. God spoke! (v.22)

Each of these things has deep theological significance, but is it possible that they also provide some more insight into what prayer is and does? Discuss the following:

- Prayer represents open, unrestricted access to the God. Because of Jesus’ coming to earth and dying on the cross we can boldly enter God’s presence by faith (see Hebrews 4:16). Barriers between God and man have been broken down!
- Prayer releases the peace and power of the Holy Spirit.
- Prayer is often the context within which God speaks! The importance of being quiet and listening in prayer.

#### For Further Thought:

In both our modern English and the language and culture of Jesus’ day, there is a close relationship between the concepts of *invocation*, i.e. “inviting God’s presence,” and *incantation*, i.e. “a formula for conjuring.” We must remember...

*Prayer is not the recitation of a magic formula for the sake of getting our wish, but a humble inviting of God’s presence for the sake of communication with Him.*

## Part 2: What Does Prayer Look Like? (Forms)

Jesus' Model for Prayer:

Most agree that Jesus offered this prayer in Matthew 6:9-11 as a model of what genuine prayer should look like. Read through the verses below and discuss the various *components* of prayer.

9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

11 'Give us this day our daily bread.

12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

Matthew 6:9-13 (NASB95)

**Component 1** – Prayer begins and ends with **WORSHIP** in the context of relationship! (vs. 9-10, 13b). *God is addressed as Father, acknowledged as holy, and as the one who is worthy of obedience, power and glory forever.* This aspect of prayer can also include...

- Praise – *Shining the spotlight on God!*
- Adoration
- **THANKSGIVING**

**Component 2** – Prayer involves **SUPPLICATION** and **INTERCESSION** (vs. 11, 13a) or...

- Humbly making requests – First and foremost for God's will to be done and secondly for our basic needs on a daily basis. (See Psalm 28:2; Philippians 4:6)
- Fervent prayer on behalf of others – Note the use of the word "us" in Lord's Prayer. See also James 5:16. Intercession is the work of Jesus and a way to be Christ-like by sharing in that work (See Hebrews 7:5)

**Component 3** – Prayer involves **CONFESSION** and forgiveness in the context of relationship (v.12)

- Agreeing with God about our sins
- Receiving God's forgiveness and extending His forgiveness to others. The impact of attitudes and relationships with others on our fellowship with God.

Summary:

5 key components or forms of prayer are worship, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession, and confession. An effective prayer life will involve maintaining a healthy balance of all these forms.

### Jesus' Pattern of Prayer:

Read the following passages and write what you learn about Jesus' personal pattern of prayer:

Passage:	When?	Where?	With Whom?
Matthew 14:23			
Mark 1:35			
Mark 6:41			
Luke 5:16			
Luke 6:12			
Luke 11:1			
Luke 9:28			

### Jesus Teaching on Prayer:

Jesus taught that God is interested, not only in when, where, and with whom we pray, but *how* we pray; especially our attitude in prayer. Read the following passages and discuss the kinds of attitudes God is looking for:

Luke 18:9-14 – Humility

Luke 11:5 –10 – Persistence

Mark 14:37-38 – Watchfulness, alert

Mark 11:24 – Expectant faith

Mark 11:25 – Healthy relationships (cf. Psalm 66:18). *Note – Keep short accounts with God and with others to avoid communication break-down.*

**Part 3:  
Where Do We Begin?  
(Practice)**

1. Find a good time and place that will facilitate effective prayer and help develop consistency.
2. Begin with expressions of worship, acknowledging God's attributes and works. Include giving thanks for specific things God has done on your behalf.
3. Take time to do a heart check, recognizing you are in God's presence. Are you tolerating sinful attitudes or actions that would hinder open communication with God? (See Psalm 139:23-24)
4. Confess known sin in your life and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
5. Take time to specifically lay out your requests before God being careful to balance prayer for your own needs and for the needs of others. (Psalm 5:3)
6. End your prayers with expressions of worship and acknowledging God's will and glory are the ultimate goal and our ultimate good. (Luke 22:42)
7. Recognize that prayer is hard work (Colossians 4:12) and that God rewards persistence.