

Prayer
Matthew 6:5-8

- I. Introductory discussion
 1. Jesus is not prohibiting public corporate prayer, but he is redefining prayer of His followers
 2. The disciples never asked Jesus to teach them to perform miracle, heal, multiply bread and fishes, but they asked Jesus to teach them to pray
 3. For many believers, prayer is a boring exercise
 - a. A lot of men think that it's not a manly job!
 - b. Here in this passage, Jesus was speaking to men in the primary context
 4. Every time Jesus prayed, something happened, or some decisions were made
 5. Question: If God knows all our needs even before we become aware of them, why do we need to pray?
 6. Question: And God would permit only those He chooses, why do we need to pray?
- II. "When you pray"
 1. Jesus is not instructing His disciples "to pray" but He assumes that they pray—**Jesus-followers pray**
 2. Prayer is God's provision through which Jesus-followers cultivate and nurture relationship with the Father
 - a. In prayer, at least two persons are involved
 - b. God the Father and Jesus-follower—it is not one way communication but a two-way reciprocal communication
 - c. Just as a Jesus-follower speaks in prayer, God the Father also speaks—often His communication is to the soul
 - d. Those who let God speak into their lives stay healthy and stand out
 - e. (A lot of Jesus-followers are not healthy and, consequently, remain a "hypocritic")
 3. Prayer is one of the important signs that believers have a relationship with the Father—every relationship thrives on communication
 4. Therefore, prayer is relationally driven
 5. The goal of prayer is not to get the things from God but it's a way of telling God that we need Him—it's a connecting time
 6. In other words, it is a cultivating relationship with God, not to use God or twist His hands to provide our need and greed
 7. In verse 5, Jesus tells His disciples, "When you connect with God" (re-worded)
 8. Why is a Jesus-follower not able to connect with the Father?
 - a. Faulty, unhealthy understanding of prayer
 - b. Sin, busyness of life, lack of learning from the Scripture, etc.
 - c. It's a sign of unhealthy relationship
 - d. It's a sign of lack of excitement in relationship
- III. Verse 5b: "do not be like the hypocrites"
 1. The Greek word "hypocrite" refers to a "play actor" or "pretender" or "performer"
 2. Hypocritic masks who he is, and pretends to be someone else
 3. Jesus uses the word "hypocrite" to refer to Pharisees and Scribes¹—the religious leaders
 - a. They exhibit a dichotomy between interior and exterior
 - b. External practice is sharply different from internal disposition
 - c. Drawing attention to oneself vs drawing attention to God
 - d. Jesus is teaching that His followers must not be like the hypocrites

4. “reward” is human acknowledgement and affirmation (what they are looking for)
 - a. Some people want human acknowledgement and affirmation
 - b. A Jesus-follower wants God as reward (very important)

IV. Verse 6: But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray in secret *in your secret place* to your Father. And your Father, who sees you *in your secret place*, will reward you

1. “But” is a contrastive particle
 - a. (contrast between a hypocrite and follower of Jesus)
 - b. Get rid of all external showmanship and keep aside your self-interest
2. “when you pray”— “when you have relational time with God” or “when you have a date time with God”
3. “go into your room, close the door”—“turn off your cell phone, tv, and computer”
 - a. These measures demonstrate your seriousness about your relationship with the Father
 - b. By closing the door and shutting people off, you show seriousness about your relationship with the Father
 - c. The Father reciprocates, “You can have 100% of Me”— God intervenes in the life of believers through the channel of prayer
 - d. It’s your date relationship with the biggest person of this universe who has entered into an agreement with you to listen to you and speak with you

V. “pray to your Father”

1. God of the universe has become your Father—it’s too good to be true
 - a. God brought about a complete shift in how we relate with God through Jesus
 - b. God is no more a distant transcendent entity, but someone so close, relational that you and I can have
 - c. Through prayer you have the chance to reciprocate in a small way how you appreciate it
2. “pray to your Father”—You engage in a relational communication with God the Father

VI. Let not your relational time filled with futile repetitions and chanting, but let it be a time of cultivation and nurturing of your relationship with Him (sometime, wordless communication)

1. Your Father in heaven knows all that you’re in need (therefore, you don’t need to inform Him about them)
2. “your Father who sees *you* in secret will reward you”
 - a. When you show your seriousness by setting aside time and space
 - b. He will give what you ask for from Him

TAKE AWAY

Pray to cultivate your relationship with your Father