



In today's passage, Jesus teaches us how to pray. He contrasts sincere, private prayer with the ostentatious prayers of those who seek admiration from others. Jesus emphasizes the importance of humility and genuine, heartfelt communication with God, and in doing so, advises against fanciful words and vain repetition. Then, Jesus provides a model for prayer. This passage underscores the heart of prayer: sincerity, humility, dependence on God, and forgiveness.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:5-15

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What does Jesus mean when He advises against praying publicly like the hypocrites? How can this be applied in our lives today? How should we approach praying publicly?

Jesus criticizes those who pray publicly to be seen and admired by others. He calls them hypocrites because their motives aren't genuine but rather self-seeking. Jesus emphasizes that such people have already received their reward, which is the fleeting admiration of others.

2. In verse 6, Jesus mentions praying in secret. What might be the significance of a private prayer life compared to public expressions of faith?

Jesus encourages praying in private, suggesting believers go into a room, close the door, and pray to God in secret. In saying this about prayer, Jesus emphasizes sincerity and a personal relationship with God, free from the desire for public approval. We should make time to pray in private, where we can commune with God without distractions. This helps cultivate a deeper and more personal relationship with Him.

3. In verse 7, Jesus warns against using vain repetition in prayer. How can believers ensure their prayers are sincere and meaningful rather than repetitive and hollow?

Jesus warns against babbling or heaping up empty phrases, implying that lengthy and repetition are unnecessary. God already knows what we need before we ask, so our prayers should be straightforward and sincere. So, we should keep our prayers simple and genuine, speaking to God honestly and openly without using elaborate words or lengthy phrases.

4. Verse 8 suggests that God knows our needs before we ask. How does this affect our understanding of the purpose and nature of prayer?

Matthew 6:8 invites us to see prayer not just as a means of asking for things but as an expression of trust, relationship, and transformation. It encourages us to focus on the quality of our relationship with God and the sincerity of our hearts, knowing that our Heavenly Father is aware of and attentive to our needs.

5. What does it mean to hallow God's name? How can believers demonstrate this daily?

"Hallow" means to honor as holy or sacred. This opening directs our attention to God as our Father and our relationship with Him as one of intimacy and trust. By hallowing God's name, we honor and recognize His holiness, setting the tone for our approach to Him with reverence and awe. When we hallow God's name, we acknowledge and treat His name with utmost reverence and respect because He is holy and worthy of our worship. It involves recognizing and exalting God's attributes—His purity, righteousness, sovereignty, and love—that make Him distinct and holy.

6. What implications does the petition "Your kingdom come" have for how we should live and engage with the world around us?

The statement "Your kingdom come" expresses our desire for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth. It teaches us to align our prayers with God's purposes rather than our desires. It reflects a surrender to God's sovereignty and a willingness to participate in His plans for redemption and restoration.

7. How does the request for "daily bread" in verse 11 highlight dependence on God? What does this say about balancing self-reliance and reliance on God's provision?

The request for "daily bread" reminds us of our dependence on God for daily provision. It encourages us to bring our practical needs before God, trusting Him as our provider. It also cultivates gratitude and reliance on God's faithfulness each day.

8. Verses 12 and 14-15 discuss forgiveness. How does forgiving others as we have been forgiven influence interpersonal relationships and community life?

The call to pray for and extend forgiveness underscores the importance of confession, repentance, and reconciliation. It teaches us to acknowledge our sins and seek God's forgiveness. It also links our reception of God's forgiveness with our willingness to forgive others. It emphasizes the necessity of a forgiving spirit in our prayers and daily lives.

9. In verse 13, the prayer includes a plea to be delivered from temptation and evil. What do these words emphasize for our daily lives as followers of Christ?

Matthew 6:13 emphasizes the believer's reliance on God for protection from temptation and deliverance from evil. It encourages a prayerful attitude of dependence on God's strength and guidance in navigating spiritual challenges and remaining steadfast in faith. It demonstrates trust in God's power to deliver us from spiritual attacks and to keep us in His care.