

First Things First

Pastor Danny de Armas

Passage: Matthew 6:5-13

5“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11Give us this day our daily bread, 12and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Background

Last week, Pastor David reminded us of the importance of daily Bible reading God uses His reliable Word to help become more and more like Jesus. This week, Pastor Danny will walk through Jesus' response to His disciples when they asked him pointedly, “Will you teach us to pray?” While Jesus gives a model to follow, His focus is not *what* to pray – as if repeating certain words will evoke the response from God that we want. Instead, Jesus teaches them (and us) *how* we should pray. The posture of our own hearts as we communicate with the living God will always be more important than the words we use. Our hope is that each of us will leave today reminded of the extraordinary privilege we have to both speak to and hear from God through prayer.

Service Notes

Instructions

This discussion guide is to help you facilitate a conversation with your small group. The “Getting Started” section serves as a quick opener and introduction to the group conversation. In the “Talk it Over” section, feel free to use all or only some of the questions. Our hope is to have meaningful conversations around God’s Word, not simply answer all the questions. Finally, the “Live it Out” section is to help identify a specific next step. Use these questions as a guide to find practical ways to apply the passage to our everyday life.

Getting Started

- If you’re participating in the 40 Days of Scripture initiative, what is one insight from one passage you have read this week? How can we pray for you this week?

Talk it Over

- What do you believe the purpose or goal of prayer is? In what ways does God use prayer to shape us to be more like Jesus?
- **Read again Matthew 6:5-8.** What are some ways we might be tempted to pray like the ‘hypocrites’ Jesus mentions in our day? While we can pray anywhere/anytime, why is a consistent and private location/time helpful for cultivating our relationship with God? What are your greatest distractions when it comes to prayer? What do you think it means to ‘heap up empty phrases’ when we pray? What is the proper attitude we can take to avoid praying like the ‘hypocrites’ or the ‘Gentiles’?
- **Read again Matthew 6:9-13.** What does the opening phrase “Our Father” teach us about the way we should pray? Why would Jesus begin with these descriptions of the Father? What do the other requests within the model prayer teach us? What does it really mean practically to pray for God’s kingdom to come and His will be done?
- **Read Philippians 4:6-7.** How does Paul encourage believers to combat some of the anxiety in their lives? What is the result of prayer in the life of the believer according to this passage? How can prayer bring peace into our lives even in chaos?

Live it Out

- Will you commit as a group to spending at least two minutes day this week praying (perhaps more than once) the simple prayer: “God, I’m asking NOT my will, but Your will be done in this situation/moment/day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”
- Daily Scripture reading can be found at www.firstorlando.com/40days.