



The Habits & Practices of Jesus (Week 1/3) Jesus & Prayer Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect *As we begin a new series, how do you think you could best prepare for it?*

Warm-Up

1. What do you do first thing in the morning? How have these habits changed over time?
2. What is a recent habit you've been trying to cultivate?

Read Luke 11:1-4

3. What other times (in the Gospel of Luke) is Jesus found praying?
4. What insight does verse 1 give us about Jesus' habit of prayer?
5. What type of things are included in the Lord's prayer? Who are they all related to? How does the Lord's prayer compare with the type of things you pray for?
6. What is the implicit *regularity* of prayer? How are you going with praying regularly?
7. Why does Jesus pray? What does it reveal about the heart of prayer?
8. Do you ever think about prayer being relational? How does communication deepen our relationships? How might that apply to your prayer life?
9. In the Lord's prayer, what type of things does Jesus teach us to depend on God for? How much does your prayer reflect this daily dependence?
10. Describe the pattern of your own prayer life: When do you pray? What do you pray about? Why do you pray? How do you pray?
11. What would it look like to take one step in involving the Lord more each day?

Read Luke 11:5-13

12. What is the reason the man received the bread? What is the approach Jesus wants us to take?
13. Does this mean that our unanswered prayer is just a matter of not asking enough? Why can that suggestion be harmful to people?
14. How is this parable more about confidence in *who we are asking* rather than *how persistently we ask*? Why can a child in a secure, loving family, boldly ask their parents for something?
15. What type of things do sinful fathers usually give their children? What does our Heavenly Father give?
16. What *type* of response to prayer are we assured of? Does this mean all our prayers will be answered how we want? What are other responses we might get to what we ask for?
17. What is the ultimate good gift we are given by the Father? How does the Spirit transform our prayer?
18. In the garden of Gethsemane, how does prayer fit into God's ultimate salvation plan?

Apply *What would it look like to pray more regularly, dependently, and relentlessly this week?*

Pray *Gracious Father, thank you that it is through Jesus, and by the power of the Spirit we can approach you in prayer. Help us not to take this for granted, but teach us how to pray. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

GOING DEEPER

The Habits & Practices of Jesus (Week 1/3) Jesus & Prayer

Small Group Discussion Questions

On Your Front Line this Week

What are your current habits of prayer? If you don't have a daily pattern of prayer, start with the Lord's prayer each day.




For Families

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen (sermon):* “The One About Receiving Gifts” by Richard East:
<https://bit.ly/4uZdlKs>
- *Listen (sermon):* “The Privilege of Prayer” by Stephen Nichols:
<https://bit.ly/4wdUUTm>
- *Listen (sermon):* “Praying to the Father” by Glen Nesbitt:
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/to-the-father/#sermons>
- *Listen (sermons):* “The Who, What, and How of Prayer” by Brian Rosner:
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/resource-training-centre/focus-2025-who-what-how-of-prayer>
- *Listen (podcast series):* “The Lord’s Prayer” by Nijay Gupta & A.J. Swoboda:
<https://bit.ly/4gJPISx>
- *Listen (interview):* “Christian Apologist: The Truth About Christianity” by Steven Bartlett:
<https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/the-diary-of-a-ceo-with-steven-bartlett/id1291423644?i=1000771108492>

Series Resources

- *Read:* “Common Rule: Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction” by Justin Whitmel Earley. 
- *Read:* “Celebration of Discipline” by Richard Foster. 
- *Read:* “Prayerfulness” by Peter Adam. 
- *Read:* “A Meal with Jesus: Discovering Grace, Community, & Mission Around the Table” Tim Chester.
- *Read:* “Extraordinary Hospitality (for ordinary people)” by Carolyn Lacey.
- *Read:* “Subversive Sabbath” by A. J. Swoboda.
- *Read:* “Sabbath as Resistance” by Walter Brueggemann.

 Available to borrow from the St Bart’s Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

For sermons and additional resources, visit stbarts.com.au

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HABITS & PRACTICES OF JESUS

Week 01/03 “Jesus & Prayer”

by Amy Norman (28/06/2026)

예수님과 기도 | 耶稣与祷告 | இயேசுவும் ஜெபமும்

Bible Passage: Luke 11:1-13; 22:39-46

*Gracious Father, thank you that it is through Jesus,
and by the power of the Spirit we can approach you in prayer.
Help us to learn from Jesus how to pray. In his name we pray, Amen.*

- When you wake up, do you jump out of bed, immediately walk the dog, or roll over and hit snooze?
 - Apparently 86% of us once we wake up, look at our phones.
 - We all have some sort of habit, something we first do in the morning.
 - Some of those habits we're really aware of, and some of them we're a bit blind to.
 - Habits are important, not least for our relationship with God. Some habits can weaken and distract us from the Lord, and others strengthen us in love and dependence on him.
 - So when we consider our own habits in light of our faith, the best person we can look to and learn from is Jesus.
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- Over the next three weeks that's what we're going to do. We're going to take a closer look at three of the habits and practices of Jesus.
 - His habits not only *show us* how to order our life, as we long to grow in love for the Lord and be more like Jesus, but they also point to the way that our future is *fulfilled in Christ*. >

- One of Jesus' standout habits is prayer.
- The Gospel of Luke in particular gives us an insight into Jesus' habit of prayer. We see Jesus praying as he was baptised (3:21), praying all night before he chose the twelve disciples (6:12), praying in private (9:18), praying in lonely places (5:16), praying during the transfiguration (9:28), praying for Simon (22:32), praying in the garden (22:39-46), and praying on the cross (23:34).
- Jesus seemed to always be praying!
- Luke chapter 11 is one of the most focused examples that reveals Jesus' prayer life. Here we see that:
Jesus Prayed Regularly,
Jesus Prayed Dependently, and
Jesus Prayed Relentlessly.

3

JESUS PRAYED REGULARLY | VERSE 1

규칙적으로 기도하신 예수님 | 耶稣经常祷告 | இயேசு தொடர்ந்து ஜெபித்தார்

First, we see that **Jesus prayed regularly**. *Verse 1 ...*

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” *Luke 11:1*

- When Luke says that Jesus was praying in a certain place, We're meant to understand that this was Jesus' regular pattern. It's not out of the ordinary. Even the place isn't mentioned, for the prayer and the disciple's response is what is meant to stand out.
- The disciples have *often* observed Jesus praying, So much so, that they too want to know how to pray.
- Just like John the Baptist taught his disciples how to pray, one of the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray”.
- (This is such a wonderful question. It's a question we can ask too. Lord, help me to pray! Show me how I can pray. Direct me to what I should pray.)
- The very fact that Jesus teaches the disciples to pray: “Give us *each day* our daily bread” implies *we* should be praying at least daily. >

4

- This daily dependence would have been very obvious for the disciples, for most people in the first century just had enough food *for each day*. When we can easily find food and order it to our door, we sometimes can miss the point, but we too still have the same daily, constant need for God.
- From this short interaction, we see that Jesus' prayer included *sustained concentrated time*. The disciple waited to ask his question *after* Jesus had finished praying.
- From other details in Luke we know that Jesus' habit of prayer wasn't confined to *one place* or *one time* of day. But he prayed in cities and on mountains, amongst crowds and purposely away from crowds, in response to what was happening before him, but also intentionally for what was to come.
- What is interesting to consider is *not just that* Jesus prayed regularly, but *why* did he pray? *Why did the Son of God spend so much time praying?*
- We might pray because we want something or we feel out of control, but Jesus has the ability to provide for all his needs (even if he chose not to). > *So why does he pray?*

5

- Jesus' habit reveals the heart of prayer. Prayer is about *relationship* with God.
- Jesus' regular prayer *points to* the relationship between the Father and the Son. It reveals the nature of God who speaks, who listens, who loves, and who longs to relate to his people.
- Recently John Lennox, a retired Oxford Professor of Mathematics was challenged by a podcaster who wanted to be convinced of where the journey of faith begins. John responded that if you want to know a person, then you have to come close. He said: "God is not a proposition, or a philosophy, or even a religion. God is a person."
- And so it shouldn't surprise us to see Jesus praying to the Father, for it reveals who God is: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Three persons in one. And Jesus praying reveals something of the inner relationship life of the Trinity, between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus prays regularly, for it expresses his relationship with God.//
- The foundation of prayer is relationship. As Peter Adam puts it: "Because God is a relational God, prayer is fundamentally a relational activity."
- How *regularly* we pray exposes what we really believe *about who God is*.

6

- With your spouse or with a really close friend, you don't just contact them out of necessity or only when you need help, but you look forward to telling them about your day or something funny you saw *because you want to*. Part of loving them is sharing your life with them.
- Relationships grow when we invest time talking to each other, and grow the most when we regularly spend time together. I suspect you probably vary the type of communication too. You might send a formal invitation to a family member, or a text when you are thinking of them.
- So it's not that *prayer* is only valuable if it is spontaneous or it is only valuable if it is planned, but as prayer is *relational*, all types of prayer can relate to God and deepen our relationship with him.
- Praying *regularly* is not meant to be a burden. It's not meant to make you feel guilty or done just as a formality. It is not something we do to earn points.
- Regular prayer is meant to be a joy, communicating with one you love.
- Just like a friend you love but haven't spoken to in a while, the very best time to *restart* talking to them is today.
- Jesus even gives us the words to pray.

7

JESUS PRAYED DEPENDENTLY | VERSES 2-4

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Second, we see that **Jesus prayed dependently**. *Verse 2 ...*

He said to them, "When you pray, say:

" 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
And lead us not into temptation.' " *Verses 2-4*

- Today we don't have time to unpack each of the specific words Jesus gives us to pray, and why there are some differences to form of the Lord's Prayer we say together, but it's hard to miss *how* Jesus is teaching the disciples to pray.
- All the aspects are orientated to the Lord. We are to *acknowledge* the Father's glory, and *seek out* his kingdom.
- Jesus himself did not need to ask for forgiveness, but he teaches *us to* ask for forgiveness from the Father, and extend forgiveness to others.
- We are to *ask* each day for our daily needs,

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and ask for help *resisting* temptation and trials that will come against followers of Jesus.

- Whilst this prayer does include what we need, it is all in *relation* to God.
- The Lord's Prayer is a prayer of dependence. Rather than just being a shopping list for *what we want*, Jesus teaches us to focus on God's glory, his will, his provision, his forgiveness, and his protection.
- *When* we come to the Father we are *meant* to be *depending on him*.
- Our culture can have such a strong emphasis that you should only rely on yourself, that it can sneak into and affect how we relate to God.
- One of the reasons we can find prayer so hard, is that we are unaware of how much we truly *need* God today.

- You would think, out of anyone, Jesus would not need the Father's help.
- He could have provided for what he needed. But instead again and again we see him resist this temptation.
- He depended on the Lord when facing temptation in the wilderness. He depended on the Lord for wisdom in choosing the twelve disciples. He even depended on the Lord for the means to provide for his disciples.

9

- Jesus dependence on the Father points to how we should be living, and how we should be praying.
- Sadly it's often not until we are given a life-changing diagnosis, or lose someone we love, that we're faced with just how much of our life, health, and circumstances are *truly* out of our control.

- So I wonder, when was the last time you prayed to God with that type of awareness? What does it even *look like* to pray dependently?
- Some clues might be:
 - *When* we come to God: coming in the ordinariness of life, not just when in crisis.
 - *What* we come to God about: depending on him for the things that seem in our control and those that seem out of it. For the small thing no one will notice, or the big thing that seems too weighty to pray for.
 - *Why* we come to God: wanting to know the Lord's will, not just a stamp of approval on our plans.
 - *How* we come to God: praying because we trust and love him, no trying to just tick a box.
- This is not a test. But it's an opportunity to reflect on *our* prayer lives more.

10

- *How* do we come to God?
Why do we come to God?
What do we come to God about?
When do we come to God?
- This week, what would it look like to take one step in involving the Lord *more* in each day?

JESUS PRAYED RELENTLESSLY | VERSES 5-13

끊임없이 기도하신 예수님 | 耶穌堅持不懈地禱告 | இயேசு இடைவிடாமல் ஜெபித்தார்

Finally, **Jesus prayed relentlessly**. This is how he taught the disciples *how to approach* prayer.
Verse 5 ...

Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. *Verses 5-8*

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- In the first century hospitality to strangers was so important, that it would have been deeply shameful to not provide for a traveller who visited you (even if they arrived at midnight).
 - The friend who is asked *knows* the importance of the bread that is asked for. The main issue seems to be the hassle of getting up. Notably the friend doesn’t get up to give him bread because *of friendship*, but because of the petitioner’s *shameless audacity*.
 - This characteristic of *boldness* is how Jesus teaches us to approach God. *Verse 9:*

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” *verses 9-10*

- Does this mean we have to strongarm God to get what we want?
Or that if we just keep persisting, then God will eventually cave in?
- No, of course not!
Praying relentlessly is not a formula for much knocking you need to get what you want, but confidence in who we ask, and who we are in Christ.
- When we remember we are beloved children of God
we should feel free to approach him with confidence.
- As Tim Keller once tweeted, “The only person who dares wake up a king at 3:00am for a glass of water is a child. We have that kind of access.” /
- Coming to the Lord boldly in prayer is less about *us making things* happen by persistence, and more about us growing in confidence of the one whom we ask.
- We can persistently bring the same things to the Lord, for we are confident in him.
- As Jesus assures us, we can continue to approach the Lord boldly and persistently, for God only responds with *good things*.
- This is the emphasis from verse 11 ...

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““Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” *verses 11-13*

- When Jesus calls everyone evil, he means that we’re imperfect. We sin. We’re not God.
His point is that if a sinful human father usually knows how to give good gifts to their children, then how much more will our Heavenly Father respond with good to his children who ask.
- Importantly, Jesus does not say that we get *exactly* what we ask for, but that we can be confident God *does* answer our prayers.
He doesn’t answer them in ways that harm us, but he answers in ways that do us good.
- And a legitimate answer, that is for our good, might be “no”, “not yet”, or it might be answered in a different way from what we expect.
- We know this, for if a child asks their parents for chicken for dinner and instead gets an amazing beef bolognese, that’s still an answer *for their* good.
- If a 10-year-old persistently asks to drive the car, being told “no” is an answer *for their* good.
- And if an employee asks for role that is not suited for their skills or temperament, being told “no” or “not yet” is an answer *for their* good.

14

- You still might have prayers that seem unanswered, but the assurance we have is *God does hear them*, and we can still bring them to him, *confident his response* (even if we don't understand it), is for our good.
- We have incredible power as we pray, for Jesus assures us that *if we ask* it will be given, *if we seek* we will find, *if we knock* the door will be opened.
- Sometimes our prayers are limited by what we think God can do, but we approach the Lord who made and sustains the whole universe. He can come to him boldly, for he has the power to give anything we ask. We can ask persistently, for we know he only gives good things.
- And the ultimate good he gives us, is the very person of the Holy Spirit. God gives us himself. As we will explore soon in Romans chapter 8, the Spirit gives us life, affirming that we are children of God, and even when we don't know how to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us. //>

15

CONCLUSION

- On the night before he died, Jesus prayed in the garden.

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” *Luke 22:42*

- Jesus embodies what he teaches about prayer. In the garden, hours before he faces his own death, Jesus' prayer is relentless. It is dependent. It is totally orientated to the Father's will.
- His prayer shapes his path to the cross. /
- For Jesus, his relationship with the Father and his habits of prayer formed in the ordinary times, are what *he needs* to as he faces his darkest hour. He doesn't want the disciples to miss what *they desperately need* too.
- *Verse 46* ... “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”
- Our habits shape how we respond to the world, they shape how we think, who we love, and what we run to.
- The most prayerful people I know are nothing like ChatGPT. The benefit of praying a lot is not that you can quickly formulate a prayer.

16

- Instead, the most obvious characteristic of those who have made a habit of prayer, is their rich relationship with the Lord, that is honest, and totally dependent on the goodness of the Lord. It is a relationship that sustains them day by day, but especially in hard times.
- This kind of relationship with God is available to everyone.
- We can only come to the Lord in prayer, because Jesus went ahead of us.
- He died for us so that we can enjoy a relationship with our Creator and our Saviour, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- So let's not be ashamed to come to God in prayer as his beloved children.

Heavenly Father, please teach us to pray. Please shape our hearts and our desires to seek you out, and by the help and power of the Holy Spirit, help us to make it a daily priority to speak with you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.
