

# KEEPING PRAYER SIMPLE

Matthew 6:5-8



## SYNOPSIS

As we continue in our series: "A Praying Life," we learn that Jesus taught on the simplicity of prayer. In a hyper individualistic and competitive culture, we can easily fall into the trap of arrogance, thinking "My way of prayer is better than that other way of prayer." But we see that God is more concerned with the heart that approaches prayer rather than the form of the prayer.

First, we learn that our prayers don't actually require many words. Jesus wasn't against public prayer that came from the psalms or other religious texts. He was against the heart of the religious elite, praying just to gain respect and prominence in society. Jesus sought to bring people back to humility, simplicity, a heart of dependence.

Second, we learn that our prayers can be free of distractions. It's clear that in our day and age, we have more distractions than ever. A way we can learn to pray is to talk to the Lord about the distractions in our mind - the "monkeys" that are jumping around in our mind, because ultimately Prayer is about being in communion with him.

God truly values the authentic simple heart as we pray, not just in communication, but in communion with Him.



## 2 THEMES TO REMEMBER

1

### OUR PRAYERS DON'T REQUIRE MANY WORDS

First of all, our Father in heaven already knows what we need. Jesus was teaching in a hyperbolic way: Don't pray to be noticed. Don't pray to gain respect and prominence from others. Prayer is about a heart of humility, simplicity, and dependence. It needs to move away from self justification and pride. Often times, in our insecurities, we try to add words and we realize that most of those words are just fluff. We offer up "hot dog prayers" full of rhetoric, but Jesus wants our heart.

2

### OUR PRAYERS CAN BE FREE OF DISTRACTIONS

In an age where distraction dominates in our world, one way we can approach prayer is to talk to the Lord about the distractions in our mind. Prayer is ultimately a communal activity. It's about being with God. It's less about telling God everything that we need, but it's more about being in communion with Him. A lot of times, our prayer has been communication, but prayer also needs to be communal. Let's approach the simplicity of prayer: sincere and humble, seeking to just be present to Him throughout our day. As Dallas Willard says, "Don't seek to develop a prayer life - seek a praying life. A 'prayer life' is a segmented time for prayer. You'll end feeling guilty that you don't spend more time in prayer. Eventually you'll probably feel defeated and give up. A 'praying life' is a life that is saturated with prayerfulness - you seek to do all that you do with the Lord.



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

What has been your journey in a praying life? What way of 'prayer' have you been most comfortable with?

2

Do you find yourself feeling insecure when you're asked to pray in public? Why do you feel that way?

3

Do you try to ignore the distractions during times of prayer? Have you considered offering up your distractions to the Lord?

4

What do you think it looks like for prayer to be more communal than communicative? What does it look like to 'be with God' in prayer?

5

What barriers prevent you from having a praying life? How can we as a life group encourage one another to live a praying life?



## BIG IDEA

God cares more about the heart that approaches Him in prayer rather than the form. Often times, our insecurities cause us to fill our prayer with rhetoric, but we need to remember that our prayers don't require many words. And as we spend time in prayer, we can bring our requests, even our distractions to him. He cares about everything and we must remember the communal nature of prayer - being with God in His presence. Let's seek to be people that pray with sincerity, humility, dependence, and a true desire to be in His presence, seeking to do all that we do with the Lord.