

WEEK 1 - WHAT IS PRAYER?

DAY 1

“Prayer” is a word that Christians use in speaking almost every day. It is something that is very much a part of the Christian life. We pray when we wake up in the morning. We pray when we eat food. We pray with the family in the evening. We pray in the beginning of church. We pray at the end of church.

But if you ask some people what prayer is, they cannot answer well. They give you many different answers.

1. Do you think most people understand well what prayer is? _____

The Bible tells us many, many times that we should pray. In these lessons we want to look at the verses in the Bible which tell us to pray. We want to understand clearly what God says prayer is.

2. What do you think prayer is? _____

Prayer is so big that it is hard to explain it in just a few words. Some people know about some parts of prayer, but do not know all the parts. Maybe you are like that. Perhaps you know some things about prayer, but you need to learn more.

3. Do you want to learn more about prayer? _____

We are having these lessons because we want to learn more about prayer. God says that he will do wonderful things in answer to prayer. But we do not see him doing as much as we would like. Perhaps the trouble is that we do not know how to pray well. Let us try to learn.

4. To finish this lesson, bow your head and ask God earnestly to help you learn these lessons, so that you may learn how to pray better.

ANSWERS

2. Bring your book to class and we will talk about your answer.
1. I asked what you think, so your answer is right. For myself, I do not think people understand well.
3. I am happy if you said yes.

WEEK 1 - WHAT IS PRAYER?

DAY 2

Did you pray yesterday asking God to help you learn these lessons about prayer? If you did, then expect to learn, because God says he will do things for us when we pray about them.

Today let us look at some of the things that people think prayer is. This word "pray" to some people simply means "to ask for". They say praying is asking God for something.

1. Is asking God for something a part of prayer? _____

Yes, asking God for something is a part of praying. But some people think prayer is only asking God for something. They think that whenever you pray you just tell God what you want; then you are finished. But praying is much more than that. Praying is not just asking for something.

2. Have I prayed a good prayer if I only ask God to help me learn?

Let us see if we can learn something from the old people. When something important happened in their lives they had a kind of praying which they used for the spirits of their ancestors. When a new child was born, some people took a mouthful of water or beer and spit it out near the door of the house. They asked the spirits to take good care of the child. If someone was ill, they offered food or beer to the spirits and asked the spirits to make the person well. Some people offered a chicken or a goat to the spirits when they wanted to pray.

3. Why do you think these people offered things to the spirits? Why did they not just ask for what they wanted?

These people thought that the spirits of the ancestors could help them. The Bible tells us that we should not try to talk to the spirits of dead people. But even though the old people were not praying to the right helpers, they can teach us something. They teach us that if we want someone great to help us it is not enough just to ask for what we want. We must also show respect.

4. Can you think of some ways in which we can show respect to God in prayer? _____

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If we want to pray well, we should not only ask for things, but we should show respect to God by thanking and praising him. We should tell him that we love him and want to serve him. So perhaps when we talk about praying it would be good to call it speaking to God.

5. Which explains prayer better -- to say prayer is speaking to God or to say prayer is asking? _____
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But listen carefully now. There is still something wrong with saying that prayer is speaking to God. When the old people spoke to the spirits of the ancestors, the spirits could not say anything to them. The people only wanted the spirits to help them.

But God says in the Bible that he will answer his children when they speak to him. Jeremiah 33:3:

If you call to me I will answer you, and tell you great and mysterious things which you do not understand.

6. How do we know God will answer us when we talk to him? _____

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We will hear God answering us and teaching us if we listen when we are praying. So we should not say that praying is just speaking to God. We need a better way. We need a way of explaining it which says that we speak to God and he speaks to us. What do we call it when we sit and talk to someone and then we give him time to talk with us too? We say we are talking together. Is this not a good way to explain prayer? We should say that prayer is talking with God.

7. Is it a good prayer if I only speak to God and do not take time to listen?

8. What is the best way to explain praying? Praying is _____

ANSWERS

- 5. Prayer is speaking to God.
- 2. No, praying is more than asking.
- 7. No.
- 3. We will talk about this in class.
- 6. He says in the Bible that he will answer us.
- 1. Yes.
- 8. talking with God.
- 4. There are many ways. We show respect by kneeling or standing. We show it very much by thanking and praising him.

**WEEK 1 - WHAT IS PRAYER?
DAY 3**

Yesterday we learned that praying is not just asking God for something. We learned that there are other parts to prayer. Asking is just one part.

1. Besides asking, what is something else we should say in prayer? _____

=====
Yes there are many things which we can say when we are praying. We will be learning many of these in these lessons. In fact, there are so many things to be said in prayer, that some people think they must pray very long prayers in order to pray well. They think they must make a very big speech or preach to God when they are praying.

2. If praying is talking with God, should we preach to God when we pray?

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People who pray like that also think that they should use very big words so that their prayer will sound good to God. They try to use words that they have heard other people praying. Or they try to use words which are used only in church. They think that these words sound better to God.

3. Do you think God hears your prayer better if you use big words? _____

=====
What do you do when you talk with your friend? You do not shout or preach or try to use big words. You just tell him what you are thinking. You ask him questions. You listen to what he has to say. This is the way it should be when we pray.

4. Praying is talking with _____

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Does this kind of praying seem different from what you thought prayer was before? You see, when we talk with God we do not have to be afraid that we will not say it right. We do not have to be afraid that he will not under-

stand. We just talk with him because he is our friend, as he says in the Bible.
John 15:14:

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

5. Praying is _____

Praying includes many things. In the lessons which follow we will talk about some things which we already know and we will talk about some new things which we need to learn. But remember this short way of explaining what prayer is.

6. What is praying? _____

Now I want you to try something. You have been using the word prayer. For the next few weeks, whenever you think of the word prayer I want you to stop and put in the words talking with God. If you think, "I must pray", stop and tell yourself, "I must talk with God." If you want to tell other people, "Let us pray," stop and say, "Let us talk with God." This will help you to see that praying is not just asking or making a speech. It is having a conversation with God.

ANSWERS

4. God.
2. No, preaching is quite different from talking together.
6. Praying is talking with God.
5. talking with God.
3. If you said yes, I hope you will learn a better way in these lessons.
1. We should thank and praise God.

WEEK 1 - WHAT IS PRAYER?
DAY 4

We have learned that many people have the wrong idea about prayer. They think it is asking or preaching to God. But we understand it better now.

1. What is praying? _____

Even though it is right for us to talk with God as our friend, we do not want to forget that he is very great. He is the one who made the earth. He is the one who gave us life. He is the one who is holy. If God is so great and so holy, how did people get started talking with him?

If we look in the Bible we find that God is the one who started talking with man. In the beginning it was easy for God and man to talk together. In the Garden of Eden, Adam did not have any sin at first. He was not afraid of God. God came down and talked with Adam in the garden.

2. Was this praying when God and Adam talked together? _____

But after Adam sinned and was driven from the garden we do not read that he talked with God any more as he did in the garden. He had been separated from God. This is what God had said would happen if Adam and Eve disobeyed. The only thing Adam could do was to burn sacrifices of animals. This was his way of praying to God.

3. What were the people in the Bible trying to do when they burned animal sacrifices? _____

But God wanted to make a better way. He wanted to make man good again. One day he talked with Abraham and said, "If you will believe me and do what I tell you, some day I will send a Saviour through your family." Abraham believed and obeyed God. He kept on burning sacrifices to God, but he also began to talk with him.

4. What did Abraham do in order for God to send a Saviour? _____

God kept his promise to Abraham. Many years later God sent Jesus to die for our sins. If we accept Jesus, our sins can be forgiven and wiped away. Then we do not have to be afraid of God because of our sins. We can talk with him as a friend because Jesus came to make the way clear between us again.

5. If we keep our sins in our hearts can we talk together with God? _____

Friends have many things to talk about. They can spend many hours together. They like to be with each other. They are sorry when the time for talking is finished. God wants to be our friend. He wants to talk with us. He is sorry when we do not know how to talk with him. He wants us to learn how to pray well.

6. What is praying? _____

ANSWERS

- 5. No
- 1. Praying is talking with God.
- 4. He had to believe and obey God.
- 2. You may not agree with me, but I think it was, because praying is talking with God.
- 3. They were praying.
- 6. Praying is talking with God.

WEEK 1 - WHAT IS PRAYER?

DAY 5

Here are some things people think about prayer. Some of them are true and some of them are not true. Write YES after every one which tells about true prayer. Write NO after every one which is the wrong way to think about prayer.

1. Good praying is praising God for his great power. _____
2. Good praying is just asking for many things which you want. _____
3. Good praying is preaching a sermon to God. _____
4. Good praying is thanking God for giving you a new child and asking him to help the child grow well. _____
5. Good praying is repeating things you have heard other people say which sound good. _____
6. Good praying is thanking God for food and asking him for rain. _____
7. Good praying is listening for God to speak to you. _____
8. Good praying is telling God how good you are. _____
9. Good praying is telling God how much you love him. _____
10. Good praying is asking God to punish someone who troubles you. _____
11. Good praying is asking God to forgive your sins. _____

ANSWERS

Bring your book to class and we will talk about these thoughts.

WEEK 2 - WHY SHOULD WE PRAY?

DAY 1

In this lesson we want to learn why prayer is important. By the end of this week you should be able to tell me some very big reasons why we should pray. Some people know that prayer is talking with God, yet they do not pray. If we know the reasons why we should pray it may help us to do it.

~~In this lesson we want to learn why prayer is important. By the end of this week you should be able to tell me the reasons why we should pray. Some people know that prayer is talking with God, yet they do not pray. If we know the reasons why we should pray, it may help us to do it.~~

These are the reasons:

- (1) We should pray because God tells us to pray.
- (2) We should pray because God wants fellowship with us.
- (3) We should pray because that is how our sins are forgiven and we have victory over temptation.
- (4) We should pray because that is how we keep alive spiritually.
- (5) We should pray because that is how we get the things we need.
- (6) We should pray because prayer frees God's power to work.

1. How many reasons are we going to learn? _____

Look carefully at the following verses and try to find what thing they all tell us to do.

Isaiah 55:6:

Inquire of the Lord while he is present, call upon him when he is close at hand.

Luke 18:1:

He spoke to them in a parable to show that they should keep on praying and never lose heart.

1 Thessalonians 5:17:

Pray continually.

Luke 21:36:

Be on the alert, praying at all times for strength to pass safely through all these imminent troubles to stand in the presence of the Son of man.

Philippians 4:6:

Have no anxiety, but in everything make your requests known to God in prayer and petition with thanksgiving.