

WEEK 3 - WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

DAY 1

Last week we learned the reasons why we should pray. Can you still remember them? Look back over the reasons which are written on page 31. Look away from the paper and try to say them. Read them again from the paper. Then write as many of the reasons as you can here without looking back.

1. Why should we pray?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

So we see that prayer is very important. When should we do this important work of praying? That is what we want to learn this week. First, I want to know the times when you think we should pray. Think carefully of how you spend a day. Think of the times when you pray.

2. Write down the times when you pray.

Many Christians pray when they first open their eyes in the morning. This is a good time to pray. They remember that God is there with them. They talk with him. They thank him for life and strength. They ask him to help them live for him on that day.

3. Do you think it is good for a person to talk with God for a few minutes even before getting out of his blankets?

Another time when Christians pray is when they are ready to eat their food. Before they begin eating, they thank God for giving them this food. Whether we say many words or few words in this prayer, they should come from our hearts.

4. Does it show real thankfulness if we repeat a few words to God before we eat and do not think what we are saying? _____

Christians also like to pray together with their families. In this way the children learn to pray as they hear their parents praying aloud. And the family is joined together as they bring their needs to God.

5. Why is family prayer important? _____

It is good also for a Christian to pray before he goes to bed at night. He can think over what he has done that day and ask God to show him what was good and what was not good. He can thank God for being with him and ask God to protect him during the night. Even as he is going to sleep he can be thanking God that he is with him. In this way his last thoughts are about God, in the same way that his first thoughts were about God when he opened his eyes in the morning.

6. Can you remember what you were thinking about last night when you went to sleep? What was it? _____

7. Do you think you could learn to think about and talk to God as you go to sleep every night? _____

What does the Bible say about times of praying? Is it necessary to pray so many times? Remember 1 Thessalonians 5:17:

Pray continually.

Notice how Daniel prayed to God. Daniel 6:10:

When Daniel learnt that this decree had been issued, he went into his house. He had windows made in his roof-chamber looking towards Je-

rusalem; and there he knelt down three times a day and offered prayers and praises to his God as his custom had always been.

8. How many times a day did Daniel kneel and pray? _____

From these verses we see that it is necessary to pray many times a day. If you pray when you wake up, when you eat food, when you have family prayers, and when you go to sleep it will help you not to forget God.

9. Do you think it is too hard to pray all these times? _____

No, praying at all these times is not hard if you really love God. In fact, we will see that there are more times when we should pray. But let us begin with these. If you do not already pray at these times, ask God to help you remember to do it.

10. Write the good times when Christians pray each day.

ANSWERS

8. Three times a day
5. It teaches the children and unites the family.
3. Answer as you feel.
9. If you think it is hard, you still need to learn more about prayer.
4. No
2. We will talk about your answer in class.
7. I think you could.
6. You will have to answer this yourself.
10. When they wake up, before eating food, when having family prayers, when going to bed
1. Look on page 32 for the answer.

WEEK 3 - WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

DAY 2

Yesterday we learned that it is good for Christians to pray at certain times through the day.

1. What are the times when a Christian should pray every day?

But if we remember what prayer is, we will know that it is not something which must be done only at certain times.

2. What is prayer? _____

When we talk together with people, we do not only talk with them at certain chosen times each day. We talk with them whenever we want to. We talk with them whenever they are with us. Of course we cannot talk with them when they are at another place.

3. Do you talk with people only three or four times a day? _____

The Bible tells us that God is always with us. This is what Jesus said before his body was taken away in a cloud. Even though his body would not be seen again, he said in Matthew 28:20:

‘And be assured, I am with you always, to the end of time.’

4. Does God come to us and go away from us many times a day? _____

We can talk with people whenever they are with us, and we can talk with God when he is with us.

5. If God is with us all the time, when can we talk with him? _____

I believe this is not a new thought to you. If I had asked you before you started reading this lesson, "When can we talk with God?" you would have said, "We can talk with God at any time." But the trouble is that even though we know this, we forget about it. We pray at the chosen times, or when we are having trouble, but we forget to talk with God between times, even though he is right there with us.

6. How do you think your wife or husband or friends would feel if you forgot that they were in your village and you failed to talk with them?

Jesus is our friend. He is with us all the time. He wants us to remember that he is there. When God gave promises to Abraham he said to him, Genesis 17:1:

'Live your life in my presence and be perfect.'

What does this mean? Another way of saying it is like this: "Live all the time remembering that I am there."

7. Do you think that if you can remember all the time that God is with you it will help you talk with him more?

If God is with us all the time, then he is with us when we are walking and when we are cooking. He is with us when we are plowing in the field. He is with us when we are visiting friends. He is with us when we are eating, lying down, riding the bicycle, sitting quietly, or talking with our children.

8. Is it possible to pray at all these times? _____

Yes, we can pray no matter what we are doing! And this is what God wants us to do. When we are walking we can pray for the people we are going to see. When we are cooking we can pray for the people who will eat the food. When we are plowing we can thank God for seeds and ask him to help them grow. When we are visiting our friends, we can pray that they will receive Christ as their Saviour. When we are sitting quietly we can ask God to teach us his way. When we are talking with our children we can thank God for giving them to us and ask him to show himself to them.

9. When should we pray? _____

ANSWERS

- 7. I hope so.
- 3. No, of course not.
- 1. When he wakes up, when he eats food, when he has family prayers, when he goes to bed.
- 4. No, he is always with us.
- 8. Yes, it is.
- 5. At any time.
- 2. Prayer is talking with God.
- 6. They would be surprised and troubled. They would think that you are angry with them or that you do not love them.
- 9. At any time.

WEEK 3 - WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

DAY 3

Yesterday we learned that it is not enough just to pray at chosen times. We learned that God is with us all the time and he wants us to talk with him at any time.

Today we want to read a good prayer which is written in the Bible. Open your Bible to Psalm 139. In this prayer you will see how near God is to us wherever we are. Read the prayer slowly. Talk with God while you are reading. When you have finished, write down here what you felt or thought or what God said to you while you were reading.

WEEK 3 - WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

DAY 4

Let us begin today by thinking over the times for prayer that we have learned. We first talked about (1) the times many people pray -- like when going to bed, when eating food, or when having family prayers. Then we saw that because God is our friend and is with us all the time, we should not only pray at these times but (2) we should pray at any time.

But although God wants us to talk with him at any time no matter what we are doing, there is something else which we should remember. We talk often with our friends and our families as we work. But there are some times when we want to sit down together. We want to spend time talking so that we may continue to understand each other well.

1. Do you ever ask your friends or family to sit-down and spend time talking with you?

This is how it is with God also. He wants us to spend some time alone with him. We cannot learn to know him well if we only say a few words to him while we are doing other things. In order to learn to know God well, we must take some time every day to sit down or kneel down before him and do nothing but talk with him.

2. Why must we take some time every day to stop doing other things and go and pray?

When Jesus was teaching his disciples how to pray he said, Matthew 6:6:

But when you pray, go into a room by yourself, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is there in the secret place; and your Father who is secret will reward you.

3. Should we pray only when we are doing other things throughout the day?

Praying while we work is good, but it is not enough. Some time during each day we must go to a quiet place and shut out other things. When we are alone with God in this way, we can really learn to know him. There are

many things to pray about during this time. Later on we will talk about all these things, but just now we want to be sure we understand that we must take time to stop other things and talk with God every day.

4. Do you think most Christians do this? _____

When should you take this time alone with God? There is no law about it. The time is not the same for everyone. You will have to find the time that is best for you. The best time for you to take time to pray may be in the evening when you have finished your work and it is dark and the children are asleep. Then you can put aside other thoughts and sit or kneel to spend time with God. Or the best time for you may be at mid-day when you have finished your food and you are not yet ready to begin working again.

5. Must all Christians take their time for prayer at the same time? _____

But the trouble with the evening and with mid-day is that often we are busy with other things, or someone comes to speak to us and our thoughts are taken away from prayer. Then we forget to pray.

6. Does it matter to God if we fail to take time to be alone with him?

Many people feel that the best time to be alone to pray is in the morning before the work of the day begins. They get up early before there is noise to trouble them. They read the Bible and talk with God about everything that is in their hearts. Then as they go to work they are thinking about the fact that God is with them.

7. When is the best time for you to have a quiet time of prayer -- at mid-day, or in the evening, or in the morning?

You can choose your own time. But when you have chosen it, be careful to keep that time every day. Do not let other things take its place. Do not forget. Do not let yourself become too busy. If you miss this time, you will find that God seems far away and you will become weak in your Christian life.

8. Now let me ask you to be very honest. It will not help you to say what is not true. If you answer honestly it will help you to see how your Christian life is. Do you take time every day to stop, sit down or kneel down, and pray?

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This is the place to begin. Be very hard on yourself. Choose a time and keep it every day. If you fail sometimes, ask God to forgive you, and try again tomorrow. God will help you in this if you really want to do it.

9. In what way should we meet with God every day? _____

ANSWERS

7. You will have to answer this one yourself.
3. No, that is not enough.
5. No, their times will be different.
9. We should find a quiet place and spend time alone with God.
1. I think you do.
8. Again you must answer for yourself.
2. Because that is the only way we can learn to know God well.
6. Yes it matters to him more than it does to our friends if we fail to sit down and talk with them.
4. I asked what you think so your answer is all right, but for myself, I am afraid many Christians do not take this time to pray.

WEEK 3 - WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

DAY 5

This week we have seen that it is not enough to pray a bit in the morning and evening, when we are eating or having prayers with our family. We also saw that although it is good to talk with God at any time while we are working or travelling, this too is not enough. We do not really learn to know God in this way.

1. How should we pray in order to learn to know God well? _____

Now let us find another time when we should pray. Read these verses then keep looking back to them as we talk about them.

Numbers 16:22 :

But they prostrated themselves and said, 'O God, God of the spirits of all mankind, if one man sins, wilt thou be angry with the whole community?'

1 Samuel 1:10:

Hannah rose in deep distress, and stood before the Lord and prayed to him, weeping bitterly.

Ezra 9:5:

Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my humiliation and, in my rent robe and mantle, I knelt down and spread out my hands to the Lord my God.

Luke 6:12-13:

During this time he went out one day into the hills to pray, and spent the night in prayer to God. When day broke he called his disciples to him, and from among them he chose twelve and named them Apostles.

Matthew 26:39:

He went on a little, fell on his face in prayer, and said, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Yet not as I will, but as thou wilt.'

Acts 12:5:

So Peter was kept in prison under constant watch, while the church kept praying fervently for him to God.

Acts 13:3:

Then after further fasting and prayer, they laid their hands on them and let them go.

2. What were the people doing in all these verses? _____

3. Why were they doing this? _____

Yes, whenever there is trouble, God's people think of prayer. This is the way it should be. God cares about our lives and whenever there is a great need he wants to help us. But remember, he wants us to ask for his help.

4. As we see in these verses, when is another time that we should pray?

So besides the times when we pray every day, there are some other big times when we should pray. This does not only mean when there is trouble, or when something bad is happening to us. Notice in Acts 13:3 which we read, that the people fasted and prayed as they were sending out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries. Notice in Luke 6:12,13 that Jesus prayed all night when he was soon to choose his twelve disciples. In the same way we should spend special time in prayer for big things in our lives.

5. Write down a big thing in your life when you think you should spend special time in prayer.

We should sometimes take time to pray for big needs which we have. A young man should never choose a wife unless he has spent much time in prayer first. An evangelist should never go out to preach unless he has spent much time in prayer. This will be more than a few minutes in the morning or evening. It will be more than talking with God while we work. It will even be more than kneeling down alone for a time.

6. In Luke 6:12,13, how long did Jesus pray before he chose his twelve disciples?

Some of the people in the verses we read were having great trouble. Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:10 was unable to have children. Ezra in Ezra 9:9 was burdened for the sins of the people. The children of Israel in Numbers 16:22 were praying because Korah had rebelled against God and all the people were to be punished.

7. One of the verses we read was Matthew 26:39. Open your Bible to this chapter. Read verses 36 to 39 and tell why Jesus was troubled at this time.

There are some things which we cannot pray for in just a few minutes. We need to take special time to pray for these things. And we must keep on praying.

8. Look back at Acts 12:5 which we read. How did the church pray for Peter when he was in prison?

When should we pray? We should pray when waking up and when lying down, in family prayers and when eating food. We should pray while we are working. We should have a special time each day to sit down or kneel down and talk with God.

9. As we learned in today's lesson, when is another time we should pray?

We have now talked about four different times for prayer. Read them over and try to remember them.

- (1) When waking, sleeping, eating food or having family prayers.
- (2) At any time during the day when you are working.
- (3) At a chosen time each day when you stop work and are quiet before God.
- (4) When there is a great need in your life.

ANSWERS

3. You could give many answers here. These people were praying for different reasons, but all of them were praying because they had a great need or trouble in their lives.
1. By taking time every day to stop and be alone with him in prayer.
8. They kept praying fervently for him.
6. All night.
4. When we have a need or when something big is happening in our lives.
2. They were praying.
9. When we have trouble, or a great need, or something big in our lives.
7. It was almost time for him to die.
5. This can be anything which you can think of -- like when people hate you or when there is death in the family, or when there is sin in the church, or when you are sick, or other things.