

Spiritual Disciplines

Prayer

What is Prayer?

- **Prayer is having a conversation with God.**
- **Prayer involves speaking and listening.**

How do we pray?

- **Matt 6:5-13** “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Prayer has two functions

- **Relationship - Transformational communion with God**
- **Rulership (servant leadership) - Intercession – Prayer on behalf of others.**

- **John 5:17-18** Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." NIV
- **John 12:49** For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. NIV
- **John 5:19** Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. NIV
- **John 8:28-29** So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." NIV

Prayer as Relationship

■ Growing in the knowledge of God

John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. NIV

■ Knowing what God is doing on the earth

Jer 33:3 Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.' NIV

■ Being changed into the image of Christ

Ps 139:1-4 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. NIV

Prayer as Rulership

- **Prayer works**
- ***Matt 18:19-20*** "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. NIV
- ***Mark 11:22-24*** "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. 23 "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. NIV
- ***John 14:13-14*** And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. NIV

2 Misconceptions about Prayer

- **Our prayers are ineffective**
- **Our prayers are unnecessary.**

Prayer is learned

- **Luke 11:1** 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."
NIV

Prayer is enjoyable

- ***Ps 36:5-9*** *Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O LORD, you preserve both man and beast. How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. NIV*

Recommended reading list

- **Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline**
- **Dutch Sheets, Intercessory Prayer**
- **Jim W. Goll, Kneeling on the Promises**
- **Joy Dawson, Intercession – Thrilling and fulfilling**
- **Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God**
- **Henry T. Blackaby, Experiencing God**
- **Madame Guyon, Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ**
- **Pete Greig and Dave Roberts, Red Moon Rising, the adventure of faith, the power of prayer.**