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Listen first.

**Psalm 46:10** (NLT) - “Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.”

**1 Kings 19:7-18** (NLT) - Then the angel of the LORD came again and touched him and said, “Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you.”<sup>8</sup> So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God.<sup>9</sup> There he came to a cave, where he spent the night. But the LORD said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”<sup>10</sup> Elijah replied, “I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.”<sup>11</sup> “Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.<sup>12</sup> And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper.<sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And a voice said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”<sup>14</sup> He replied again, “I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.”<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD told him, “Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be king of Aram.<sup>16</sup> Then anoint Jehu grandson of Nimshi to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from the town of Abel-meholah to replace you as my prophet.<sup>17</sup> Anyone who escapes from Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and those who escape Jehu will be killed by Elisha!<sup>18</sup> Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!”

**Matthew 6:7-13** (NLT) - “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again.<sup>8</sup> Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!<sup>9</sup> Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.<sup>10</sup> May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.<sup>11</sup> Give us today the food we need,<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.<sup>13</sup> And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.”

## Study Guide

Last Sunday we introduced our new series called Pray. Take some time to answer these questions together:

What is easy about praying for you?  
What is hard about praying?  
Are there any experiences with prayer that stand out to you?

When we started our conversation this last Sunday about prayer, we introduced the acronym PRAY (Pause-Rejoice-Ask-Yield). Our first step in learning how to pray is to Pause or, as we phrased it, listen first. What is challenging about listening to God? Have you learned any ways to focus on God in the silence and resist distraction? What are they?

In the scripture that we read from 1 Kings, God called Elijah away to go up a mountain so that he could get him to stop and listen. It can be hard to find the space and time to listen to God, and it can be hard to manage the expectations that come with it too.

Read Matthew 26:36-46. Here we see Jesus suffering under incredible stress and His response to it, is to go and spend time in prayer before God. The disciples couldn’t handle it though. Instead of praying they fell asleep and Jesus delivers this famous line, “For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!” In this, Jesus is pointing out that it was not necessarily that intentions of the disciples that was lacking, but rather that they were not practiced, not disciplined enough to follow through on what they wanted to do. It is important for us to seek out disciplines (patterns and practices) that help us grow in our ability to do what the Spirit asks of us. Looking at your life now, what are some ways that you could start to practice the discipline of silence before God?

Take some time to pray for each other.