



Prayer DNA

Matt 6:5-9

[based on the sermon preached on 19.02.23 – available on the [church app](#) or at <https://lwac.org.au/sermons>]

KEY IDEAS

1. We should not pray showy, wordy, performance or approval based prayers.
2. We should pray secret prayers, in solitude and stillness, away from the eyes of people.
3. Our true basis of prayer should be submission and surrender to God as Father, and dependence on God and trust in God.

CONNECT

- In Matthew chapter 6, from his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that his followers should do three things in secret (giving, praying, and fasting), away from the eyes of people, so our motivation will be about pleasing God and not the approval of others. What is one Kingdom of God action or activity which you have done in the past from the wrong motives? Share about this as you are able.

STUDY

Read Matt 6:5-6

- Jesus identifies those who pray publicly and with the wrong motives as “hypocrites.” What group was most likely Jesus’ target? Who were these hypocrites?
- Jesus identifies both standing in the synagogue and on the street corner to pray as behaviour to be avoided, as hypocritical. What makes praying in these ways so wrong?
- What does Jesus say they might/will receive when they pray this way? What does Jesus imply they won't receive when they pray this way?

- Jesus then goes on to give instructions on how to pray. How does this location and manner contrast to the way the hypocrites pray?
- What is the connection here between the location of prayer and our motivation? Why is this significant and important?
- Jesus says when we pray in secret from pure and humble motivation God will reward us. What do you think this reward is? What might it look like? Is it having our prayers answered or something else?

Read Matt 6:7-8

- In many of the pagan religions of Jesus' day, people would pray by babbling incoherently for extended periods of time, thinking that the repetitive noise from their mindless, unthinking jargon would somehow arouse their pagan deity to act on their behalf. See I Kings 18:16-46, the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal, for an example of this. The opposite of this babbling seems to be that prayers should be intelligently and intentionally spoken, and not necessarily long, which implies that engaging our minds while we pray is not only allowed, it's important.
- What is Jesus saying in verse 7 about what is most important in our prayers, using the correct (and/or many) words, or something else? If something else, what is most important?
- Why does Jesus say that excessive words are unnecessary? What about who God is and what God knows makes excessive words unnecessary?
- How might God knowing what we need before we even ask him impact the way we pray?
- If God knows what we need before we even ask, why do you think Jesus still teaches us to pray? What else is there about prayer which makes it so vital?

Read Matt 6:9

- In this opening stanza of The Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us several things about God and about prayer. We learn that God is our Father, that God is in heaven, and that God is holy. We also learn that our prayers should be intelligible and that our posture or approach to prayer should be one of humility, submission and surrender.
- The inclusion of "our" in "Our Father" means that God is Jesus' Father as well, and that Jesus is both praying for us and with us.

- How might awareness of these truths impact our *prayers* (what we say) and our *praying* (how and when and how often we say it)?
- We tend to focus on frequency of praying and length of prayer time when evaluating our prayer life, but Jesus does not address either topic in this teaching on prayer. What is the implication of this regarding what is most important in our prayer life?

APPLY

- In a time of personal self-reflection and appraisal, rate the secrecy, motivation, submission and intelligibility of your prayer life on a scale of 1-10, 10 being highest, 1 lowest.
- If a change is warranted in any of these areas, what can you do to change how you pray or address the issue of why you pray?
- Which other aspect of this study has struck you the most and why? What are you going to do as a result ?
- Identify one or more truths from this study which speak to and can be applied in your life.
 - 1.
 - 2.

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH AND FOR ONE ANOTHER

- According to need.