

Open Your Heart and Mind

- As a Sunday School, will you pray for VBS which starts tomorrow? Pray for the children who will be attending; pray also for those students who make a commitment to Christ this week.

Finding God in His Word (Read Matthew 6:1; 5-15)

- What are some of your strategies for prayer? What patterns of prayer have you found helpful to have prayer a regular part of your sanctification, your growth as a Christian?
- What are some of the dangers of using fixed patterns of prayers, or reciting prayers? What are some of the positives?
- As you read through this section on prayer, what stands out to you most?
- Overall, in what ways have you/do you struggle with the examples Jesus gives of prayer to avoid?
- Discuss the quote from Dr. Craig Keener, "*Effective prayer is not a complex ritual but a simple cry of faith predicated on a secure relationship.*"
 - o Why do you think there is a proclivity to make prayer, or any other spiritual discipline, into ritual? What are the temptations and pitfalls of ritual? How do they give a false sense of spiritual connection with God?
- Why do you think Jesus give us a pattern of focusing upon God the Father as we begin in prayer?
- How would focusing upon God the Father - our relationship with Him, His kingship, and His will - prepare us to come before God with our requests?
- Balancing the three requests that focus our hearts on our heavenly Father, Jesus gives three requests that would flow from our own lives.
 - o We are taught to pray for our needs, asking for the day for daily bread. Why is it important for us to come to our heavenly Father with the needs of our lives?
 - o We are taught to pray for forgiveness from our heavenly Father, in line with the forgiveness we are giving to others. Why do you think this is an important pattern of the prayers Jesus teaches us to pray?
 - o In the final prayer request we are taught to ask for temptation and testing to be kept from us. In what way(s) would prayer prepare our hearts to battle against sin, and trust our heavenly Father in trial?

Live the Christ Life

1. In what way(s) can you apply this pattern of prayer to your own prayer life?