



SESSION 2 PRAYING IN THE RIGHT WAY

A 10 Session Study based around the Lord's Prayer

Drawn from material prepared by J John and the Life Builder Study series of booklets (Douglas Connelly)

All bible verses quoted are from Matthew Chapter 6 NLT

⁷ "When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸ Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ⁹ Pray like this:

Opening Activity (Welcome)

- ❖ Have you ever found yourself in a phone "queue" being told "your call is extremely valuable to us; please hold and one of our trained staff will speak to you shortly"? How do you feel about the message and the organisation?
- ❖ Have you ever had a conversation where the other persons attitude has put you off?

Exploration

- ❖ Have you ever tried to "persuade" God to do something through your prayers? What happened?
- ❖ Have you ever prayed with the attitude "well it can't do any harm!"?
- ❖ Have you ever felt like you were praying to the ceiling or to empty air?

Study (Word)

Old Testament Prayers (the prayers that Jesus and His followers knew)

- ❖ 1 Kings 18:20-39
 - Look at the way the prophets of Baal pray (vv 26-28). Why do they pray like this?
 - Compare this to Elijahs prayer (vv 36-37). In what ways is it different? What does this prayer tell us about Elijahs knowledge of or relationship with the Lord?
- ❖ Genesis 18
 - Why does God decide to share His plan with Abraham (v17)? What does this say of what God thinks of Abraham? Would He say this about us?
 - How would you describe Abrahams attitude and motive? Is he too bold?
 - Is Abraham haggling; negotiating; pleading; exploring or what?
 - In Isaiah 41 God describes Abraham as "my friend". Is that evident in the conversation we see in Genesis 18? From your knowledge of Abrahams life what kind of things do you think helped that friendship develop?

- ❖ Matthew 6: 7-8
 - Is repetition in prayer always wrong? (See Matthew 26: 39-44)
 - Is praying for a long time always wrong? (See Luke 18: 1-8)
 - What problem is Jesus addressing? Why do people “babble on and on” when they pray?
 - Does this help us understand the Elijah/Prophets of Baal passage better?

Think point – prayer is growing a friendship

Restoration of the relationship between God and man is the key theme of the whole of Scripture from Genesis 2 onwards, Genesis shows God and man as friends walking together in the cool of the day, we cannot restore that relationship just by changing our behaviour or actions.

- ❖ In the first study the hypocrites (play actors) thought that prayer was for their benefit and theirs alone. In what ways had they got this wrong?
- ❖ If you think any relationship is just for yourself what happens?
- ❖ Can we talk without really communicating? What gets in the way?
- ❖ Is it too simple to “just” describe prayer as conversation with God? Explain your answer.
- ❖ Do we ever think that God will answer our prayers if we find the right words or formulae or make the right promises?
- ❖ Is real prayer the cause of us knowing God better and better or is it the result of knowing Him better and better?

What next? (Witness)

- ❖ Do your prayers reflect the fact that God is a real, living, caring God?
- ❖ Are you ever tempted to “babble” in prayer? Why? What can you do to stop this?
- ❖ How will prayer be different in Heaven?

Praise, prayer and worship (Worship)

Focusing on the matters considered during this session and the matters before us in the coming week.