

I Am A Church Member: Praying & Serving

Matthew 6:5-13; Mark 10:45

Key Thoughts

1. **Prayer is simply talking to God.** It needs no special language or code words. The God of the universe wants a relationship with you, and that is why Jesus went to the cross.
2. **Prayer is between you and God.** Those who pray to be seen "have their reward," a word written on ancient receipts that meant paid in full. Human praise becomes the whole payment.
3. **Private, natural prayer is effective prayer.** Go into your room and give God your full attention, in your own words. God does not need many words or more people to hear you; Elijah prayed about sixty words, and the fire fell.
4. **The Lord's Prayer is a pattern, not a script.** It moves from relationship and adoration to requests surrendered to the Father's will, then to daily provision, forgiveness, and protection. Prayer is about His will, not about getting ours.
5. **Serving is a choice to share the mind of Christ.** "It shall not be so among you" is a command, "whoever desires" is a choice, and Jesus chose it first. He made Himself a bondservant all the way to the cross, and joining Him in seeking the lost may cost us our comfort, our reputation, or more.

Discussion Questions

1. Prayer is simply talking to God, with no special language required. Why do so many believers feel they need the right words to pray, and what changes when you believe the God of the universe actually wants to talk with you?
2. Read Matthew 6:5. Jesus says those who pray to be seen "have their reward," a word used on ancient receipts for "paid in full." Where are you tempted to pray, or to do anything spiritual, for the ears of the people around you rather than for God?
3. Read Matthew 6:6, then Matthew 18:15-20 alongside Deuteronomy 19:15. If God does not hear us better when more people pray, why does private prayer matter so much? What would it take for you to "go into your room" this week?
4. Read Matthew 6:7-8 and 1 Kings 18:26, 36-37. Baal's prophets shouted all morning; Elijah prayed about sixty words. What does "word salad" look like in our prayers, and what does it look like to bring God your heart in your own words?
5. Read Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 22:42. Jesus gives this as a pattern, not a script. Which part of the pattern is most missing from your own prayers, and why is "Your will be done" so hard to pray honestly?
6. Read Mark 10:35-45 and Philippians 2:5-8. James and John asked for the best seats, and Jesus pointed them to the Son of Man who came to serve. What is one way you could serve someone this week that would cost you something: your time, your comfort, your finances, or your reputation?

Applications

1. **Go into your room.** Set a time and a place this week to be alone with God. Talk to Him in your own words, using the pattern Jesus gave as your guide.
2. **Pray "Your will be done."** Take the one thing you have been trying to get from God and hand it back to Him, the way Jesus did in the garden.
3. **Choose to serve.** Find one way to serve someone this week that costs you something: your time, your comfort, or your reputation.

Closing Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Thank You that You want us to talk with You, and that Your Son went to the cross so we could. Forgive us for the prayers we have prayed for the ears of others, for the many words that said little, and for the times we have treated You like a genie instead of a Father. Draw us into the quiet place with You. Teach us to bring You our daily needs and then to pray as Jesus prayed, "Your will be done." Give us the mind of Christ, who did not come to be served, but to serve, and who made Himself of no reputation for our sake. Make us willing to spend our time, our comfort, and our reputation so that the lost may be found. In Jesus' name, amen.