

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 12/12/93 PM
Matthew 6:9 "Things We're Commanded to Pray for in the Bible"

Introduction of Service: The service this evening is the second in a three month trial. Our aim is to implement the importance of corporate prayer in our church. So once a month on Sunday evenings, for 3 months, we're trying a new format with our Sunday evening service. In a sense, we're moving our "Prayer Meeting" to Sunday evening. After a brief devotional from God's Word on the subject of prayer, we'll be moving to 6 "prayer rooms" located in various places in the church building. For our prayer time, we'll gather as families, and meet with others in our deacon care groups. If you are a visitor, feel free to go with a friend to any group you desire.

We'll be giving more specific instruction on this later in the service.

Intro (of message):

Most, if not all, of us need to learn to pray more biblically.

Quote: R.A. Torrey, How to Pray (34) "Many a church is praying for a revival that does not really desire a revival. They think they do, for to their minds a revival means an increase of membership, an increase of income, an increase of reputation among the churches, but if they knew what a real revival meant, what a searching of hearts on the part of professed Christians would be involved, what a radical transformation of individual, domestic and social life would be brought about, and many other things that would come to pass if the Spirit of God was poured out in reality and power; if all this were known the real cry of the church would be: 'O God, keep us from having a revival.'"

Torrey also said, "Much prayer is insincere. People ask for things which they do not wish. Many a woman is praying for the conversion of her husband, who does not really wish her husband to be converted. She thinks that she does, but if she knew what would be involved in the conversion of her husband, how it would necessitate an entire revolution in his manner of doing business, and how consequently it would reduce their income and make necessary an entire change in their method of living, the real prayer of her heart would be, if she were to be sincere with God: 'O God, do not convert my husband.' She does not wish his conversion at so great cost." (33)

Most of need to learn to pray more biblically. That involves the motive of our prayers. It also involves the content of our prayers.

Q: Do you ever struggle to know what to pray for?

I do. Many times I wonder how biblical my prayer life is. Do you know when I especially feel this way? When I read the prayers of men of God like Paul and Daniel and Nehemiah. When I notice the things they said in their prayers, and compare that with the way I pray, I feel ashamed.

Q: How can we learn to be more biblical in the way we pray?

There's one thing we can do for starters, which we will do tonight. Did you realize that there are several things for which the Bible commands us to pray?

Tonight: "Things We're Commanded to Pray for in the Bible"

In a moment, we'll brainstorm the following question.

Q: What specific requests does God command us to pray for in the Bible?

But before we do, let's turn to our key text, Matthew 6. There we'll remind ourselves what we've seen many times before.

Key Text: Matthew 6:9-13

Q: Did you realize there are 6 things for which Jesus commanded us to pray?

The Lord's prayer is really the disciples' prayer. According to Lk 11:1, one of Jesus' disciples asked Jesus, "Teach us to pray." Jesus responded with this now famous prayer.

He never intended it to be merely trite words we recite. I like to think of the Lord's prayer as a skeleton. The 6 requests are like the bones. When we pray, these bones give structure to our praying. But it's our privilege to put "flesh" on these bones, to personalize the prayer.

Q: What are the 6 requests that Jesus told us to bring to God when we pray?

The first 3 requests focus on God:

1. For God's Name to be honored (9)
2. For God's Kingdom to come (10)
3. For God's Will to be done (10)

The final 3 requests focus on Our Needs:

4. For our need of daily provisions (11)
5. For our need of forgiveness (12)
6. For our need of spiritual protection (13)

Rather than do a deep, exegetical study of this text, I want you to help me make a few basic observations about prayer that can help us tonight.

Q: Where should our focus be when we start to pray? On God. Prayer is an opportunity to bring honor to God. When we pray, our aim is to get in line with what He wants to accomplish in our lives.

Q: What image is applied to God here that helps us know He is interested in what we have to say? He is "Our Father."

Q: Jesus said to pray for "daily bread." What does that say to us about asking God for Ferraris and Jacuzzis?

Discuss: What other lessons can we learn about prayer from this model?

"Things We're Commanded to Pray for in the Bible"

Discuss: What specific requests does God command us to pray for in the Bible?

--include text where the command is located

--write down on transparency

Let's take a chronological look at the kinds of things God commanded His people to pray for in the past: Transp:

- II Chr 7:14 For revival in the country
- Ps 32:6 For forgiveness and cleansing of sin
- Ps 122:6 For the Peace of Jerusalem
- Mt 5:44 For the people who persecute you
- Mt 9:38 For God to send out Missionaries to those who need the gospel
- Lk 6:28 For the people who mistreat you
- Lk 22:40 That you will not fall into temptation
- I Cor 14:13 The one who speaks in tongues should pray that he may interpret.
- Eph 6:19 For boldness for fellow Christians in proclaiming the gospel
- Col 4:2-3 That God would open doors for proclaiming the gospel
- I Thes 5:17 Express thanks to God
- I Tim 2:2 For our Government Leaders
 - for their salvation
 - for a good environment to spread the gospel
- James 5:13 For those in trouble
- James 5:16 For those who need to be healed from the effects of sin

Observations:

If we want to be biblical, if we want to pray for the right things, here's where to start. There's nothing wrong with praying for sick loved ones, and for better jobs, and money to pay the bills. But we're in great danger when those are the ONLY things for which we pray.

When was the last time you started your day and asked God to keep you from falling into temptation? Or asked Him to open up an opportunities to share the gospel with a lost person? When was the last time you lost sleep at night because you were pleading with God to free a brother from the enslaving effects of sin? Here's a tough one. When was the last time you prayed for that person who mistreated you at work?

May God help us to pray more biblically.

Instructions for Prayer Time:

There are 6 "prayer rooms" located in various places in the church building. We're going to divide into prayer groups, according to deacon care groups. If you do not remember who your deacon is, the lists are posted by the doorways. If you are a visitor, or a regular-attending non-member, feel free to go to any group you desire.

Greeters will be standing at the doors to help you find your way.

Location of Prayer Rooms (arranged according to Deacon Caring Groups):

Bill Baldwin--Auditorium (near piano)

Don Boggs--Jr. High room (downstairs in Educational wing; former office area)

Jack Branon--Sr. High room (in the basement of the new facility)

Don Cole--Gym

Dave Purrington--Upstairs room in Gym (room above Awana store)

Gary Storm--College & Career Sunday School room (next to Choir room)

General Instructions about Prayer Time:

1. You have 3 minutes to find and go to your prayer room. Each group will spend about 5 minutes sharing requests, and then 10 minutes praying.
2. No one has to pray out-loud who does not want to pray. We don't want to embarrass anyone.
3. The deacon will act as the leader of the group. He will ask for prayer requests. Then he, along with 3 or 4 others, will lead the group in prayer.
4. When your group is finished, you may stay for a time of fellowship, or you may leave. We will NOT reassemble in the auditorium after the prayer groups are over.

Specific Instructions for Deacons:

1. Please set up your "prayer room" before the evening service. Make sure you have plenty of chairs (20-25).
2. Arrange the chairs in a way that makes it easy for people to share requests (such as in a circle, or semi-circle). Arranging the chairs in a series of "rows" doesn't work well for a prayer group because it's hard to share requests when people are looking at the back of someone else's head.
3. Try to keep things "moving." Allow about 5 minutes for sharing requests, and then about 10 minutes for actual prayer time.
4. Ask 2 or 3 others to join you in leading the group in prayer. Be careful not to ask someone to pray who feels uncomfortable praying outloud in a group (you may want to find and ask the individuals ahead of time).
5. To God be the glory for how He uses this time, for His honor, and our good!