

The Tanner St Church of Christ meets each Lord's Day beginning with Bible classes at **9:30 AM**. We continue with our worship at **10:20 AM** and again at **5:00 PM**. We also meet each Wednesday evening at **7:00 PM** for Bible study and worship. Our meeting place is located about ¾ of a mile from I30 at 1512 Tanner St in Malvern, AR.

If you have questions about what we believe and teach, please visit our website, tannerst.com to listen to sermons or read past articles from our bulletin. Or you can contact us and we will be glad to find a convenient time to study with you.

Phone: (501) 332-8806 Email: preacher@tannerst.com

Consider: 1Peter 4:15-16

Needed News

Dolline Fain is undergoing therapy as she recovers from her broken wrist and hip. She is at Encore in Room 202.

Paula Laubach is still dealing with tendonitis.

Annette Gray had some soreness and headaches from her cataract surgery last Monday, but is doing well now.

Amy Simpson's father is out of the hospital following quadruple bypass surgery. He is staying at her brother's house for now.

Ricky Ragsdale continues his therapy and is awaiting the results of a recent CT scan.

John Ragsdale had another shot for his eye last week.

Betty Ragsdale, Conrad Harris, Joyce Venable, Thelma Echols, and others of our number also have ongoing health difficulties. Knowing that prayers are being offered is of great comfort to those who are dealing with troubles.

Our Meeting starts in 3 weeks!

Seeking His Righteousness

"...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.." Matthew 6:33

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A Simple Prayer

L. A. Stauffer

Bible students may be struck with amazement that a body of Jewish followers would ask Jesus to teach them to pray. These were men of a nation that grew up with prayer. It was a staple of their home life, it was taught in the synagogue schools, and it was a public practice weekly at the synagogue service. Did the disciples of Jesus see something different about the prayers of Jesus that struck them as unique? One may easily suppose they did.

And it is even more apparent in the model prayer that Jesus taught them in answer to their request. That prayer is recorded by both Luke and Matthew as a part of the Sermon on the Mount in the context of Jesus' criticism of the prayers of fellow Jews, especially the prayers of the nation's leaders on street corners and in other public places (Lk. 11:1-4; Matt. 6:9-15).

We do know, according to Luke's gospel, that prayer was a must in the life of Jesus, and that He taught the disciples that they *"ought always to pray, and not to faint"* (Lk. 18:1). Jesus petitioned the Father after His baptism before He faced the devil in the wilderness of temptation; He needed to withdraw from the pressure of crowds to be alone with God; He communed all night with God before He chose the twelve; He fell prostrate to His knees and face when He agonized to God about His upcoming death; and He spoke to God in His final hour on the cross (Lk. 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 22:41-46; 23:33-49).

It is from this intimate and personal relationship with the heavenly Father that Jesus draws the principle elements of effective, simple, and meaningful prayer. Prayer is really not complicated when disciples, as Jesus, really know the Father, genuinely depend on Him daily, and earnestly seek His help in times of need.

Intimate: -- Men who make a show of prayer are not genuine. Jesus says, They are hypocrites who have a purpose in prayer beyond a real need for God. To be seen of men and to receive the approval of men has its momentary reward, Jesus says, but has no value in receiving grace and mercy from God in desperate and critical times. But withdrawing to a hidden and unseen place to call on God provides a setting where nothing is to be gained beyond a sincere appeal to a Father who loves His children and will reward them with His approval and blessings. So Jesus says: *"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray to the Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee"* (Matt. 6:6).

Direct: -- Men who seek out flowery and eloquent phrases to repeat again and again in their prayers have an image of a god who needs to be impressed and awaits an abundant display of the right words again and again before He responds. Jesus corrects that impression when He teaches the disciples that *"in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking"* (Matt. 6:7). God, the Father of Jesus, knows our needs before we ask and eagerly awaits our supplications. When we approach Him at midnight in need, we must but ask, seek, and knock to receive His gracious provisions (Matt. 7:7-11).

Simple: -- We are not to think that Jesus in these brief words of instruction intends to present prayer in its fullness. It is an irony of ironies (noting the context of this prayer) that men have come to cite these words by rote in public

gatherings. If the daily repetition of these words is the extent of a disciple's prayers, he misses the intimacy, the directness, and simplicity these sample petitions are intended to exemplify.

Prayer: -- *"After this manner therefore pray"* signifies Jesus' intent to illustrate the way disciples are to approach God, and in that approach how simple, how basic, how fundamental, how elementary heartfelt needs and petitions to God are to be expressed. Jesus does not forbid more expressive words of adoration and praise, but He does say that "our Father who art in heaven" is enough and that it recognizes the disciple's relationship to God as a child who brings himself before a Father ready to hear.

"Hallowed be thy name," "thy kingdom come," and "thy will be done" are three third person imperatives that acknowledge to our Father that His name must be "consecrated" among us. His kingdom must rule over us, and His will must be followed by us. *"Give us this day our daily bread," "forgive us our debts," "bring us not into temptation," and "deliver us from evil"* succinctly say to our Father that we need thee every day -- yea, every hour -- in a world that is always evil and often adverse to our daily desires and wishes.

The apostle Paul exhorts us to make supplications, thanksgiving, intercessions, prayers, and requests to God and here Jesus shows how simple and direct these petitions can be when we have a private and personal relationship with Him. In the absence of impressive words and eloquence we can simply say along with the words of Jesus: "thank you", "help me", "strengthen me", "comfort me", "watch over me", "heal me", "give me wisdom," etc.

To *"pray then in this way"* is to avail self of the infinite wisdom, power, and love of the Creator who has adopted us into the heavenly family through Jesus Christ and can accomplish all that we need.