

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.

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## Needed News

**Joyce Venable** was still not feeling well last week.

**Thelma Echols** continues to deal with her back pain.

**Phyllis Jackson** is doing better, but tires easily. She is going to physical therapy three times a week.

**Chris Wright** had the stent removed and is doing good.

**Brenda Keisler** got shots for her neck last week.

**Paula Laubach** is dealing with some severe stomach issues.

This week's article is meant to add some more thoughts to today's sermon on prayer. Brother Shouse's message goes well with the things we considered. I hope that you will take time to read the passage in Luke 11 along with this article. This article was first posted on JumpStartsDaily.com in June of last year, but its teaching is a good addition to our thoughts today.

If you use the internet I hope you take advantage of the many sites presented by faithful brethren. They can be an extra source of strength and growth. Of course always remember, the words of men should never replace the Word of God. DLH

# Seeking His Righteousness

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

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## Some Thoughts On Prayer - Luke 11:1

**Roger Shouse**

First, the request to be taught to pray came after Jesus prayed. They heard and then they asked. John 17 is one of the longest prayers of Jesus that is recorded. There were prayers on the cross. We know that He prayed all night. Jesus prayed often. He prayed before He chose the apostles. Jesus is the model to look to for prayer. He understood that prayer keeps our relationship with the Lord alive and vital. We need to talk to God.

Second, prayer is something that must be learned. It's not natural and that's why we often fail. It's not that praying is hard, but it is in the sense to remember to pray not only about the big things in life but also the little things. Prayer is not about getting what I want but rather, inviting God into my life. It is God's will becoming my will. Following a prayer ought to be a prayer of thanksgiving. We thank God for answering our prayers. Prayer is not always about getting. Prayer is praise. Prayer is thanking. Prayer is seeking Heaven's help.

It is interesting to me that the apostles never asked Jesus how to preach. Peter and John were fishermen. They weren't accustomed to standing before crowds and speaking. They would. They would speak before officials, opponents and those that cherished every word that they said. They never asked Jesus how to preach. They never asked Jesus how to do a miracle. They would be sent preaching and confirming that word with miracles. Just what are the steps to healing someone? They never seemed to ask that. I would have. Just how do you raise the dead? Never asked that one. How do you grow faith? How do you grow a church? How do you appoint elders or shepherds in a congregation? What's the best way to serve the Lord's Supper? How do you get people to be stronger? Tons of questions that they could have asked, but it seems like they never did. But this one, teach us to pray, seems so simple. Maybe prayer builds a relationship with the Lord that would take care of many of those other questions. Maybe we don't pray enough.

Third, in asking about prayer, they were not asking about the

fundamental and core principles of prayer. For instance, they were not asking about “Who do we pray to?” They were not asking about reverence in prayer. They were not asking about praying to God instead of praying to man. Those that asked this question were Jewish men who grew up praying. Prayer was part of the fiber of Jews. In the home, synagogue and temple activities, prayer was a common sight. These twelve had heard prayers all of their lives. They understood the basics of prayer 101. What they were asking was how to pray like Jesus prayed. He really prayed. He prayed all the time. How do we do that? That’s the key question.

Fourth, what follows is what the world calls the “Lord’s Prayer.” The “Our Father, who art in Heaven.” Calling this the Lord’s prayer is somewhat true, because this came from the Lord. When asked, this is what He answered with. But, it is unlikely that Jesus ever prayed this Himself. He would not have asked for the forgiveness of sins, since He was without sin. Jesus never sinned. Only a sinner needs a Savior and forgiveness. It might be better to refer to this prayer as a “Model prayer.” It’s not so much these very words, but rather the thought, the faith, the trust that is found behind those words.

You’ll notice a few things about this prayer. First, it’s short. For one who prayed all night, Jesus offers a sample prayer that contains only 37 words, five sentences. Short. A prayer doesn’t have to be long to be good. There are times that a long prayer may not be the best. There are times a short prayer may not be the best. The best prayers come from the heart, not the number of words counted in that prayer.

You’ll also notice that the words Jesus uses are simple. No one has to run to the dictionary to find the definitions. Not here. It seems that these words were natural. The crowd Jesus taught and the make up of the disciples was that of the common man. This is not to say that they were unintelligent or dumb. They were not. This prayer is using words that they would have used. Every once in a while, you might hear someone using 16 syllable words in his prayer. One must wonder if the guy talks that way all the time or if he is trying to impress someone. You’ll never impress God with big words. God knows more than you ever will and God can speak and hear every language that ever existed. So, it often comes down to trying to impress those who are listening. Don’t do that. If your natural vocabulary includes big words, that’s fine. Don’t use words in prayers that you don’t understand. Pray in private like you pray in public. Pray in public like you pray in private.

You’ll also notice in this example Jesus gives us, that our prayers praise God (Hallowed be Thy name). Prayer includes physical things (our daily bread). Prayer involves spiritual things (forgiveness of sins). Prayer asks God to help us (Lead us not into temptation). Together, there seems to be a balance here. Not all prayer is about physical things. Not all prayer is about spiritual things. Not all prayer is about praise. Not all prayer asks God to help us. Different needs. Different concerns. Praying for physical things is not wrong.

You’ll notice that this prayer understands the place and nature of God. It is God who gives daily bread. It is God who forgives. It is God who leads us not into temptation. God, right there in our daily lives. God, not very far from us.

You’ll also notice the use of “us” in this model. Give “us” “our” daily bread. Forgive “us” “our” sins. Lead “us” not into temptation. The “us” and “our” reminds us that we are all in the same boat. There is not one of us that could say, I don’t need to say those things. There is not one of us that could conclude, you need to do that, but not me. No, you do need this. It’s a “us” and “our” type of situation.

You’ll also notice that this type of prayer could and should be prayed often, even daily. The bread that was prayed for was a “daily” bread. It was not the month’s quota of bread. It wasn’t the year’s supply of bread. It’s today. Tomorrow, we’ll need to ask the Lord for bread again. This tells us that we’ll be repeating some prayers, maybe often, maybe every day. Before the bread arrives, there were folks who baked it. Before that, there were folks that processed the grain. Before that, there were folks who harvested the grain. Before that, there was a farmer who planted the seed. In all of this duration, there was the right amount of rain and sunshine, provided by the Lord, to grow the grain. There was a period of time between the day the seed was planted and the day the person took a bite of the bread. The same could be said of fruit. Similar things could be said about meat. There were many steps and many blessings from Heaven before the food lands on our table. God was involved all along the way. That is simply something to consider.

Teach us to pray. What a profound question. What a great step in recognizing the position of God, the trust of our hearts and the goodness of the Lord’s blessings.

Pray...It just makes a person want to stop what they are doing for a moment and thank the Lord.