ROOTED IN PRAYER

Week 3 — Rooted in Prayer

Main Text: Luke 11:1–13 (ESV) Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” **2** And he said to them, “When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
3 Give us each day our daily bread,
4 and forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
And lead us not into temptation.”

5 And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, **6** for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; **7** and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? **8** I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. **9** And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **10** For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. **11** What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; **12** or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? **13** If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Big Idea: A strong Christian life is built on a consistent, personal relationship with God through prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Sermon goal: Encourage the church to move beyond occasional prayers and develop a deeper, daily prayer life that trusts God's character, seeks His will, and depends on the Holy Spirit.

Introduction: How Deep Are Your Roots?

As we've been working through our series, *Rooted: Growing Deep in Christ*, we've been talking about what it means to build our lives on Jesus.

A tree's roots are important because they provide stability and draw the nourishment the tree needs to grow. The deeper the roots, the better equipped the tree is to withstand difficult conditions.

The same is true in our spiritual lives.

We need to be rooted in Christ. We need to be rooted in His Word. And today, we're going to talk about being **rooted in prayer**.

Prayer is one of the most important parts of our relationship with God, but if we're honest, it can also be one of the areas where we struggle the most.

We know we're supposed to pray. We know the Bible tells us to pray. We know we need God's help. But sometimes prayer becomes something we do only when we're in trouble, when someone is sick, or when we need God to fix a situation.

Prayer can become our emergency plan instead of our daily relationship with God.

But prayer was never intended to be just a last resort. Prayer is how we continually turn our hearts toward the Lord, seek His direction, confess our needs, worship Him, and depend on His strength.

Think about Jesus' disciples. They had the opportunity to walk with Jesus, hear Him teach, and watch Him minister to people. Yet when they saw Him praying, one of them asked Him to teach them how to pray.

They recognized that prayer mattered.

If the disciples needed to learn to pray, we need to learn to pray, too.

1. Prayer Begins With a Relationship, Not a Routine

One of the disciples said to Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

Jesus responded by teaching them to pray, “Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.”

Notice how Jesus begins: **Father.**

He doesn't begin with a complicated formula or a list of religious words. He begins with a relationship.

A. We come to God as our Father.

Prayer is not simply speaking words into the air and hoping somebody hears us. Through Jesus Christ, we are invited into a relationship with God.

Romans 8:15 reminds us that believers have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

That means prayer is not reserved for pastors, elders, or people who have been Christians for decades. Every believer can come to God.

You don't have to know all the right words. You don't have to pray like someone else. You don't have to make your prayer sound impressive.

You can come honestly before your heavenly Father.

Sometimes we make prayer harder than it needs to be because we think we have to sound spiritual. But God is not impressed by fancy words. He wants an honest heart.

B. We approach God with reverence.

Jesus also teaches us to pray, “Hallowed be your name.”

God is our Father, but He is also holy. We come to Him with confidence because of His grace, while remembering that He is the sovereign God who created us and redeemed us.

Prayer is not about making God fit into our plans. It is about bringing our lives before Him.

C. We seek God's will above our own.

Jesus says, “Your kingdom come.”

This changes the way we pray.

Instead of asking only, “God, what can You do for me?” we begin asking, “Lord, what do You want to do in me? How can my life serve Your purposes?”

We can bring God our needs, our concerns, and our desires. But as we pray, we also surrender our plans to His wisdom.

Application: Before you bring God your list of requests, take time to worship Him, thank Him for who He is, and surrender your day to Him.

Key thought: Prayer isn't just about getting God involved in our plans; it's about bringing our plans under His leadership.

2. Prayer Requires Persistence and Dependence

Jesus gives a picture of a man who goes to his friend at midnight asking for bread because he has an unexpected guest.

The friend is already in bed and doesn't want to get up. Yet Jesus uses the situation to teach about persistence in prayer.

The point is not that God is reluctant to help us, as though we must wear Him down before He pays attention. Rather, Jesus is teaching His disciples to keep coming to God with confidence and persistence.

A. Don't give up when the answer doesn't come immediately.

Sometimes we pray and see an immediate answer. Other times, we pray for weeks, months, or even years without seeing the outcome we hoped for.

We pray for our children. We pray for our marriages. We pray for people who don't know Jesus. We pray for healing, provision, direction, and spiritual renewal.

And when the answer doesn't come quickly, we can become discouraged.

But delayed answers do not mean God has stopped listening.

Luke 18:1 tells us that Jesus taught His disciples they should always pray and not give up.

Persistence in prayer is not about convincing God to care. It is about continuing to trust Him because He already does.

B. Persistence develops our faith.

When we continue to pray, we are reminded that our hope is in God rather than in our ability to control the outcome.

Sometimes God changes our circumstances. Sometimes He gives us wisdom to navigate them. Sometimes He strengthens us to endure while we wait.

We should never assume that every delay has the same explanation. We may not understand why some prayers seem unanswered. But we can continue to trust God's character even when we don't understand His timing.

There is a difference between giving up because God hasn't answered yet and continuing to pray while trusting Him with the answer.

C. Prayer keeps us dependent on God.

We live in a world that tells us to be self-sufficient. Work harder. Figure it out. Take control.

But prayer reminds us that we need God.

We can have education, experience, resources, and good intentions and still need God's wisdom and direction.

As a church, we need to pray. We need to pray for our families, our community, our leaders, our ministries, and those who have not yet come to know Jesus.

We cannot manufacture spiritual renewal through human effort alone. We must seek God and remain faithful in the work He has called us to do.

Application: Is there something you've stopped praying about because you have waited so long? Bring it before the Lord again. Continue to pray, and trust Him with the outcome.

Key thought: Persistence in prayer is not telling God what He must do; it is refusing to stop depending on Him.

3. Prayer Requires Us to Ask, Seek, and Knock

Jesus gives three instructions: ask, seek, and knock.

These are active words. They describe a life that continually turns toward God.

A. Ask — Bring your needs to God.

Jesus invites His disciples to ask.

Philippians 4:6–7 teaches believers to bring their requests to God with thanksgiving, and it promises God's peace to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

God already knows what we need, but He invites us to bring those needs to Him.

Pray for your family. Pray for wisdom. Pray for healing. Pray for provision. Pray for opportunities to share your faith. Pray for strength to overcome temptation.

Don't assume something is too small to bring to God, and don't assume something is too big for Him.

But remember: asking is not a guarantee that God will give us every specific thing we want. We ask in faith while trusting His wisdom and goodness.

B. Seek — Pursue God's presence and direction.

Seeking goes deeper than simply presenting a list of requests.

It means we want to know God, understand His Word, and follow His leading.

Sometimes we spend all our prayer time telling God what we want Him to do without stopping to ask what He wants us to do.

We ask Him to bless our plans, but have we asked whether those plans honor Him?

We ask Him to change other people, but have we allowed Him to work on our own hearts?

We ask for direction, but are we willing to obey when He shows us the next step?

Seeking God means that His presence and His will matter more to us than simply getting our preferred outcome.

C. Knock — Keep moving forward in faith.

Knocking suggests continued action. We don't just ask once and walk away. We keep turning to God, trusting Him, and taking obedient steps.

Prayer and action belong together.

If we're praying for people to come to Christ, we should also be willing to share the gospel.

If we're praying for stronger families, we should invest in our families.

If we're praying for our church to grow spiritually, we should pursue discipleship, serve faithfully, and encourage one another.

If we're praying for God to use us, we should be willing to say yes when He opens a door.

Sometimes we're asking God to open doors while we're unwilling to take the step of faith He has already placed in front of us.

Application: Ask yourself three questions:

- What do I need to bring to God?
- What do I need to seek Him about?
- What step of obedience do I need to take?

Key thought: A praying Christian is not passive. Prayer leads us to trust God and respond faithfully.

4. Prayer Rests on the Goodness of Our Heavenly Father

Jesus compares earthly fathers with our heavenly Father. Even imperfect human parents generally desire to give good things to their children.

Jesus then points to the goodness of God, who gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

A. God is not trying to keep good things from His children.

Jesus' illustration reminds us that God is not cruel, indifferent, or unwilling to hear us.

We may not always understand His answers, but we can trust His character.

A child may ask for something without understanding whether it is good for them. A loving parent sees more than the child can see.

Likewise, we do not always understand the whole picture when we pray.

God sees what we cannot see. He knows what we do not know. His wisdom is greater than ours.

This doesn't mean every painful circumstance is easy to explain. It means we can bring our questions to God without assuming that His goodness has disappeared.

B. God may answer differently than we expect.

Sometimes God answers with yes. Sometimes He says no. Sometimes we must wait. And sometimes His answer comes in a way we didn't anticipate.

Prayer is not a method for controlling God. It is a relationship in which we trust Him.

Jesus Himself modeled surrender in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying that the Father's will would be done.

We can pray boldly and honestly while still surrendering to God's wisdom.

C. We must depend on the Holy Spirit.

This is especially important for us as an Assembly of God church.

Jesus concludes this teaching by pointing to the Father's gift of the Holy Spirit.

We believe the Holy Spirit is not simply an idea or an emotional experience. He is God at work in and through His people.

The Holy Spirit helps us grow in Christlike character, strengthens us in our weakness, guides us according to God's truth, and empowers us to witness for Jesus.

Acts 1:8 promises power when the Holy Spirit comes upon believers so that they will be Christ's witnesses.

We need more than our own strength to live the Christian life faithfully.

We need the Spirit's work in our hearts and His power to accomplish the mission Jesus has given us.

That is why prayer matters so much.

We pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen us, fill us, guide us, and empower us to live as faithful witnesses of Christ. We don't seek spiritual experiences merely for the experience itself. We seek God because we want to know Him, become more like Jesus, and faithfully carry out His mission.

Application: Don't approach prayer as though you are trying to convince a reluctant God to help you. Come to your heavenly Father with confidence, asking Him to work in your life and trusting His goodness.

Key thought: We can pray with confidence because the God we approach is a good Father who knows what we need.

5. How Do We Become Rooted in Prayer?

Let's bring this message down to everyday life. What does it look like to become a praying person rather than someone who prays only occasionally?

A. Set aside time to pray.

Don't wait until you feel like praying. Establish a regular time and place to meet with God.

It may be early in the morning, during a lunch break, or in the evening. The important thing is to make prayer a consistent part of your life.

B. Pray honestly.

You don't have to hide your fear, frustration, disappointment, or questions from God.

Read the Psalms. David brought his joy, sorrow, fear, and confusion before the Lord.

God already knows your heart. Prayer is an opportunity to bring it honestly before Him.

C. Pray with Scripture.

Let God's Word shape your prayers.

Pray through the Lord's Prayer. Pray the promises and truths of Scripture. Ask God to help you obey what you read.

Scripture keeps prayer grounded in God's character and revealed will.

D. Make room for the Holy Spirit.

Don't let prayer become nothing more than a list of requests. Take time to worship, listen, repent, and surrender.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas where you need to grow and to empower you to live faithfully.

E. Pray with others.

There is a place for private prayer, but there is also strength in praying together.

Pray with your family. Pray with other believers. Pray for the needs of the church and community.

A church that wants to see people reached, disciples made, and lives transformed must be a church that seeks God together.

6. Conclusion: Don't Just Pray in the Storm

Think back to the picture of the tree.

When the storm arrives, the tree depends on the root system that has been developing long before the wind begins to blow.

Our prayer lives need to be the same way.

We don't want to be people who only pray when the doctor calls, when the finances get tight, when the marriage is struggling, or when life becomes overwhelming.

We want to be people who walk with God every day.

We want prayer to be more than something we do before a meal or at the beginning of a church service. We want it to become a natural expression of our dependence on our heavenly Father.

And as we continue this *Rooted* series, remember that prayer isn't about checking off a religious responsibility. It is about growing in relationship with the God who loves us.

Let me ask you:

- Has prayer become a routine rather than a relationship?
- Have you stopped praying about something because you've become discouraged?
- Are you seeking God's will, or only asking Him to bless your own plans?
- Are you depending on your own strength when God is inviting you to depend on His Spirit?

We cannot grow deep in Christ while consistently neglecting our relationship with Him.

So let's make a fresh commitment today.

Let's become a people who pray when life is good and when life is difficult. Let's pray when we understand what God is doing and when we don't. Let's pray for our families, our church, our community, and the people who need to know Jesus.

Let's ask the Lord to make us a church that doesn't simply talk about prayer but practices it faithfully.

A church rooted in prayer will be a church that continually depends on God rather than itself.

And as we depend on Him, may He strengthen our faith, transform our character, empower us by His Spirit, and use us to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.