

Lake Merced Church of Christ

Home Groups

Prayer: Understanding Prayer

Introduction

This Prayer sermon series is a series designed to bring us into greater intimacy with God. If you have not listened to the Desiring Prayer sermon yet, stop what you are doing and go to LakeMercedChurch.com and listen/watch it. Each member is encouraged to do the following throughout this series:

1. Pray through a Psalm every day.
2. Meditate on that Psalm for several minutes.
3. Pray over the needs at LMCC (Do this by downloading the Echo Prayer App and following the Lake Merced Church of Christ feed).

Secondarily, each member of Lake Merced is asked to find a partner throughout this series that they are close to. Each person is encouraged **every day** to call/text/message their partner to do two things:

1. Share their reflections from the Psalm for that day.
2. Pray together.

Ice Breaker

Tonight's group time centers on a message of intimate knowledge of another person. Open your group time by having everyone play a game of Two Truths and a Lie to see how well each of you know one another.

Opening Prayer

Ask God to help your group grow in their intimacy and relationship with the God of the Bible. Ask Him to bless your time together.

Discussion

1. **Read Matthew 6:5-13 together as a group.** When we think about what it means to understand prayer, this is usually the first text we go to, and for good reason. Jesus says, "This then is how you should pray..." What stands out to you or emerges from your reading of this text? What do you think Jesus is trying to teach his disciples when he says these specific words?
2. Often times, we read this text in much the same way that we read a recipe: a teaspoon of this and a pinch of that. We look for patterns. Do you think that was Jesus' intention when he shared this prayer? When you read this text, is Jesus telling people what to include in the prayer, or does it reveal something about the heart of prayer? What do you think?
3. Josh discussed the importance of the language used for God in this passage, that Jesus doesn't call God "God" or "LORD," but he says, "our Father." Do you think there's any significance to Jesus' word choice here? Are all those terms synonymous? Or do you think the term "Father" reveals anything about the nature of relationship in our prayer?
4. **Read verse 8 again as a group.** If you're being totally honest and transparent, how do you react this statement? Does it make you want to pray, or does it sort of feel like it "lets you off the hook" to not have to pray? Why?

5. In Sunday's message, we discussed how prayer is actually the continuation of a conversation started by God. In other words, prayer should be a response to what we read and know about God in His Word, rather than generic utterings to skies. Do you stop to consider, with specificity, who you're praying to when you pray? Do you feel like you're talking to the same God that Adam & Eve spoke to? Why or why not?
6. How do you think we can begin to know and encounter the True God who is actually there, rather than a god of our own creation who agrees with us in everything when we pray? Tim Keller suggests that if the God we encounter in prayer never makes us angry, frustrated or confused, He may not be the God of the Bible because it's natural that people disagree when they're in true relationship. How comfortable are you to ever disagree with God? And if or when you disagree, what does it look like to submit to Another's will?
7. As you reflect on your own prayer life this week, how do you feel it has gone? Have you enjoyed praying through the Psalms? Why or why not? How can others here encourage you and keep you accountable to pray with discipline, conviction, joy, and delight?

Closing Prayer

As you close your prayer time this week, spend a few minutes in quiet and reflect on who God is, think about the things He's done, and reflect on the ways He's been both merciful and challenging to you in your walk with Him. Try to remove the word "just" from your prayer and speak to Him as a Father with conviction and passion. Speak to Him as a child to a father.