

- What is prayer?
  - In its most basic form, prayer is communication with God
    - We will talk specifics later!
  - God hears our prayers when we make them in perspective to his will (1 John 5: 14)
    - God responds to prayers out of mercy alone (Daniel 9: 18)
    - God is always watching over us, he knows our position, and wants to hear from us (Psalm 34: 15)
- How do we pray?
  - We are to pray by faith (Mark 11: 22-24)
    - Anything can become reality, nothing is mightier than God
      - Once we truly grasp this concept, we can realize that God is capable of doing anything
    - We must have full assurance that (if it be God's will) our prayers will become reality
      - If we don't really believe this, we underestimate the power of God, as we doubt his supremacy
      - It's very important to note the "if it be God's will" part
  - The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6: 5-15)
    - We've all heard this so many times, we can possibly say it forwards in backwards
      - This is a template for what all we should pray about to God
      - Simple. But elegant
        - Not overly wordy
      - We know Jesus was perfect, a loved son of God
        - We'd do good to mimic his example!
    - This is a great example that a prayer doesn't need empty, lofty words (Matthew 6: 7)
      - Instead, prayer should be personal and loving
      - It's not a speech, don't make it one
        - God wants a conversation, not a speech
    - Breakdown
      - Revering God (Matthew 6: 9)
        - This is a time to praise God's name
        - Jesus starts with this, possibly because God deserves all the glory we can give him
          - His needs are far less important than the name of God, and are nothing compared to pronouncing his glory
          - Jesus is the literal incarnation of God, if he doesn't start with himself, we shouldn't
      - Submission (Matthew 6:10)

- Here we see Jesus committing to whatever God may have in store for him
  - Take a second to recognize what this means
    - Jesus is offering up his own free will to fulfill whatever God may have in store for him
- Petition (Matthew 6:11)
  - This is a time to ask God to provide for us
    - Jesus puts faith in this statement that God will provide him sufficiently
- Forgiveness (Matthew 6:12)
  - This is a chance to bring any sins to God, that they may be forgiven
  - We cannot have a double standard
    - We are sinful, therefore we cannot expect less of others
    - If we can be forgiven, we must understand others should be too
- Repentance (Matthew 6:13)
  - In closing, Jesus asks that God give him strength to resist evil
  - Following forgiveness
  - Closing (leaving prayer victorious)
- Though our prayers will probably not be identical (but sometimes might be), we should definitely take to heart this example provided
  - It's easy to overlook the importance of this prayer, but we should put weight into every word, even when we are just repeating it from memory at a church service
    - Prayer takes place from the heart, not the mind
- Why do we pray?
  - Jesus has blessed us with the holy spirit, which allows us to pray before God (Romans 8:26-27)
    - We never need to feel incompetent in our prayers or be scared of praying, and in fact should be convicted to engage in prayer
      - We already discussed what prayer is, a conversation with God
        - God knows our thoughts and actions before we can even think or perform them
        - God knows our brokenness and still wants to embrace us
        - We shouldn't be afraid of outside criticism in our praying; if your goal is to impress others with lofty language, you are mistaken behind the purpose (Matthew 6:1)
          - This is particularly true in a group of Christians, as we understand the meaning of prayer, and should

never judge others (especially for sticking out their neck for others)

- Furthermore, we have no right to feel incompetent
  - We are praying through the holy spirit, not by our own righteousness (Romans 12:3)
    - We only have the opportunity to pray by the grace of God
    - Prayer is a gift, given to each of us by God (via the holy spirit mentioned earlier)
      - We are told to use our God-given gifts faithfully (1 Peter 4:10-11)
  - Prayer is a part of God's will for us (1 Thessalonians 5:14-22)
    - God wants us to use our gift of prayer (via the holy spirit) to connect with him
    - Prayer is our opportunity to ask God to forgive us, to praise his name, to petition our requests, among other things
- What's next?
  - How often do you say "I'll be praying for you?"
    - How often do you?
      - Does it depend on the person?
    - What would happen if you did pray for these people... as in REALLY pray for them with full faith and conviction for the words you are saying?
  - Do you ever pray aloud?
    - It's very easy to get lost in your own thoughts when you pray silently
      - One second, you're adoring God, the next, you're thinking about dinner
    - Praying out loud makes you actually think about the words you want to say
  - We will be doing a time of group prayer
    - Each person will have a chance to pray
      - Can be as long or as short as you want it to be
      - Try your best to make it meaningful
      - Remember, no one's going to judge what you say
        - You aren't praying to us, you're praying to God
      - Going in a circle
  - Prayer is our means of communication with our father in heaven, and a gift we should not take lightly
    - Remember, the people of the old testament had a physical dwelling place of God: the Tabernacle
      - Only the most holy of man could enter into the inner sanctum, and only on occasion (Hebrews 9:7)
      - Alternatively, we have access to the king of the universe at any moment of the day, and we should take advantage of this