

SERMON NOTES AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

Luke 11:1-13

It was the regular custom for a rabbi to teach his disciples to pray. The disciples knew that John had done that for his disciples, and they asked Jesus to do that for them. Normally, the rabbi would teach a long series of exercises in prayer. Here Jesus teaches a very simple model for prayer. It was a prayer easily memorized, so the disciples could pray the prayer themselves. And it could also serve as a reminder of the essential components of prayer, about how to pray and what to pray for.

It begins with addressing God. But instead of a very formal address for God, such as “Lord,” or “Sovereign,” it begins with personal address of “Father.” Commentators tell us that the word Jesus actually uses is “Abba,” which is the Aramaic word for the very informal address to one’s father. It would be like in our culture addressing our father as “Dad” or “Daddy.” We may begin with God on a very personal level, talking to Him about our needs, our concerns, and our intercessions on behalf of others. We are not coming to an abstract or distant deity, but to a parent who loves us and who delights to supply His children’s needs.

The Lord’s Prayer begins by putting God first. It prays for God’s name to be hallowed and for His Kingdom to come. For the Jews, the *name* meant much more than merely a name by which a person is called. The *name* had to do with the whole character of the person. That’s why the name of God must be hallowed and never abused.

The Lord’s Prayer covers the whole of life. It covers the *present need*. It asks for *daily bread*. It covers *past sin*, asking for forgiveness. It covers *future trials*. William Barclay reminds us that the word *temptation* in the New Testament means any testing situation. It includes far more than the mere seduction to sin. It covers every situation which is a challenge to and a test of a person’s character, perseverance, and faith. We can not escape these situations, but we can meet them with God.

One commentator said that the Lord’s Prayer has two great uses in our own private prayers. If it’s used at the beginning of our devotions, it awakens all kinds of holy desires which will lead us into the right kinds of prayer. If we use it at the end of our devotions, it sums up all that we ought to pray for in the presence of God.

In the follow-up teaching in verses 5-13, Jesus is emphasizing the need to be persistent in prayer, and that we need to continue to ask, seek, knock. At the end of the text, Jesus emphasizes the confidence we may have in God because of God’s great love for us.

Questions: Do you have a regular time of prayer? What works best for you as a time and a place to pray?