

Teach us how to **pray**

Notes Guide
Week Three



Your Kingdom Come Question Guide

Way in

The day before some major surgery, your friend says to you, 'Will you pray for me? I'm just not sure I know what to pray.' What would you say?

Apart from actually asking for things, what are some other benefits of prayer?

Read Psalm 103

1. A well-meaning relative says to you at a family gathering, 'I hear you're religious, then. What do you get out of it?' What would you say?

2. At the start of Psalm 103, David mentions the 'benefits' of God (v2), and then lists all the benefits throughout the rest of the Psalm. Which of the things David mentions particularly resonates with you and why? How does this list compare with your answer to question 1?

3. Essentially, King David describes in this Psalm what it is like to live in God's kingdom, rather than any earthly kingdom - including his own. To pray 'Your kingdom come', is to pray for these things to happen in your life and the lives of those around you. How does that compare with your current prayer life? What priorities in prayer does it lead to?

4. Verse 19 mentions that God's kingdom is already established. He is already King. Why is this so helpful to remember? How does this help our prayers, particularly the things we worry about?

5. A friend says to you, 'Praying "your will be done" is just a cop out in case you don't get what you ask for.' How might you answer them? Why is praying 'Your will be done' actually one of the most freeing and powerful things you could ever pray?

6. Read Matthew 13:44-46. According to this parable, what value does Jesus place on the kingdom? What influence might this have on our prayers? And on all other priorities in our lives?

7. What will you expect to happen if you pray 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' for the following areas of life?:

- your family
- your workplace
- your street/community
- your nation

Quote for **Reflection**

'What do I lose when I have a praying life? Control. Independence. What do I gain? Friendship with God. A quiet heart....Essentially, I lose my kingdom and get his. I move from being an independent player to a dependent lover: I move from being an orphan to a child of God.' (Paul Miller)

How do you feel about losing the 'kingdom of me' and gaining the 'kingdom of God'? Why is it so difficult? Why is prayer such a great barometer of how far you have lost control of your own life for the sake of submitting to God's Kingdom?

Take some time to pray for others, that you would all be willing to lose control of your own life and instead willingly submit to Christ's Kingship in your life.

How to pray when you're scared

Question Guide

Way in

The day before some major surgery, your friend says to you, 'Will you pray for me? I'm just not sure sure I know what to pray.' What would you say?

Apart from actually asking for things, what are some other benefits of prayer?

Read **Nehemiah 1:1-11**

Nehemiah has a real dilemma - to stay secure in his top job or risk that security by doing what he believed he needed to do to be obedient to God. If he was to do the latter it would have significant consequences. Even asking his boss for leave of absence was going to be difficult – the thought scared him! He felt he had to trust God and so he prayed.

1. In verses 1-3 of chapter 1 and verses 1- 5 chapter 2, we see Nehemiah's problem and why he was "very much afraid" to ask the king for permission to go to Jerusalem. Think of a time when you have been very afraid and what was your reaction?
2. In verse 4 Nehemiah faces his own fear. How do we recognise when we are simply scared of the future and what do we do? How ready are we to pray, and what type of prayer do we use, when we are anxious, stressed or scared?
3. Nehemiah's description of his God in verse 5 reveals his attitude as to why he has confidence to pray. What attributes of God do you see in this verse? Can you think of other characteristics of God that would help you to have confidence to pray to him?

4. The real predicament of the exiled Jews is identified in verses 6-8. What is it? Note:- this was a corporate as well as an individual problem. What implications does this have for us e.g. when we pray in our prayer of confession "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you. . . ."

5. Verse 9 demonstrates another attribute of God. What is it? (Also see 2 Chronicles 7:14) How would these verses help us if we are feeling scared, anxious or worried?

6. Nehemiah seems to be reminding God about his own achievements in Verse 10. What value is this form of prayer to us when we pray? How might God view it?

7. In the penultimate sentence of verse 11 Nehemiah is very specific about the outcome he is asking for. How specific are we about what we ask for, particularly when we are apprehensive about our situation?

Quote for reflection

Anxiety & Prayer

What does an unused prayer life look like? Anxiety. Instead of connecting with God, our spirits fly around like severed power lines, destroying everything they touch. Anxiety wants to be God but lacks God's wisdom, power or knowledge. Because anxiety is self on its own, it tries to get control. It is unable to relax in the face of chaos. Once one problem is solved, the next in line steps up. (Paul Millar – A Praying Life p70)

How can we best overcome anxiety and trust God instead?