

Teach us how to **pray**

Notes Guide
Week Four



Give us this Day Question Guide

Way in

Do you think that you tend to pray more for things you *want* or things that you really *need*? Why do you think that is?

One day, a friend who is going through hard times says to you, 'It's OK for you, you've got God on your side, you've got nothing to worry about.' What would you say?

Read **Philippians 4:4-7**

1. In the Lord's Prayer Mathew 6 9-13 we read "give us this day our daily bread". Up to this point in the prayer the focus has been on God and the kingdom. This is the first of the personal requests which Jesus taught his disciples to pray for. How far reaching should our prayers be for the material things we need in life?

2. In Philippians 4:6 Paul encourages us not to be anxious about anything. How possible is this in reality given all the pressures in modern life? Was it any different for him? See 1:7 and 4:2.

3. In Verse 6 Paul suggests that by "prayer and petitions with thanksgiving we can make our requests known to God". How does this help us understand how we should pray and what we should pray for? How should we view Philippians 4:6 in the light of Luke 11:9 and 10?

4. One of the great themes of Philippians is joy and rejoicing. In 4:4 Paul says “Rejoice and again I say rejoice” What place has joy in prayer? See Philippians 1:4, Philippians 1:18 b and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

(NOTE In your own study time read through the whole of Philippians and underline or highlight the word joy or rejoice each time you find it and take time to see how important Paul thought joy is in the Christian's life and prayers.)

5. As well as encouraging the Philippian Christians to pray requests Paul also encourages them to pray with thanksgiving. (Also see 1 Thessalonians 1:2) How important is thanks in our prayer life. Does it go hand in hand with joy?

6. The result of effective prayer is “the peace of God” which is beyond human understanding, guarding our hearts and minds. Why do you think Paul chose the heart and the mind to be filled with this peace?

7. The Jewish concept of “peace” comes from the Hebrew word “Shalom” which really means wholeness/fulfilment. How does prayer enable you to find “Shalom” in your own heart and mind?

Quote for Reflection

‘To be anxious means that we ourselves suffer, ourselves groan, ourselves seek to see ahead. Thanksgiving means giving God the glory in everything, making room for him, casting our care on him, letting it be his care. The troubles that exercise us then cease to be hidden and bottled up. They are so to speak laid open towards God, spread out before him.

(Karl Barth)

Take some time to pray for others, that you would all be more thankful in various areas of your lives.

How to pray with a right attitude

Question Guide

Way in

Do you think that you tend to pray more for things you *want* or things that you really *need*? Why do you think that is?

One day, a friend who is going through hard times says to you, 'It's OK for you, you've got God on your side, you've got nothing to worry about.' What would you say?

Read **Luke 18:9-14**

1. Verse 9 sets the context for the two prayers. Why is being 'confident in your own righteousness' so closely linked with 'looking down on everybody else'? What might this look like today?

2. Compare the two prayers. What strikes you about each of the people praying and each of the actual prayers?

3. Read Luke 18:15-17. In addition to the Tax collector, Jesus also commends children as an example of what it looks like to receive Jesus. What might their response to Christ teach us?

4. As we apply this specifically to prayer, the truth is that we're far too polite to pray as bluntly as the Pharisee, aren't we?! But, if you were rewriting his prayer for 21st Century Surbiton, what might it say?

5. One Sunday in church, after the service, the person you are sitting next to leans over to you and says, "Oh, he prays well, doesn't he?" What would you say?

6. 'Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less.' What might true humility in prayer look like for:

- your family
- your friends
- your workplace
- your community

7. Verse 14 is both a great challenge and a big relief! How might the hope of this verse radically effect our prayers?

Quote for **reflection**

"I don't just need help with my plans; I need help with my questions and even my own heart." (Paul Miller)

How is our prayer life such a vivid snapshot of being confident in our own righteousness? You may like to take some time to pray for yourself and others that Christ's grace would humble you in your attitude towards him, and as a result towards others and in your prayer life.