

Theme: Prayer is the natural response and activity of the believer in his/her relationship with the living God. We are invited to open our lives to Him in humility and sincerity. These are the prayers that God hears and answers.

Background: As prayer has been a frequent topic in our studies recently we are going to take the next several weeks to consider the Lord's Prayer as a means to draw us more deeply into personal prayer.

Introduction: We can study something wonderful – and squeeze out the "wonder."

## I. Believers Pray

### A. The sign of life

1. The living "breathe"
  - A newborn's cry
2. Those reborn "pray"
  - Crying out to God
3. Learning to pray
  - "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1)
  - Not "if" but "when"

### B. Divine communication - "Prayer is the soul's breathing itself into the bosom of its heavenly Father." (Thomas Watson)

- Taking God's promises and turning them back to Him in request – knowing that
- Communicating through the word

## II. Prayers that are not Heard (Or "How Not to Pray")

### A. Praying for show (5)

1. Hypocrites
  - Who are they? Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23)
  - What are they? (Matthew 23:27&28)
  - Appearance bears no resemblance to reality
2. Pride is the problem
  - a. They "love" the limelight (5)
    - Luke 18:10ff
  - b. Making my private prayer "public"

### B. More "Words" than Prayer

1. Empty phrases? Vain repetition
  - The "pitter-patter" of the "Pater Noster"
  - 1 Kings 18:26 from "morning till noon"

NOTE: Not all repetition is "vain." See Psalm 136 or Matthew 26:44

### 2. Too many words

- a. Why so many words??
  - A god in my image needs to understand my request
- b. "Lip service"
  - An offering of the lips, not the heart
  - Going through the motions

NOTE: It is not much prayer that is rejected – but many words in prayer. (Luke 20:46&47)

### C. A Temporal Reward

- The eyes of the crowd is all you get

## III. Praying To Be Heard (6)

- A. With humility!
  - 1. In Secret
    - To be heard, not seen! (Matthew 14:23; Acts 10)
    - Before divinity, not humanity
  - 2. Before Him Who sees
    - in secret (Psalm 139:7-10)
- NOTE: If you can't be in "secret" you still pray (Daniel 6:10&11)
- B. In sincerity
  - 1. He knows what you need
    - Before you ask!
    - Not so we can change His mind (Numbers 23:19)
  - 2. In Spirit and truth (John 4:24)
- C. Concertedly
  - Finding a time and place

#### IV. Drawn to Prayer

- A. By our own need!
  - We aren't in control
  - Aware of our weaknesses
- B. By our God
  - 1. A great and gracious Father
  - 2. Who calls us to pray (Jeremiah 33:3)
    - Knowing our need, He asks what we want (Mark 10:51)
  - 3. Who promises much
    - He hears! In secret!
    - He answers and rewards "abundantly" (Ephesians 3:20&21)

"And when you pray" come before your heavenly Father in humility, with sincerity of heart.