

## Spending Time with God in Prayer

Message 4 of 5 in the series: "Fruitful"

### A. God wants us to live fruitful lives.

"This is to my Father's glory, that you **bear much fruit**, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

John 15:8 (NIV)

"...the Holy Spirit produces **this kind of fruit** in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23a (NLT)

1. To live fruitful lives, we must remain connected to Jesus.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. **If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit**; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5 (NIV)

2. Branches don't produce fruit for themselves or seek glory for themselves. They produce fruit for others and bring glory to the gardener.

"I am the true grapevine, and **my Father is the gardener**. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more."

John 15:1-2 (NLT)

### B. Spending time in prayer is essential to remaining connected to Jesus.

1. Jesus made it possible for us to spend time with God in prayer anytime, anywhere.

"So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. **There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.**"

Hebrews 4:14-16 (NLT)

"Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you." 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

2. Prayer is much more than asking God for things. Prayer involves talking to God, spending time in His presence, and aligning ourselves with His will.

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. **When can I go and meet with God?**" Psalm 42:1-2 (NIV)

"I love the LORD because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. Because he bends down to listen, **I will pray as long as I have breath!**" Psalm 116:1-2 (NLT)

"My heart has heard you say, 'Come and talk with me.' And my heart responds, '**LORD, I am coming.**'"

Psalm 27:8 (NLT)

3. Spending time in prayer requires faith/trust that God really answers prayers.

- We must trust that God loves us and wants what's best for us. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? **If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**" Matthew 7:7-11 (NKJV)

- We must trust that God has the wisdom and power to answer our prayers. "O Sovereign Lord! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. **Nothing is too hard for you!** ...You are the great and powerful God, the Lord of Heaven's Armies. **You have all wisdom and do great and mighty miracles.**" Jeremiah 32:17-19a (NLT)

- We must trust that God knows better than we do what we need and when we need it.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; **do not depend on your own understanding**. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

"Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish **infinitely more than we might ask or think.**" Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)

### C. Remaining connected to Jesus is essential for praying in accordance with God's will.

**“But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father... I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.”** John 15:7, 8, & 16b (NLT)

*Note:* Praying “in Jesus’ name” is not a magic formula that makes God grant wishes. Instead, it means asking for things that we know are in accordance with God’s character and His will.

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that **if we ask anything according to his will**, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.” 1 John 5:14-15 (NIV)

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but **let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think**. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12:2 (NLT)

**Life Application:** We must never try to use prayer to bring glory to ourselves or to manipulate God. “When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues **where everyone can see them**. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. **They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again**. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!” Matthew 6:5-8 (NLT)

**Life Application:** We can learn to pray better by praying with other believers. “Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, ‘**Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.**’” Luke 11:1 (NLT)

**Life Application:** We need to schedule time with God in prayer if we’re actually going to pray. “But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. **He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done**, giving thanks to his God.” Daniel 6:10 (NLT)

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#### Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read John 15:1-8. In what ways do fruitful branches bring glory to a gardener? In what ways do Christians who live spiritually fruitful lives bring glory to God?
2. What role does prayer play in staying connected to Jesus? (Psalm 27:8, 42:1-2, 116:1-2)
3. Why do you think most Christians say that they don’t spend enough time in prayer?
4. Discuss the following statements about prayer:
  - We must trust that God loves us and wants what’s best for us. (Matthew 7:7-11)
  - We must trust that God has the wisdom and power to answer our prayers. (Jeremiah 32:17-19a)
  - We must trust that God knows better than we do what we need and when we need it. (Proverbs 3:5-6, Ephesians 3:20)
  - We must never try to use prayer to bring glory to ourselves or to manipulate God. (Matthew 6:5-8)
  - Remaining connected to Jesus is essential for praying in accordance with God’s will. (John 15:7 & 16, 1 John 5:14-15)

Which of these statements speaks the loudest to you right now?

5. Daniel prayed three times each day in an upstairs room in his house. (Daniel 6:10) When/where do you spend time with God in prayer? In your opinion, how important is it to schedule a time and place to pray?
6. Describe someone you know who loves spending time with God in prayer. Why do they do it? What do they get out of it? How can the members of your connect group help each other learn to pray better? (Luke 11:1)
7. Quotations to Consider:

"I am so busy now that if I did not spend the first three hours each day in prayer, I could not get through the day." Martin Luther

"Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you." David in Psalm 37:4-5 (NLT)

"There is a devil. He is cunning, he is mighty, he never rests, he is ever plotting the downfall of the child of God; and if the child of God relaxes in prayer, the devil will succeed in ensnaring him." R.A. Torrey

"Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth. God does nothing but in answer to prayer." John Wesley