

We Need to be a Praying Community

Matthew 6:5-15

Introduction

- A vision statement describes the goal of an organization; our vision statement as a church family is the following: “**We exist to develop followers of Jesus who prayerfully engage their communities with the gospel.**”
- The way you get to your vision statement is by implementing your mission statement; our mission statement is virtually the same with the exception of one word: “**We aim to develop followers of Jesus *by* prayerfully engaging our communities with the gospel.**”
- **Where we are headed for 2021...**
 - We will be shifting our service times again... hopefully indefinitely.
 - 9:30 AM
 - Prayer 10:30-10:50
 - 11 AM
 - Daniel sermon series (begins February 14)
 - What I said on January 5, 2019...
 - Life Groups: The best method to foster healthy disciples of Jesus.
 - Connection Youth Group: It will be a priority and a vital part of our mission as a church.
 - **A new full-time staff position...**
 - Our partners voted 100% in support of increasing our budget so that I can hire a full-time Youth and Young Adult Pastor
 - We received 27 resumes
 - I interviewed multiple potential candidates
 - Meet our new Youth and Young Adult Pastor: Bryan Standerwick
 - Family: Ashley (wife), Aleigha, Jayleigh, Alexander, and Maximus.
 - Moving from Oak Creek, Wisconsin

- Start time: First week of March
- Why I hired Bryan...
 - He thinks and functions missionally
 - He has a track record for engaging people outside the church.
 - He has a God-centered passion for youth and people.
- **We need to keep moving forward regardless of what is coming...**
 - “So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.” (Heb. 13:12-14)
 - Things will never be the same in America. We were made for and are called into the craziness of our times. We exist for such a time as this.
 - **“We aim to develop followers of Jesus *by* prayerfully engaging our communities with the gospel.”**
- **Jesus modeled a dependance upon prayer.**
 - The “Lord’s Prayer” in Matthew is sandwiched in the middle of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount which outline the ethics of his Kingdom and all who belong to it:
 - “You are the salt of the earth...” (5:13)
 - “You are the light of the world...” (5:14)
 - “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, ‘Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.’” (5:38-39)
 - “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.” (5:44)
 - After the “Lord’s Prayer” Jesus said...
 - “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.... For where you treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (6:19-20, 21)
 - “Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.” (6:34)
 - “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter it are many. For the gage is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (7:13-14)
 - For Jesus, prayer was fundamental to the success of his mission.

Seven Reasons Why we put Prayer in our Vision and Mission Statement

1) We must pray because God is our Heavenly Father.

- When we approach God in prayer, we can approach Him like a child approaches his/her father.
- God is not unapproachable because He calls all whose faith rests in Jesus Christ His children.
- Romans 8:14 informs us why it is we can approach God as a child approaches a father: ***“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry ‘Abba! Father!’”***

2) We must pray because God is God.

- Secondly, when we do approach Him, we must understand that although God is our Father, He is not like us.
- The One who we address is, “Abba! Father!” Is the One before whom the angels must cover their feet and hide their faces anytime they are in His presence as they sing: *“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory”* (Isaiah 6:3)!
- Although the Christian is privileged to be a child of God, we must not forget that he is holy.

3) We must pray because God’s kingdom is coming (*Your kingdom come...*).

- When we approach God in prayer, we can do so understanding that we do not belong to the kingdoms of earth, but to the kingdom of God.
- The Bible says of the Christian, ***“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”***¹
- Things are not the way they should be, and when we pray, we can pray knowing that things will not always be the way that they are. We pray because we are citizens of a different kingdom.

4) We must pray because it is God who provides for our needs (*Give us each day our daily bread...*).

- When we really know our God, we recognize that He is not only aware of our circumstances, but that our most basic needs come from Him.

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (1 Pe 2:9–10). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

- When we truly know our God, we understand that it is He who ultimately provides for our most basic needs. This is why Jesus said in His sermon on the mount:
Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they.... But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matt. 6:25-26, 34)

5) We must pray because of our failures and God faithfulness (...and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us).

- Best way to know our selves, is to first know who God is...
- So when we pray we ought to pray for the forgiveness of our own sins as well as the ability to forgive others.
- This principle reminds me of the authority of a certain government who took a Christian captive and asked, "What can your God do now?" To whom the Christian replied, "He can give me the strength to forgive you."

The final thing we ought to include in our prayer to God is that...

6) We must pray because we are our greatest enemy and Jesus is our greatest advocate (And lead us not into temptation).

- One of the themes in Jesus' prayer is that it is about our need for, and dependence on God.
- What we see in this prayer is our need for God in every area of our lives.
- On this point, Darrell Bock suggests,
 Not praying is a little like walking up to the marriage alter, saying one's vows to the spouse, and then going mute as the relationship moves from day to day. There can be no development of a deeper connection without time for table talk. In fact, without such basic contact, the relationship not only fails to go forward; it goes backward.²

7) We must pray because we have lost our way and prayer is the compass to guide us to where we need to be.

- The Church has never been more divided and fractured
- Our God and our mission is what unites us...
- All of history is moving towards Malachi 1:11,
For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure

² *Ibid*; p. 312.

offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.”

Conclusion

- The famous pastor, A.W. Pink said this about prayer, Prayer is a coming to God, telling Him my need (or the need of others), committing my way unto the Lord, and then leaving Him to deal with the case as seems Him best. This leaves God to answer the prayer in whatever way He sees fit, and often, His answer may be the very opposite of what would be most acceptable to the flesh.³
- As recipients of the gospel who have been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, we have been made the children of the living God who is eager for us to come to Him like a doting father is eager spend time with his child.
- We have direct access to the throne room of the very One who created all things... the King of Creation. God not only expects us to talk to him, but he longs to satisfy us with only what serves our good and his glory.

Challenge

- *Make Time* to listen to God: For you to know who it is that you pray to, you must begin by listening. The way to listen to God is by reading your Bible; what you hear in the Bible will inform and infuse your prayers.
- *Talk* to God: In response to your relationship with God, you must respond by communicating with him. Know that when you talk to God, that he listens to his children and delights to give them what is good for them.
- *Trust* God: Know that when you go to God in prayer, you go to the One who is good while you are not. Believe that the one who pray to is the one who has spoken something out of nothing and regardless if your prayers are answered or not, that God’s response or the lack thereof is because he is good.

³ *Ibid*; p. 48.