

“You’re Invited To...A Life of Prayer” (Prayer: The Extraordinary Invitation – Pt. 1)
(Luke 11:1-10)

- **The Great Invitation**

- Thank you, Kyle, for that amazing story of prayer! Here’s a prayer story from Jesus and His disciples: **One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.’ (Luke 11:1-4)** *Let’s pause and pray...*
- For the entire month of May, we’re talking about **Prayer: The Extraordinary Invitation**. Let me rephrase that—we’re not just *talking* about prayer. We’re going to be *learning about prayer, practicing prayer, equipping and empowering and engaging a life of prayer*. I’ve started saying this the past couple years at churches I’ve preached at: *if I could give one gift to the church today—the church of America, the church of 2026—it would be the gift of Prayer*. Not just the religious duty where we offer an obligatory prayer to start a meeting or eat a meal or make transition time during a worship service. But authentic, relational, earnest, simple, faithful, desperate prayer for God and His Kingdom. Prayer as a *lifestyle*, the engine room of all we do. I would see the church receive that gift. Because if we could recover that, *everything else flows*.
 - A life without prayer is a life without power. A church without prayer is a church without power. A life *with* prayer is a life with God—which means anything is possible! A church of prayer is a church awake and alive and moving with God.
 - Watchman Nee, the 20th Century Chinese church planter who led a movement that brought over 100,000 people to Christ even as the Communist regime was overtaking China, once said: **“Our prayers lay the track down on which God’s power can come. Like a mighty locomotive, his power is irresistible, but it cannot reach us without rails.”**

- John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement who began every morning kneeling for 2 hours in prayer, said, **“God does nothing except in response to believing prayer.”**
- Martin Luther, the great protestant reformer, said, **“I have so much to do today that I shall have to spend the first 3 hours in prayer.”**
- *Prayer* is the extraordinary invitation to *a life with God*. This was the lifestyle of the early church and the apostles. This was the lifestyle of Jesus! How will we respond to the invitation?
- **Jesus’ Life of Prayer**
 - After following Jesus for some time and getting to witness how He really lived His life, Jesus’ disciples finally began to feel the weight of this invitation. The Gospel of Luke, more than any other Gospel, highlights Jesus’ prayer life. At every major junction, Jesus is praying: at His baptism (Luke 3:21), seeking solitude from the crowds (5:16), before choosing the Twelve (6:12), before Peter’s confession (9:18), at the Transfiguration (9:28), in Gethsemane before the cross (22:39), even on the cross (23:34). Prayer is how Jesus *lived His earthly life*. When Jesus prayed, He was modeling for us what it looks like to live in relationship with God, showing what He as the Son of God had enjoyed from the beginning, the perfect, loving relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In prayer, we’re invited to step in and enjoy that relationship, that eternal, Holy love that’s been shared in the Triune God for all eternity.
 - The disciples glimpsed this relationship Jesus had with His Father and how it was the foundation for all He did, and they were stirred to ask Him, **“Lord, teach us to pray...”** *Lord, we want a prayer life like yours; we want to talk to the Father like you do; we want a relationship with the Father like you have.* And Jesus didn’t even hesitate. It’s almost like He’s thinking, *I’ve been waiting for you to finally ask!* He gives them the greatest model for prayer of all time.
 - What is prayer? A lot of people say the simplest definition for prayer is just “talking to God.” And I think that’s right. But I’d even broaden it a little more. How do we connect with the people we love? It’s more than *just* talking right? There are all kinds of ways we communicate and relate. I’d say that prayer is how we *relate* to

God: it's talking, it's listening, it's paying attention, it's beholding, it's aligning with, sometimes it's just silently *being with*. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus took that and gave it a practical form and focus: for Jesus, **Prayer is relating to God for the sake of His Kingdom and His good purposes in our lives.**

- The Lord's Prayer is a model for our prayer life that is astonishingly simple and deep at the same time. He gives us 5 requests that cover the most important things. You might have noticed, Luke's version of the prayer is the abbreviated version, Matthew 6 adds just a little more detail which is what we base our traditional, liturgical version on that most of us have memorized. Let's break it down:
- **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.** God, the eternal creator, sustainer, and redeemer of all, wants a *personal relationship* with us, so we can call Him *Father*. That's how Jesus taught us to relate to God. And the first request is that *God's Name would be honored, praised, revered* throughout the earth—that in this world of rebellion and sin where God's Name has been rejected and ridiculed, all the earth would once again come to honor Him—because if we can do that, we'll be back on track to make everything right again.
- **Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.** The most important thing we can pray is for God to be rightly worshipped, and for His Kingdom to come—that heaven and earth would once again be united—that God's space, and God's life, and God's ways would invade ours. His Kingdom and His will in this earth, in this nation, in our community, in our church, in our lives, in our hearts, as it is in Heaven.
- **Give us this day our daily bread.** Just like the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, completely dependent on God's provision, just like the first humans in the Garden, we can rely on God for our deepest needs, for the simple things and the big things. He wants us to ask, and trust, and depend on Him. He wants us to see all the provisions and opportunities in our lives as gifts from Him. It's the way we're made to live.
- **Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.** Prayer is an opportunity to constantly realign our lives with God, to repent, to turn back to Him

anywhere we've turned away—and this should be the constant posture of our hearts. He wants us to become the kind of people that the moment we feel ourselves starting to drift, we turn back to Him and seek His grace. Then He wants us to extend that same grace and mercy to others.

- **And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** Trials will come, it's part of this world, Jesus said that. But we have permission to pray that God would spare us from the trials, the tests, the temptations, as much as possible. This world is full of evil, there is an Enemy and a Kingdom of darkness. One of the reasons we need to live a life of prayer is we need to be prepared and protected from all that, because it will come to undermine our lives with God again and again. We don't have to give in; He's given us a strategy to oppose and resist it, and that strategy is a life of prayer.
- Now as the church took this prayer and adapted it as a liturgy for worship, they borrowed from King David's prayer in the old testament for a finishing note of praise: *for yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.* And that's a great conclusion, too.
- **Accepting the Invitation**
 - This is the most extraordinary invitation you could ever receive: the God of the universe wants to be in a relationship with you, wants to communicate with you, to relate to you, in your day to day life. And He's inviting us to partner with Him to allow His heavenly Kingdom, and His good will to unfold in and through our lives. What will you do with this invitation?
 - I invite everyone to spend time every day this month *in prayer*. I have a simple tool for you that's based on the elements of the Lord's Prayer, and you can use this in your personal prayer time, or with your families or groups: **P – Pause and Praise, R – Repent, A – Ask, Y – Yield**. Do you already have a solid routine with your prayer life? Keep it up, and maybe think about how you can try something new this month. Do you feel like your prayer life is getting stale? Try changing your routine, spend more time, or change the space, get ride of distractions. Do you feel like you don't really have much of a prayer life? Now's the perfect time to begin.

- I just heard a story this week from the Christian singer Matthew West. He was at a Father-Daughter church camp. They took the dads and daughters deep into the woods, blindfolded the daughters and had the dads guide them through woods. They gave the dads 3 instructions to repeat as many times as possible before the walk began: *I will never leave you. You can ask me anything. You should only listen for the sound of my voice.* He made her repeat those to him as many times as she could, and then they began. At first, he could put his hand on her shoulder and they could walk and talk with each other. Then with a silent signal from the camp counselor, he had to take his hand off her shoulder and he could only guide her with the sound of his voice. Then with another silent signal, dad could no longer say anything unless she remembered the instruction that she could ask him anything. It gets more and more challenging. His daughter is feeling lost, wondering where her dad is, because she's not remembering the instruction that she can ask anything. Then a counselor comes up, as a voice of deception, and says, hey, it looks like you got separated from your dad and the group, how about you follow me and I'll get you caught up. The dad is watching this happen, feeling powerless, hoping she remembers the instructions! But she says, *ok*, and she follows the camp counselor. Of course, he leads her off course, into a ditch, just standing in front of a tree. She's there, confused, blindfolded, waiting, wondering what's going on. Dad is standing there just waiting and hoping she remembers the instructions! After a few minutes the counselor comes over and says, I don't think you're where you're supposed to be—the group was all gone, she was alone, off the trail. The counselor asked, do you remember the instructions we gave you at the beginning? She thinks for a while, and suddenly she says, *Dad, are you there?* Her dad's crying at this point, *Yes, honey, I've been here the whole time!* She asks, *Can you help me?* He says, *Of course, you just have to listen for the sound of my voice,* and he guided her back on track.
- ***I will never leave you. You can ask me anything. Only listen for the sound of my voice.*** Are you walking with Him? Have you gotten off track? It starts with His Word, it starts with prayer. Let's accept this extraordinary invitation and take this journey together. *Let's pray.*