

## But when you pray . . .

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### DAY 2—TEACH US HOW TO PRAY

“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray’ ” (Luke 11:1, NIV).

#### The Heart of the Christian Life

Prayer is essential, even vital.

“Every morning take time to begin your work with prayer. Do not think this wasted time; it is time that will live through eternal ages. By this means success and spiritual victory will be brought in” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 194).

The disciples often witnessed Jesus praying. They noticed that He had a prayer life different from theirs. The disciples were good spiritual people. They had dedicated hearts and wanted to serve God. They went to church, kept Sabbath, returned tithe faithfully, and ate clean foods. Everybody in Israel, especially the disciples, knew how to pray, right?

We think we know how to pray. Even children know how to pray. But when the disciples watched Jesus praying—and compared their prayers with His—they realized that they *didn't* know how to pray. That's the reason they said, “Teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1).

We assume that prayer is so simple. And yes, God would listen to the simplest prayer. But we must continually improve our prayer life.

The disciples noticed that they would preach, but nobody was impressed. They would try to heal or cast out demons, but they had no power. They asked Jesus, “How do You do that?” Jesus said, “By prayer and fasting.”

Jesus basically says that you can't do things in your own wisdom; it's only in God's power. For you to succeed, you need to pray seriously. In the book of Romans, Paul says that Holy Spirit must intercede for us because we don't even know how to pray (Rom. 8:26).

“Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. . . . Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God” (*Prayer*, pp. 12, 13).

Jesus had a powerful prayer life and would often spend the whole night in prayer. “Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer. . . . He is our example in all things. . . . His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Savior of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer” (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 93, 94).

Jesus made prayer His priority, the first thing before the day started. “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35, NKJV). Jesus had a time and a place for prayer.

When the disciples said, “Teach us how to pray,” Jesus didn't tell them, “Pray with these words,” like a mantra. In fact, He clearly told them not to repeat the same words every time they prayed (Matt. 6:7). Jesus Himself prayed a different kind of prayer in John 17, according to the needs of the situation.

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 93). In prayer we open our heart to God in honest conversation, like a dialogue. If you repeat the same words every time you pray, it will become routine and you will not even think about what you say.

Prayer and study of the Word should always go together. Through prayer we talk to God; through the Word God talks to us.

Jesus lived a life of prayer. He prayed early in the morning, He went to a specific place for prayer, and He openly conversed with God. He is our example. He is calling us to pray just like Him.

Let’s pray together.

### **Prayer Time (30–45 Minutes)**

*All prayer groups have different ways of praying together. We encourage you to spend the next 30-45 minutes in united prayer, in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads. We encourage short conversational prayers (1-3 sentences). This allows for more people to pray multiple times. Below are some examples of praying through Scripture based on the theme. You may pray through other passages also and include other subjects in your prayer time. See the Leader’s Guide and World Church Prayer Requests for prayer ideas.*

#### **Praying God’s Word — Luke 11:1**

“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’”

#### **“Jesus was praying in a certain place”**

*Father, teach us to pray like Jesus. We confess to making excuses and getting distracted and busy. Help us to choose the best time and place for meeting with You every day. Change our priorities and form new habits that lead us into Your presence.*

#### **“Lord, teach us to pray”**

*Yes, Lord, show us how to pray just as You showed the disciples. Thank You for the beautiful example of the Lord’s Prayer. Show us how to model our prayers and our lives after You. Fill us with the Holy Spirit, and use our prayers to transform our homes, our church, our community, and Your kingdom.*

### **More Prayer Suggestions**

**Thanks and Praise:** Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

**Confession:** Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

**Guidance:** Ask God to grant wisdom for current challenges and decisions.

**Our Church:** Pray for regional and world church needs (see separate sheet with requests).

**Local Requests:** Pray for current needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

**Listen and Respond:** Take time to listen for God’s voice and respond in praise or song.

### **Song Suggestions**

*SDA Hymnal:* Sweet Hour of Prayer (#478); Hear Our Prayer, O Lord (#684); What a Friend We Have in Jesus (#499)

*Other Songs:* Seek Ye First; Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus; In Moments Like These