

John 5:19 “Why I Don’t Pray” Discussion Questions

Purpose of Discussion: To help people practice prayer.

Sermon Refresher: Jesus depended completely on his Father and calls us to become like children too. As we cultivate the helplessness of children, we will be driven to pray. When we pray we admit our need to God our Father. We can learn from Jesus the need to focus on prayer and to pray about everything.

Discussion:

1. What do you think makes prayer challenging for so many of us?
2. Read John 5:19 and John 12:49. How do the Father and Son relate to each other according to these verses?
3. How could John 5:19 and 12:49 shape prayer for you?
4. “Prayer isn’t a marathon to run but a throne to get off of.” How could that image affect how you approach prayer?
5. “We don’t pray more because we don’t understand how helpless we are.” When do you tend to feel helpless? Why do we hide our helplessness and weakness?
6. In contrast to Question #5, when do you tend to feel in control of situations? What would it be like to imagine yourself as a child in relation to them? How could that change how you pray about the everyday stuff in life?
7. One of our problems in praying, Keith said, can be that we don’t know what we should pray for. One of the best ways to learn what to pray for is by using Scripture when we pray. We let God’s word shape our words to him. We will practice praying use the ACTS structure for how and what we pray.
 - Adoration: Praising God for who he is (his character and attributes)
 - Confession: Acknowledging our specific sins to God and asking forgiveness
 - Thanksgiving: Appreciating God for what he has done for us

- Supplication: Asking for help in anything for ourselves and others

Don't worry if this is new or feels awkward. It's great just to try it out and pray. Talk to God like a child would talk to a parent.

Adoration

Exodus 15:11

Who among the gods

is like you, Lord?

Who is like you—

majestic in holiness,

awesome in glory,

working wonders?

Confession

Psalm 51:1–2

Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your unfailing love;

according to your great compassion

blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity

and cleanse me from my sin.

Thanksgiving

Ephesians 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Supplication

Philippians 1:9–11

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

2 Chronicles 20:12

Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.

John 5:19 “Why I Don’t Pray” Exercise

This Exercise helps you practice praying using the ACTS structure. Each day has verses to read as a prompt for what to pray. It can be good to jot down to the side each day what you pray for. Try to spend at least 5–10 minutes each time.

First, brainstorm what you could pray for. You can use these categories that Keith shared for what Jesus prayed for. Try to come up with at least one request for each.

Critical events

Luke 3:21–22 21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Decisions

Luke 6:12–13 12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles

Miracles (of life change and of your responsibilities)

Mark 6:41 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.

Other people (God would give them faith and that faith wouldn’t fail)

Luke 22:31–32 “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

Enemies

Luke 23:34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Day 1

Adoration

1 Chronicles 16:25–27

For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
 he is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are idols,
 but the LORD made the heavens.
Splendor and majesty are before him;
 strength and joy are in his dwelling place.

Confession

1 John 1:8–10

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

Thanksgiving

Ephesians 1:4–6

In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Supplication

2 Chronicles 14:1

Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, “LORD, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, LORD our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. LORD, you are our God; do not let mere mortals prevail against you.”

Day 2

Adoration

Isaiah 42:8

You are the LORD; that is your name!

You will not give your glory to another
or your praise to idols.

Revelation 5:12

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”

Confession

Psalm 139:23–24

Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Thanksgiving

Exodus 15:13

In your unfailing love you will lead
the people you have redeemed.
In your strength you will guide them
to your holy dwelling.

Supplication

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Day 3

Adoration

2 Samuel 22:2–3

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation.
He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior—
from violent people you save me.

Confession

Psalm 32:5

Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, “I will confess
my transgressions to the Lord.”
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.

Thanksgiving

Psalm 111:2–5

Great are the works of the Lord;
they are pondered by all who delight in them.
Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures forever.
He has caused his wonders to be remembered;
the Lord is gracious and compassionate.
He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.

Supplication

Ephesians 3:16–17

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit
in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

Day 4

Adoration

Psalm 63:2–3

I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.

Confession

Psalm 19:12–13

But who can discern their own errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.
Keep your servant also from willful sins;
may they not rule over me.

Thanksgiving

Colossians 1:13–14

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Supplication

Proverbs 30:7–9

Two things I ask of you, Lord;
do not refuse me before I die:
Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.
Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you
and say, 'Who is the Lord?'
Or I may become poor and steal,
and so dishonor the name of my God.

Day 5

Adoration

Ephesians 3:20–21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Confession

Psalm 32:1–2

Blessed is the one

whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one

whose sin the LORD does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Thanksgiving

Revelation 15:3–4

Great and marvelous are your deeds,
Lord God Almighty.

Just and true are your ways,
King of the nations.

Who will not fear you, Lord,
and bring glory to your name?

For you alone are holy.

All nations will come

and worship before you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Supplication

Ephesians 3:17–19

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.