

Week 6- “Rules for Prayer”
Study Guide and Discussions Questions

Week 6 (6/16/2019) *Father’s Day

Rules for Prayer (ch.7, pg. 97-107)

For this weeks study please read chapter 7 in the book, “*Prayer*”, by Timothy Keller. If you have any observations or questions in the reading please feel welcome to bring them to your Life Group.

Main point for the Study:

“Nothing we formulate or do can qualify us for access to God. Only grace can do that—based not on our performance but on the saving work of Christ.”
(*Prayer*, Keller, pg. 103)

Primary Bible Scripture for the week:

Psalms 130:3—4 (ESV)

3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
 O Lord, who could stand?
4 But with you there is forgiveness,
 that you may be feared.

Jeremiah 29:12—14 (ESV)

¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

John 16:22—24 (ESV)

²² So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. ²³ In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Study and Reflection Questions:

In chapter 7 of *Prayer*, Keller summarizes 5 rules on the practice of prayer as found in John Calvin’s publication, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. (see Keller, *Prayer*, pg. 97—107). This will provide the basis for this weeks study.

1. Calvin's prayer rule #1: Joyful Fear (Keller, pg. 97—99)

Read: Psalm 130:3-4.

Our attitude in prayer should be one of both joy and reverence. To fear God is to be in complete awe of his power and holiness. In Psalm 130 we see that God is feared (revered) not only for his perfect judgment, but also because of his ability to forgive. How does forgiveness of sins enable us to “fear” Him in reverent worship?

2. Calvin's prayer rule #2: Spiritual Insufficiency (Keller, pg. 99—101).

Read: Jeremiah 29:12-14.

We should come before God with an understanding of our complete dependence upon Him. We should converse honestly with God about all our flaws and weaknesses. God knows and sees all of our shortcomings. What does “Seeking God with all our heart” (Jer. 29:13) mean to you? How does repentance fit into this picture?

3. Calvin's prayer rules #3 & #4: Restful Trust yet Confident Hope (Keller, pg. 101—103). Keller combines Calvin's rules #3 and #4 .

Read: John 16:22-24, see also Jeremiah 29:12-14.

We can pray with confidence that God hears us and will act on behalf of His children. However, we must also submit to God's plan when His answer is not the one we wanted. We can trust that His larger plan for our good is always at work. Share or reflect upon an instance when God answered your prayer in an unexpected (possibly unwanted) way. What was the outcome?

4. Calvin's prayer rule #5: The Rule Against Rules (Keller, pg. 103—107).

Refer to: John 16:22-24, Jeremiah 29:12-14.

Grace rules all. Calvin cautions us that we should not conclude that following any set of rules can make our prayers worthy to be heard. Remember our access to God is only possible because of His grace. Our ability (or inability) to follow “rules” of prayer does not affect the access to our Father that He gives freely to those who believe in His son, Jesus Christ.

When we pray “in the name of Jesus” we are declaring our trust in Christ alone for our salvation and eternal relationship with God. We are also making a statement that our prayer intends to honor and bring glory to Jesus. Honestly explore the motivations of your heart in your prayer. Do your prayers have, in mind, the ultimate goal of honoring and glorifying Christ? Share your thoughts with your group.

"PRAYER" –Pathway Church Message Series

14-week study guide, (spring 2019)

Welcome to the study guide that we will be using for the next 14 weeks as we read Timothy Keller's book, "Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God." This book will aid us as we deepen our understanding of what the Bible teaches regarding prayer. Below is the schedule for weekly reading and the Pathway sermons that will coincide with the chapters in the "Prayer" book.

During this series we will journey together and explore many aspects of prayer. Prayer is a key spiritual discipline in the life of a Christ follower. One can certainly pray and not be a Christian, but one cannot be a Christian and go without prayer. Prayer is the primary way a Christian communes with and communicates with God. Prayer is vital in the Christian life and yet frequently a neglected discipline. Christians are instructed to "pray without ceasing... for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:17,18 ESV).

The purpose of this series is to deepen our understanding of and expand our experience with prayer. Together we will experience awe and intimacy with God through our prayer life.

The primary study guide resource will be Timothy Keller's book, "Prayer." Pathway will provide additional questions to help guide individual study or Life Group discussion. It is recommended you do the reading before you come to the Sunday service that coincides with that chapter. The discussion points contained herein are meant to give initial guidance and focus for Pathway's church-wide study. It is the prerogative of the group to dive deeper into Keller's book if so desired.

In addition to the Sunday sermons, Tim Keller's book "Prayer", and Life Group discussions, there will be several other ways during this series that Pathway will encourage one to further enrich their prayer lives:

1. Open invitation to Sunday morning prayer time @ 9AM in Room 101. We will be gathering in Room 101 every Sunday morning before service from 9AM – 10AM to pray with one another and for one another (no experience necessary!). All are encouraged to come.
2. Pathway Pastors will be texting out brief prayer prompts to those who opt it. It is easy, just text this message "**@pccprays**" to the number **81010** and you will receive a daily text prayer prompt as a reminder to take a moment to talk with God.

If you prefer email instead, just send an email to

pccprays@mail.remind.com (no subject required).

3. Pathway will be encouraging prayer during the second worship set of Sunday service, creating more opportunities for people to pray with one another, pray on their own, or pray with one of the prayer shepherds in the back of the sanctuary.

The Pastors and Leadership of Pathway Community Church thank you for your participation in this prayer series. We pray that this series will bring about a deeper understanding and a richer experience in your prayer life. We pray that your awe and intimacy with God grows and deepens through this series.

14-Week Reading and Sermon Schedule

Desiring Prayer

Week 1 (5/5/2019)

The Necessity of Prayer (ch.1, pg. 7-18) and ***The Greatness of Prayer*** (ch.2, pg. 19-32)

Understanding Prayer

Week 2 (5/12/2019)

What is Prayer? (ch.3, pg. 33-49)

5/19/2019 (break from Prayer series for PCC Retreat weekend)

Week 3 (5/26/2019)

Conversing With God (ch.4, pg. 50-65)

Week 4 (6/2/2019)

Encountering God (ch.5, pg. 66-80)

Learning Prayer

Week 5 (6/9/2109)

Letters on Prayer (ch.6, pg. 81-96)

Week 6 (6/16/2019) *Father's Day

Rules for Prayer (ch.7, pg. 97-107)

Week 7 (6/23/2019)

The Prayer of Prayers (ch.8, pg. 108-119)

6/30/2019 (break from Prayer series for a Generous Giving message)

Week 8 (7/7/2019)

The Touchstones of Prayer (ch.9, pg. 120-142)

Deepening Prayer

Week 9 (7/14/2019)

As Conversation: Meditating on His Word (ch.10, pg. 143-164)

Week 10 (7/21/2019)

As Encounter: Seeking His Face (ch.11, pg. 165-186)

Doing Prayer

Week 11 (7/28/2019)

Awe: Praising His Glory (ch.12, pg. 187-204)

Week 12 (8/4/2019)

Intimacy: Finding His Grace (ch.13, pg. 205-221)

Week 13 (8/11/2019)

Struggle: Asking His Help (ch.14, pg. 222-239)

Week 14 (8/18/2019)

Practice: Daily Prayer (ch.15, pg. 240-262)