

Week 8- “The Touchstones of Prayer”
Study Guide and Discussions Questions

Week 8 (7/7/2019)

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

For this weeks study please read chapter 9 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. The study that follows will be specifically addressing the subsection “*Where Prayer Takes Us*” (pg. 134—140) in chapter 9 of Keller’s book.

Main point for the Study:

“At the end of time, history will culminate in a great banquet, but... we can eat with Jesus now. How? Through prayer... Prayer (though it is often draining, even an agony) is, in the long term, the greatest source of power that is possible.” (Keller, *Prayer*, pg.140)

Primary Bible Scripture for Study:

Matthew 26:36—46 (ESV)

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” ³⁹And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” ⁴⁰And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? ⁴¹Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴²Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” ⁴³And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

Study and Reflection Questions:

In Keller's book, *Prayer*, chapter 9 summarizes and distills the individual principles of the great Christian teachers: Luther, Augustine, and Calvin. The questions and reflections that follow are specifically drawn from the subsection "Where Prayer Takes Us" (pg. 134—140) in chapter 9 of Keller's book.

1. Where Prayer Take Us: Self-Knowledge and Honesty

Where in the Matthew 26 passage above do you observe Jesus exposing to God his most intimate and honest feelings? When you pray do you talk to God about the things you really fear most; do you share the temptations and sins that you are still weak against; do you confess the mistakes you have made that you haven't been able to tell anyone else?

In prayer do you sometimes "hold back" in your intimacy with God? Discuss how praying with total and complete transparency to God would strengthen your relationship with Him. Does absolute honesty with God sound like freedom or does it sound a little scary? Why?

2. Where Prayer Take Us: Trust and Hope

Where in the Matthew 26 passage above do you observe Jesus expressing his trust in the Father? What does Jesus ask of God?

In both Matthew's account and Mark's account (Mark 14:32-42) Jesus prays the same thing three times during the evening. Why do you think this is significant?

What is your response or reaction when you feel that your prayers are not answered in the way you had hoped? Have you ever avoided prayer because you were afraid of the answer you might get?

3. Where Prayer Take Us: Surrender

What parts of the Matthew 26 passage above are evidence of Jesus surrendering to God? What do you think the difference is between trusting in God verses surrendering your life to God? During seasons of increased prayer have you found yourself in places and situations that you never would have imagined or dreamed? Share.

4. If you are comfortable, share a time when prayer has proven to be the most powerful resource in your life. Perhaps it got you through a terribly difficult experience? Perhaps it led to a life-changing event? Maybe it changed the life of someone very close to you?

“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 in. 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)