
Hm.... I also found this file which is a manuscript, it should be "newer", but I don't know how it's different...

Manuscript: Jan 7, 2001

Welcome, introduction of teacher

OPEN UP IN PRAYER HERE....

Once again, welcome to the CORE seminar on discipling, where we're spending 13 weeks looking at how to disciple others in Christ.

In this section of the seminar, we're going through different ideas that we want to pass on to those that we disciple. Today, we're talking about the role of prayer in discipling.

As I was preparing this class, I found it hard to separate "material about prayer *for* discipling" and "generally helpful material about prayer." We're going to talk about:

- The importance of prayer
- Helping others to pray regularly and faithfully
- Encouraging others to pray effectively and according to God's will
- Helping others to understand how God responds to prayers

As you might have noticed, any of these can be applied to us as individuals! That's not an accident. If we're going to pass on the Godly discipline of effective prayer to those we disciple, then we have to think through those matters ourselves!

Today's class might have less discussion than usual, but I encourage all of you to enter in with any comments regarding your own experiences with prayer, where relevant. I'm sure that there's a lot about prayer that we can learn from each other.

That said, let's get right to it. **Why is prayer important in discipling?**

We need to remember that the **ultimate goal of discipling is to encourage our friend to greater fellowship with God and greater personal holiness that glorifies God. We need to teach others to know, love, and obey God.** We are told in **John 17:3** that "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Just as we can get to know other people by talking with them, prayer is one of the main ways that we can come to know the Lord, and one of the key ways we glorify the Lord we say we love to glorify. So, **we need to encourage our friends to pray regularly.**

Taking our Lord as our ultimate example, we see that Jesus took time away to pray.

In Matthew 14:23 and Mark 1:35-39, we see Jesus going off to a solitary place. All of John 17 is Jesus' prayer to God just before He is betrayed and arrested.

Jesus also repeatedly instructed His disciples to pray.

In Matthew 6:5-15, Jesus gives specific instructions on prayer, including the Lord's prayer as an example for them. Jesus gives the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8 reflecting on the importance of prayer to a just God.

Throughout the New Testament epistles, we are encouraged to pray.

In Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2, and 1 Thessalonians 5:17, for example, we are urged to pray and present our requests to God, and to be devoted to prayer, and to pray continually.

Prayer is definitely important. As disciplers, we have the responsibility to encourage our friends to get closer to God through prayer. If you are meeting with someone and see that they don't have a healthy prayer life, it would certainly be good to talk to them about the importance of prayer, just as we just did.

If we recognize that prayer is important, **how then do we encourage it in discipling?**

One of the most natural and most effective ways is simply by **modeling**. If you actually spend time praying, **your friend will hear** how you pray. Much like we as a congregation can learn how to pray by **listening to Sunday morning prayers**, we can pass on effective and appropriate prayer to our friends simply by praying with them!

To encourage prayer outside of your meetings, you can ask your friend to pray for certain things. **Share prayer requests**, and agree to pray for each other. Model good prayer by **following up** with your friend mid-week. To go a step further, **challenge** your friend to **set aside time to pray** each day. When he goes through **major decisions**, **encourage him to pray** through them.

Even beyond that, have some **discussions about prayer**, or spend some time **studying prayer-related books or scripture**. In the rest of today's class, we're talking about ways to effectively and regularly pray. Think about passing these ideas on! A great book to go through would be DA Carson's book, [A Call to Spiritual Reformation](#), which I used heavily for today's class!

OK. Then what information can we pass on... ?

How do we make sure that we and our disciplined friends pray regularly and faithfully? Let's try to list some things that might be useful to pass on to people that we disciple. What, then, are some **practical ways for us to buckle down and pray?**

- Plan to pray
(Set aside time during the day to pray)

- Adopt practical ways to impede mental drift.
(Speak out or mouth the words. Journaling. Pray through others' written prayers. Pray through scripture)
- Develop prayer-partner relationships
(Set times to meet with people simply to pray. Hold each other accountable to regular prayer. This works great in a discipling setting!)
- Develop a system of keeping track of your prayers
(Writing notes of prayer requests and reminding yourself to follow up. Going through the membership directory)
- Pray until you actually start praying.
(Give yourself time for your mind to settle and focus on God)

No matter how much you try to encourage your friend to pray, it may just be that **they come back with excuses for not praying** during a given day, week, or month. Let's try to think through some excuses that people might give for not praying. Let's also think about responses that we might give. **Let's try to list some...**

- I'm too busy to pray
(Is daily work more important than prayer? Luke 10:38-42, the story of Mary & Martha shows that God must be first! If you're too busy to pray, drop something.)
- I'm too spiritually dry to pray
(Those are the times that we especially need to pray for renewal. Luke 18:2-8 shows that we ought to be persistent in our prayers. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says to pray continually)
- I feel no need to pray
(Go over the notes on the importance of prayer. We have an example in Joshua 9, where Joshua has done well due to the Lord allowing him to conquer many lands. When the Gibeonites disguise themselves as distant travelers and negotiate a peace treaty, Joshua and the Israelites forget to pray about the matter, and fall for the trick)
- I'm too bitter to pray
(Matt. 6:14-15 and Mark 11:25 say that by forgiving others, we demonstrate we really want God's forgiveness.)
- I'm too ashamed to pray
(Shame leads us to hide from God, but Hebrews 4:13 says that all is plainly seen before God. A sense of shame should bring us back to God in repentance and thankfulness for Christ's work on the cross!)
- God doesn't seem to answer my prayers
(God doesn't always answer with a "yes". More on this later)

Our task as disciplers doesn't end with encouraging our friends to pray. We need to show them how **to pray effectively and according to God's will**. We need to teach them to pray with the **right motivations**, so that they can **rightly come to know God**.

A tendency for young Christians is to pray according to their own will and their own desires. This is very different from the Biblical model of praying according to God's will. It's far too easy to site verses like **Matthew 7:7-11** (ask, seek, knock), **Matthew 21:21-22** (believe, and receive. Move mountains), and **James 1:5-8** (granting wisdom to those who ask) and claim that we ought to get whatever we ask

for from God. The problem is that in such a case, we're placing ourselves before God.

We need to remind our friends of what **1 John 5:14-15** says. ***Have someone read that !!!*** Our requests must be aligned with His will.

So how do we follow God's will in our prayers? How do we know if what we're asking for is in line with God's will?

- Scripture! Study it, and get a grasp of what God has already done. Try to understand His plan for His creation. The most assured way of praying in line with God's will is to actually pray through scripture. After you read a passage that challenges you in a certain way, pray that **God would help you to change** appropriately. You can also offer **a prayer of thanks** for a certain **truth** that you read about.
- Check your motives. **James 4:3** warns against praying with the wrong motives. Are they to glorify you or God? Who's interests are you trying to further?
- Talk to others. Have them pray for you. Have them pray that you would pray for the right things!

Of course, we won't always know what God's will is. Fortunately, the Lord helps us out. **Romans 8:26-27** speaks of the way that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in prayer.

One way that we can better understand how to pray for God's will is to examine prayers in scripture. I'd encourage you to go through **prayers in the Bible** in your own time. Even better, **go through these prayers with the people that you disciple!** You can start with the Lord's prayer, in Matthew 6. D.A. **Carson's book, A Call to Spiritual Reformation** is a great book for you and your disciple friend to go through together. It looks at Paul's prayers in Scripture and draws the priorities that we ought to have in prayer. **Greg Gilbert** is going to give us a brief summary of this book and some others, 2 weeks from now, so be sure to hear that.

As you lead your friend to effective prayer according to God's will, you need to be prepared to respond to disappointments that your friend might have to "unanswered" prayers. God can answer with "Yes," "No," or "Wait."

Matthew 7:7 promises **good gifts to God's children** who ask them of God. As disciples who will see different answers to different prayers, **we have to recognize** that no matter what the request, **God's will comes first**. **God knows what is best** for us, even though we may think something to be bad right now.

Sometimes God seems silent, and he has us waiting. Here, He calls us to persevere. As disciples, we need to encourage our friends to persevere in prayer. Go over the parable of the widow, in **Luke 18:2-8** with him. Continue to support him in prayer, and encourage him to continue to pray about it weekly. Try to help them to recognize their **complete dependency on God** during such times.

Sometimes God answers with a "Yes." As a discipler, **delight with your friend**, and encourage your friend to pray a **prayer of thanks** right there on the spot. Burn this memory into their mind, so that they can later remember what God has done for them!

But what happens if your friend has prayed earnestly and unselfishly, and thought he was praying in accordance with God's will, but **receives a "No" in the end?** As a discipler, part of your job is to be there for support. Remind him that God is good and trustworthy. Sometimes we don't know His plans and His ways. Dear friends pass away and we don't know why. In the end, we still need to trust God.

We'll talk at greater length about this in a few weeks, when we think about helping people to deal with pain. For now, I'd like to read us a quote that encourages us to persevere and utterly submit our own will to God's:

"No matter how large a spiritual giant you may become, there will be days when God's answer to your prayers will be no. Despite your seeking, searching, and the outpouring of your soul, your heavenly Father has decided against your petition. When this happens your *attitude* becomes the vital factor. Are you willing to give your hurt, disappointment, perhaps even grief, to Christ who died for you ... and then begin to pray again? Prayer problems are usually not intellectual but volitional. In praying effectively the submission of your will is directly linked with finding God's will. Prayer which God answers is offered with an attitude of submission. Are you willing to say, when God's response to your urgent prayer is not the one you wanted: 'Have thine own way, Lord'?"

-- p. 65, W. Bingham Hunter. [The God Who Hears](#)

Remember that with discipling, **we're trying to further our friends' relationship with God.** We're trying to **teach them to know, love, and obey God.** With regard to prayer, the best thing we can teach and model is to trust in the goodness of God's will. By spending time together in prayer, and also looking at Biblical models for prayer, we should encourage a greater relationship with God through prayer!