

Thornbury Baptist Church
Easter Teaching Series
Small Group Discussion Questions

Talk Date: May 18th 2025

Talk title: Jesus on Prayer – The Simple Pray-er

Passage: Matthew 6:5-8

Speaker: David Lawrence

Discussion Questions

- Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray. Ask group members to share who taught them how to pray? What helpful lessons did they learn?
- Jesus' teaching on prayer, and the vast majority of recorded prayers in the Bible assume that prayer is about asking God for things (see e.g. vs 9-13). How do more meditative forms of prayer fit in with this picture?
- Jesus emphasises the importance of praying in a place where there are few distractions (5) and this was his own practice (Luke 4:42; 5:16; 9:1, 28). Where do people in the group find works for them to pray?
- In your prayer-place, 'pray to your Father, who is unseen' (6).
 - How does encountering and addressing God as 'Father' affect our times of prayer?
 - Does the fact that God is 'unseen' present any challenges for prayer?
- Both the 'hypocrites' (5) and probably the 'pagans' (7) were not using their own words but would have used set forms of prayer (though of a very different nature). Do people in the group use set forms of prayer at all? What is the value, and any possible downside, of using the words of others in our prayer times (e.g. Daily Prayer; Prayer apps; LifeWORKS Daily Prayer outline?)
- 'Your Father will reward you' (6).
 - What are the rewards of prayer?
 - How do we sustain faith in a God who rewards prayer, with the experience of unanswered prayer? (In the talk David suggested the importance of combining prayer with Bible reading. How might that help sustain faith when God seems silent?)
- Verse 8 is sometimes presented as almost undermining everything Jesus has just said about prayer! If God knows what we need, then why bother to pray?! However, Jesus himself clearly saw this as an *incentive* to pray. How is that so?
- If you were mentoring a new Christian and teaching them how to pray, what would you take from this passage to give them guidance?

Takeaway

What is the main thing each person is taking away from this discussion?

All talks are recorded and may be viewed on TBC's YouTube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCM1OwaJ4eSICosAji9Ofzjw>