

“How to Actually Pray” / Luke 11:1–4 / Ask #2

MLK Weekend (after video)

This weekend our nation commemorates the life and prophetic vision of Martin Luther King, Jr.

And rightly so. He was a man of unshakeable courage, with a biblically-based vision of what could be, what ought to be.

- This year’s **celebration is particularly significant**, as 2018 also marks 50 years since Dr. King was tragically killed.
- **I know it’s easy to get discouraged with our lack of progress on this issue sometimes**—whether that comes political leaders making ridiculous statements from the Oval Office and hearing other people defend them or whatever.

But **like many Americans** I’m inspired by Dr. King’s speech in which he talked about what he saw from **“the mountaintop.”**

- The **mountaintop is a vision of** Promised Land of unity and brotherhood and equality that God created for us to have.
 - **Jesus died** so that we could possess it.
 - Our world hopes for it, but **in the gospel are the resources** to obtain it.
- **Dr. King showed us** that hatred and oppression hurt both the oppressor and the oppressed alike, and that **the answer was embracing the love of God** for all his children.

Works Consulted:

“Teach Us to Pray,” John Mark Comer

“Desire: Do We Want Him?” David Platt

“Honest to God,” Tim Lucas

“Praying Like Jesus Prayed,” Chris Spradlin (from Life Church)

And so, **Summit family**, on this weekend, and again every weekend, I’m **praying that we will recommit ourselves to unfinished work, to pray and speak on behalf of racial equality.**

- **If you agree, say Amen?**

This isn’t just an MLK-weekend thing for us. This is an area we really want to grow year-round and we have a lot of work to do.

- **One of the things we’re doing this year is the Summit Institute is hosting a forum on February 6 with Dr. George Yancey.** Dr. Yancey is an AA sociologist that has written incredibly helpful material on racial unity in society and the church, stuff that many of us on staff have gone through, and we wanted to bring him here so that you could benefit from his ministry also. **So, on that night**, I’ll be hosting a forum with him on that night.
- **God is doing something** in our church on this, **and I don’t think you’ll want to miss it.**

Luke 11:1–4

Luke 11: We are in the 2nd of a 4-week series on prayer, called *Ask*. The **title of the series** comes from Paul Miller’s observation in *A Praying Life* (a book I would heartily encourage you to pick up—in the lobby!), that you could summarize all of Jesus’s teaching on prayer as, “Just Ask.”

Last week we saw that Jesus instructed us to pray desperately, boldly, persistently and trustingly.

- When my **two oldest girls** got into the car last week, they said, “Dad, will you take us to Pei Wei?” Which they do almost every week. And I said, “No, I think your mom is fixing something for us

at home.” At which point one of them said, “Dad, just know that all the way home we will be asking...”

We’ve got issues when it comes to prayer. I’ve told you before: We say things that don’t make sense. We repeat phrases and God’s name and the word ‘just’ over and over: “Father God I just want to thank you, Father God, I just want to ask, Father God, that you just...”

- **Maybe in your small group you have the prayer-lecturer.** They are kind of praying but more lecturing everybody and gossiping about others while they do it. **Preach-praying. “Lord, I beseech you** to be with Rachel and her new boyfriend as they deal with purity, as Lord you have called us to purity in our inner most parts, and Lord sometimes I just see lust in their eyes.”¹
- John Crist says, “**Do you ever have someone in SG ask you to pray for something that is just so dumb** that you think, “Um, I’m not praying for that.” A person in my SG said the other day, “Would you pray for my son? He’s in the finals of a karate tournament.” I thought, “*What exactly am I supposed to pray?*” “*Jesus, when Connor steps out onto that mat, would you just guide his foot right into that other little boy’s face? Be the great physician that you are, Lord, and just render his opponent unconscious...*”
- **...And I’m still not sure what we’re doing when we pray for our food.** “Lord, bless this food and the hands that prepared it.” Why just the hands? **Why not the whole body?** *But, see, that’s a question you are not allowed to ask.* Next time you pray over a meal, try asking God to bless the feet or the kidneys of the people that prepared it. See where that gets you.”

So, anyway, **I’m grateful that we have a story in the New Testament** where Jesus specifically explains to the disciples *how to pray*. **This is a**

¹ Adapted from Tim Lucas, “Honest to God.”

prayer outline, or a template, that should shape all the prayers you pray.

Last week we talked about overcoming the greatest obstacle to prayer: the problem of unanswered prayer. It is encouraging to me that this was the 1st thing Jesus dealt with in his teaching on prayer.

This week we’re going to deal with perhaps the 2nd biggest obstacle: ***I don’t know how to pray.*** For both of these questions, we have been in Luke 11.

Remember, this discussion with Jesus being asked a question:

11:1 Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”² And he said to them, “When you pray, say...”

- It’s **important to note here we have to be taught** to pray... Jesus didn’t just say: “You don’t need to be taught how to pray; just say whatever you want. All prayers are the same/acceptable.”²
- **Truth is, they’re not.**
- **There is a specifically Christian way to pray.** In fact, in Matthew’s recording of this same teaching, he tells us that before Jesus gives his disciples instructions on the way TO pray he warns his disciples now NOT to pray.
- **Every religion teaches its adherents to pray.** But Christian prayer is fundamentally different.

Matthew: “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles (that just means people who don’t know God) do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.”⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. (Matthew 6:7) (Interestingly, one of the only kinds of prayer that Jesus criticizes are prayer that are too long. **To which many of you**

² Andy Stanley, “Speed Dial,” from *Permission to Speak Freely* series, preached at North Point Community Church.

say, 'Amen.' But just remember, he never said anything against long sermons.")

- **What did Jesus have against long prayers?** These pray-ers thought they'd be heard for their 'many words.'
 - They think that **because they pray a certain amount of time**, or say certain phrases, or fast, or get themselves into some spiritual state, that God will hear them.
 - **Almost every religion teaches some version of this:** If you'll repeat enough **Hail Mary's**; verses from the **Koran**; chants from the **Bhagavad Gita**; if you'll **yell loud enough** at God saying, "*Yes Lord; Yes, Lord*" enough... God will hear you.
 - The **word "MANY"** that Jesus uses here means "ANXIOUS": Will God hear me? Did I use the right words? Did I pray long enough? Have I broken through?
- **You, by contrast, Jesus says, pray to a loving **Father****, a Father you don't have to persuade to care; a Father who knows what you need before you ask it, who only thinks about his children with good.
 - I know of a **Summit family who adopted a number of children** from a South Asian country. One of them was adopted when he was a little older (5 or 6), and the mom said she would get frustrated and heartbroken because he would often try to manipulate situations to try to get his way instead of just asking her. **She said, "I am heartbroken because he still acts like an orphan at times, even though he is now a beloved part of the family."**
- **We have been adopted into God's family. Yet many times we still act like orphans.** And we shouldn't approach God as if we have to make ourselves worthy.
 - **Adoption is a one-time decision of the parent that** does not fluctuate with the behavior of the child.
 - **We have been made children through the finished work of Christ**, and there's nothing anymore we need to do to entice God to hear us.

Prayer begins by embracing the fatherhood of God. J.I. Packer says if you really want to find out how much someone understands Christianity, find out how much they understand and make of the fatherhood of God.

So, that's where Jesus starts this prayer:

"Our Father..."

- **Paul Miller says how we approach God in prayer is where we demonstrate whether we really understand the gospel.**
 - **"When we slow down to pray, we are immediately confronted with how unspiritual we are..."** (Are you like this? I am. I start thinking about how unspiritual my requests are, wondering if I am using the right words, or wondering if I am asking with the right motives) **In contrast, children never get frozen by their selfishness. They come just as they are, totally self-absorbed. Jesus tells us to *become like a little child when we pray...* How do little children ask? They just say what is on their minds. They have no awareness of what is appropriate or inappropriate. *This isn't just a random observation about how parents respond to little children. This is the gospel.*" (God accepts us, with all of our mess, because of the finished work of Christ.)**

Private, personal prayer is one of the last great bastions of legalism.

- I told you a few weeks ago that **some of you have a hard time** with this because you had such a strained relationship with your dad. Your dad was quick to anger, or inattentive, or absent.
- **But I encouraged you to stop** seeing your Heavenly Father through the lens of your earthly one and instead start evaluating your earthly father by your Heavenly one.
 - **Maybe your earthly dad didn't care and looked at you more** as a nuisance. But your Heavenly Father can't stop thinking

about you, dances over you constantly with singing, and knows when a single hair falls from your head.

- **Your earthly father may have been self-absorbed, but your Heavenly Father was so into you** that he absorbed your pain on the cross to spare you the eternal consequences of your choices.
- So, **go before the throne of God boldly**, and say, “Dad, I have a need” and just tell him what’s on your heart without all the posturing or obsessing over how unspiritual you are or saying the right words.
- I’ve always loved this **picture of John F. Kennedy**. Here he is, with some paper in his hand probably deciding the fate of the free world. I’m sure it is in perfect condition—beautifully types and worded. And John Jr. is peeking out from below—with a totally different relationship to the man in the chair than anyone else. *“That’s not the ruler of the free world. That’s dad. ...And I need some Cheerios.”*

“...hallowed be your name”

- **(Before I explain this**, let me point out that **I think it’s interesting before we get to any requests in the prayer**—which is, of course, the thing that occupies most of our prayers—we have several phrases that focus on our relationship with God. **This shows us that prayer is more about being in right relation to God** than getting through some laundry list of needs that God already knows about anyway.)
- **‘Hallowed be your name’ should precede any request we make of God.**
- This is a **request for God be hallowed** in our eyes and to show the world that he is hallowed through us.
- **You say, “What does “hallowed” mean?”** That sounds a little scary.
 - I knew of a guy who grew up in Catholic church who said that until he was 8 years old he thought that God's name was

'Howard.' He said, “We said it every week: “Our father who art in heaven, Howard be yo name.”

- Two words that I think can help you get your mind around what Jesus is going for here by use of the word:
 - ***Hallowed = Most beautiful**: He is **better than anything** you are asking him for. Many of us **approach God like only a means to an end**. “God, get me out this jam. Give me healing. Help me do well on this test. Get me this job.”
 - But **seeing God has holy** means seeing him as greater than all earthly gifts. It means saying, “God, I would *love to have the new job*; I’d love to have a healed body, but you are better than any of those things. And **if I don’t get them** I’ll be a little disappointed, but it won’t **affect my joy or my confidence in life** because I have you, the greatest of all possessions.”
 - **One of my favorite quiet time books is called *The Valley of Vision***. It’s a book of Puritan prayers from the 16th and 17th centuries, **where they prayed, during times of great persecution**, to see God. They said *‘even if I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil if I know that thou art with me.’* So turn this valley of the shadow of death into my valley of vision—let me see you—and it will be enough.
 - ***Hallowed = Most worthy**. This is a recognition that the point of my life is to give glory to you. Life is not about me, or prospering me, but your name and your kingdom.
 - **You see, a lot of times we rush right into prayer** forgetting why we exist in the 1st place. We exist for the glory of God.
 - God is not our servant whom we put to work for our purposes. He is not a piñata and prayer our whacking stick to get from him what we need for our party.
 - **I’ve tried to illustrate this to you by urging you to think of your life, in some ways, like a movie**. Movies always have major characters and minor characters. What happens to minor characters is not as important because the story is defined by the major character.

- Most of you have no idea who **Biggs Darklighter** is. Only the geekiest of Star Wars nerds do. He was the X-wing pilot in the first Star Wars movie who shielded Luke Skywalker from getting shot so that he could destroy the Death Star. **Without him, the whole Star Wars saga**, all 52 movies, would never have gotten off the ground. YET you've never heard of him.
 - **But if he could be with us today, back from his grave in a galaxy far, far away**, he would probably say, "I don't care. My small sliver of the story was only to serve the purposes of the main character—Luke Skywalker."
- **God's glory is the main character of our lives**, and we recognize that the point in all things that happen to us is to put us into a theatre where we can give glory to God.
 - **God might hallow his name before others by prospering you** so that you can give credit to you for your successes to him and using those successes to further his kingdom; or **he might hallow his name that by letting you suffer** so that you can show everyone in the midst of suffering that you can have joy in bad circumstances because he is better than health or anything else you are asking him for.
 - The **point of our lives is not living and dying**; the point is giving glory to God. And **sometimes God is glorified** when sick people get well; sometimes he is glorified when they suffer well, and even die well.

3rd phrase: "...let your kingdom come, your will be done."

Here what we are doing is **surrendering ourselves** to pursue God's agendas on earth.

- **Prayer is not supposed to be getting God to help us** in all of your agendas, but you seeking to join God where he is working.

Two key things here:

1. *Pray the Scripture: Scripture is how we best know what God wants to do in the world.

- **Our faith is supposed to serve as the WIRE that connects** God's power to the needs of the world. (Imagine you have an electrical source and an appliance over here. Plenty of energy; totally lifeless. **Prayer is like the cord that connects them.**) That's what we are doing when we say, "Your kingdom come, your will be done." We are connecting the power of God's promise to the situation.
- **Here's what we say: the prayers that start in heaven are heard by heaven.**
- So, I want to ground my prayers in Scripture.
- "One thing is certain: Our most powerful prayers are hyperlinked to the promises of God. When you know you are praying the promises of God, you can pray with holy confidence." —Mark Batterson, *The Circle Maker*
- **Two very practical suggestions:**
 - **Whenever you spend time in the word**, highlight verses that stand out to you go back and pray them. Let your prayers start with your reading of Scripture. **H*E*A*R**
 - **Memorize Scripture: My favorite pray-ers** are those who **lace Scripture all throughout their prayers**. That's what I would love to hear instead of useless phrases and "God, just" over and over. We want to hear the words of Scripture!
 - **How much better would the YOP** be if you committed a bunch of verses to memory so that you could bring his word to bear in every prayer you offer? **Many of our staff** are doing this.
 - **What if you and your SG came up with 10 verses to memorize this year** that you could start using in your prayers?

So, that's the 1st thing. Know and pray Scripture. Second,

2. *Pray with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the one responsible for extending God's kingdom on earth and he's the one who knows the will of God.

So, prayer is **therefore supposed to be a two-way conversation** as the Holy Spirit reveals what he wants for God's kingdom. The Spirit is supposed to pray through you.

So, I want to encourage you to develop the habit of "**listening prayer.**"³

- I know we have to be careful... BUT **59/36 (Acts 13:2)**—How? Everyone get a phone alert?)
- Try this: "God, I don't want to just pray to you, I want to pray with you. So, move in me as I pray."

One last observation about this phrase, "*your kingdom come, your will be done*" before we move on. **Eugene Peterson** says these two phrases juxtaposed are **an example of two important kinds of prayers we should pray**: morning prayers and evening prayers.

It's a **concept he gets from the Psalms**.

- **Morning prayer** is active, petitionary prayer, where you pray boldly against things in the world that are not right. "God, change this! Bring your kingdom into this mess."
- **Evening prayer** is where you submit yourself to the will of God and rest in his choices for your life, trusting he has given you what is best like he promised and that he'll take care of all things.
- **Both are essential components** of a healthy prayer life.

"Give us this day our daily bread"

³ Let me quote Paul Miller here: "We need the sharp-edged, absolute character of the Word and the intuitive, personal leading of the Spirit. The Word provides the structure, the vocabulary. The Spirit personalizes it to our lives. If we believe Scripture only applies to people in general, then we can miss how God intimately personalizes his counsel to us as

- **Just want to point out that Jesus liked bread.** It doesn't say "our daily kale" or "our daily juice cleanse." Jesus liked bread. WWJD? He didn't get the bunless hamburger. Just my .02. But I digress.
- Most of us **never think to pray this**, because we don't wonder where our next meal is coming from, but the point here is that we develop a posture of dependence on God and thanksgiving for everything.
- The **essence of sin is independence and autonomy** from God. The drive of sin it toward independence and autonomy.
- This **phrase goes the opposite way**.
 - The phrasing (in Greek) is *today's* bread. It is intentionally short-lived.
 - **It means day by day** we are looking to God as the ultimate source of everything—**not just bread but anything** we need. As a dad, as a husband, as a student—anything I need in any role I have. **Nothing is off limits**.
 - **Not every request is spiritual**. Bread is not spiritual.
- One of my favorite promises on this: **⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but pray about everything, letting your requests, with thanksgiving, be made known to God. Philippians 4:6**
- **What should I look to God for? Everything**. Literally anything I'm worried about.
- **Just for fun, I went through Scripture** and made a list of some of the varied things that people prayed about—note how **some of these are spiritual** and some are not.
 - **Zacharias and Elizabeth** wanted a family when they couldn't have kids so they prayed for a son.
 - **Solomon** prayed for wisdom in his new job.
 - **Eliezer, Gen 24**, prayed he could meet a pretty girl he could set his master Isaac up with.

individuals. We can become deists, effectively removing God from our lives. But everywhere in Scripture we see God speaking to us with a personal touch, prompting us to obey and love." Paul Miller, *A Praying Life*

- **Samson** prayed for water when he was thirsty and superhuman strength to accomplish a task.
 - **Joshua** prayed for the sun to stand still so he could finish a battle
 - **Daniel** had a weird dream and he didn't know what it meant, so he prayed for interpretation.
 - **Gideon** thought God was calling him to do something, **but he** wasn't sure so he prayed for confirmation that he should do it.
 - **David prayed for forgiveness** after committing adultery with Bathsheba. He prayed God would give him a clean heart and a renewed, steadfast spirit.
 - **Elijah** prayed that it wouldn't rain.
 - **Paul** prayed that some thorn in the flesh that bothered him would be taken away.
 - The **disciples** prayed for **boldness**.
 - **Fathers in the NT** prayed for their little girls to get better.
 - **Peter** asked Jesus for financial help to pay his taxes.
 - **Jesus** told his disciples to pray to get out of temptation
 - He prayed that his disciples would stop acting like idiots and be unified.
 - Jesus told us to pray for lost people and the workers to get the gospel to them.
 - **All the Apostles** prayed for Jesus to come back quickly
 - **Here's the rule:** *If it matters to you, it matters to God, and you can pray about.*
 - ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but pray about **everything**, letting your requests, with thanksgiving, be made known to God. And watch what happens when you do: ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 4:6–7**
 - Those who **depend on God** will learn to rest in God.
 - **Because, Psalm 84:11, no good thing** will he withhold from those who walk uprightly before him.
 - Literally no assignment he has given me—not as father, husband, disciple, friend, your pastor—will he not supply the daily bread I need.
 - **I love this verse:** it's one I memorized for prayer and it was in our Bible reading for this week. **"Those who know your name trust in you because you have not abandoned those who seek you, Lord."** Psalm 9:10 Those who trust in God will never be disappointed, let down! Everyone else in my life has disappointed me. The #1 guy to disappoint me is named J.D. Greear. He has let me down and broken his promises to me more than anyone else.
 - **That gives you rest!** **"Learning to pray doesn't offer us a less busy life (loving people and being involved in bringing the kingdom of God to earth makes you busy); it offers us a less busy heart. In the midst of outer busyness we can develop an inner quiet...By spending time with our Father in prayer, we integrate our lives with his, with what he is doing in us. Our lives become more coherent. They feel calmer, more ordered, even in the midst of confusion and pressure."**⁴
 - **Don't you want this?** Prayer is the way.
- "...and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us."**
- **This is a part of prayer that I have tended to skip** in my personal life. But it's in there for a reason.
 - **Confession is an important part of our lives because it** helps us clear out sin **so that it isn't growing and spreading in us.**
 - You see, sin loses its power when it is exposed.
 - So, **Scripture tells us to confess** our sins first to God, and then to others where we need to, because you strip sin of its power that way.
 - **This week** I was thinking, "What is the big obstacle here? What keeps me from confessing?" **Honesty:** Sometimes in the moment,

⁴ Paul Miller, *A Praying Life*, 11.

I can't think of anything to ask forgiveness of. I can barely remember what happened yesterday, much less my sins. **Maybe that's because I have a dull conscience**, but that's where I find myself.

- **Two suggestions:**
 - Ask your spouse to make you list.
 - No, seriously... **Here's what I do:** I have 3 major areas of sin I tend to stumble toward, so I start with those 3. You say, "What are they?" I'm not telling you that. I don't want you judging me and trying to point them out whenever you see them. I don't want you walking up to me when I'm looking at something in the mall and saying, "Oh, I see your materialism is firing up again." (**I have people in my life** who know what they are and they ask me about them). **The point is**, as I go through those, the HS inevitably leads me to others.
- The other thing confession goes that Jesus indicates **is that confession changes our attitude toward others.**
 - The primary thing that produces compassion and generosity in you toward others is realizing how gracious and compassionate God has been toward you.
 - **I approach God as a man deeply loved** and deeply forgiven, and that fosters the right attitude in me toward others—both those that need my love and those that need my forgiveness.
 - **We love, because he first loved us...**
- **One last thing I wanted to point out here that is a little off topic but I think important to point out.** One of the commentators I was studying pointed out that this is written as a communal prayer— All of the pronouns in the Lord's Prayer are *plural*.
- Today, **we tend to think of prayer (and confession) as mainly a personal thing.** But there's also corporate "we" elements to it.
 - **We pray this together.** Let me tell you why that is really important on a day like today: **MLK day.** This is a day not just to remember the progress we have made because of the work

of reformers like King, but to express repentance for the sins of our past and how they still affect our present.

- **You say, "But I wasn't guilty of those sins."** Throughout the Bible, people like Daniel and Ezra and Solomon in the Bible led the congregation to confess the sins of "we the people," sins they may have had no personal part in.
- **We need to lament, from time to time**, the sins of our past and hope together toward the future.
- **And next weekend is another opportunity:** Next weekend is the National Sanctity of Life Sunday, a time for us to mourn the tragedy of abortion.
 - **3,000** babies, made in the image of God with human souls are aborted every single day in our country; almost 28 per day here in the Triangle.
 - I know that **bothers some of you** to talk about this—you say, "Why are you bringing politics into the pulpit?" This is not a **political issue it is a biblical one.**
 - The **baby is a human being made** in the image of God;
 - **Psalm 139 tells us in no uncertain terms that baby has a soul** and God has a plan for it and terminating it is the taking of innocent human life.
 - **I realize that this is a complex issue** and for some of you abortion is a part of your story and you have lots of regrets mixed up in it—and, honestly, I'm not trying to beat you down or imply there is no redemption of this, just that our society's approval of it is inexcusable and we, as a society, must repent of it and we as a church must lead in that.

Finally, **"Lead us not into temptation."**

- **This is one I find myself praying a lot**—for me, my kids, for our staff team, and for you.
- Because **I know that all of us, left to ourselves,** will go astray. **Lurking inside** of us are corruptions that want to take us over and destroy us.

- **Scripture says that the natural man** does not desire the things of God. Faith, loving God, loving purity and truth and righteousness—these things are no longer natural to us because we are fallen.
- That means without the overcoming grace of God working inside of us, **all of us, me included**, will fall away.
- **This really came home to me recently**—if you’d asked me 5 years ago who the most significant pastors in the U.S. were, that were about my age—mid 20’s—if I’d have named 8 of them, 5 of the 8 are no longer in ministry.
 - I look at these guys—it’s **not that they were categorically different**. Most were better preachers, better men. Two things **Paul Tripp** points out: the absence of real community, and they don’t take seriously the power of indwelling sin.
 - **I need God’s grace** to overcome my temptations and weaknesses. And you can pray for me.
 - My **kids need it**, and I pray daily for them.
 - **You need it**.
 - It’s our **only hope**.
- **I don’t want to end this on a discouraging**. Yes, only God’s grace can deliver us from the particular temptations of our heart, particularly since we have a literal Enemy who is scheming to attack us with those temptations in the particular places where he knows we are most vulnerable; **but, church, God promises to make a way of escape** (1 Cor 10:13) if we ask him for it. Amen?
 - **I’m a child of the 80’s**, back when video games were pure and simple... there were dots on the screen and you’d eat them. Missiles would come down and you would shoot them; donkeys would roll barrels down and you’d jump over them. One of the best was **Pac-Man... GHOSTS**. You could always duck out of the side trap door and be free.
- Brothers and sister, we **don’t have to be discouraged** or scared of Satan. We can be more than overcomers through the **promises of Jesus**.

- So, the last thing he tells us to pray, every day, is, “Lead us—me, my kids—not into temptation.”

(Practical)

Let me **end this message by giving you few really practical suggestions** in light of today’s message that will help you either start a daily prayer time if you don’t have one, or jump-start it if you’ve gotten into a rut:

Rif on the Lord’s prayer (Tim Keller) You know, “riff,” like in jazz, when you’ve got a melody in the background, but the musicians are riffing and doing their own thing around the skeleton of that melody.

- **For the last 2 years**, I’ve started just about every morning prayer time this way—by going through the phrases of the Lord’s prayer and praying what the Spirit brings to mind as I pray.

In your ASK book, there is another, easy to remember outline for how you should pray, one I’ve used often: **A-C-T-S**

- It’s **similar to the Lord’s Prayer...**

Here’s some others...

- **Here’s another one:** take a morning walk *with no devices* and **pray out loud**.
 - Again, let me emphasize praying out loud
- Set **reminders on your calendar** to pray for specific needs at specific times.
- Use a prayer app like **Echoprayer, Prayermate, or Evernote** can help you organize and keep track of prayer needs
 - **Do prayer cards:** a card where you put a name, prayer requests and verses of Scripture you are believing for these people
- **Pray in the moment with people**, don’t just promise to pray for them.
 - **Waiters and waitresses**

- **Prayer walk your neighborhood**, the office, or some part of the city.
 - **Don't be weird. No hands raised, don't try to be sneaky and anoint things with oil.** Why is the water cooler greasy?
- **Try 2–3 short times of prayer instead** of one long one: Morning, after lunch, before bed.
- **Pray regularly with your kids** – let them hear you pray, use a kids version of ACTS – “Wow, Sorry, Thanks, Help”
- Use a prayer companion in **your daily time with God**:
 - *The Valley of Vision*. These are short—only a page each—and you can just pray them, personalizing them for where you are.
 - *The Songs of Jesus*, Tim Keller
 - *Daily Light*

(All these are up right now on our website if you missed any of them)

MUSIC

Above all, just start. Prayer is a muscle that grows as you use it.

- The **more you do it, the more you know how** to do it, and the more you **desire** to do it.
- **So, start with 5 min a day** if that is all you can handle, and commit to doing it every day for a month. And see where it goes from there.

Let me close by riffing on ‘the Lord’s Prayer’ over us as a church, so if you’d all stand...

