

# ALL ABOUT PRAYER

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## TEXT: 1 John 3:21-24

*21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. NIV*

## THEME: PRAYER

### INTRODUCTION

If we are to learn all about prayer, then it would be better to study the prayer habits of our Lord Jesus Christ

1. When Jesus prays, heaven opens,
  - Luke 3:21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And **as he was praying, heaven was opened**
2. Jesus likes overnight praying
  - Luke 6:12 one of those days Jesus **went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.**
3. When Jesus prays, heaven listens
  - Luke 9:16 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and **looking up to heaven, he gave thanks** and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people.
4. When Jesus prays, God's glory is revealed
  - Luke 9:29 **As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed**, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.
5. Jesus prays for his disciples' faith life
  - Luke 22:32 But I have **prayed for you, Simon**, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."
6. Jesus prayed for his enemies
  - Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them**, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

### JESUS' PRINCIPLES ON PRAYER

1. Prayer is likened as the request of a child to a father
  - Matthew 6:8, Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.
  - Matthew 7:11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!
2. Prayer must be subject to the Father's will
  - Matthew 7:11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

- Matthew 6:10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
  - Matthew 26:39, 42 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."
3. Prayer secures always of loving attention and response from the Father.
- Matthew 7:7-11 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! NIV
  - Matthew 21:22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

### **JESUS' GUARANTEE WHEN WE PRAY: ANSWERED PRAYER**

- John 16:23-24, *In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, **my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.** 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. **Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.***

### **APPLICATION: THE FIVE FINGER PRAYER**

1. Your thumb is nearest to you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C.S. Lewis once said, a "sweet duty".
2. The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.
3. The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.
4. The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is fact that this is our weakest finger; as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.
5. And lastly comes our little finger; the smallest finger of all. Which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, "the least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinky should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.