



# CONNECTION

February, 2016

## “Let's Keep Learning to Pray”

*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.” (Luke 11:1 ESV)*

“Lord, teach us to pray.” That's what the disciples asked of Jesus. Like most of us who believe in God, they had grown up with prayer. But when they saw the way that Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father, they realized how much they still had to learn. And they weren't afraid to ask.

I'm not sure if I've ever met a Christian who was satisfied with his or her devotional life. In fact, most of us struggled in this area; feeling awkward, ineffective, tongue-tied, and distracted. We can get so discouraged that we give up learning to pray, doubting that things can get better. Then, God brings something into our lives that make us want, or need, to develop our prayer lives. Maybe it is seeing how Jesus talks with the Father. Maybe it is a pressing need or a renewed longing. Maybe it is a conversation with someone. Something happens, and we ask again; “Lord, teach us to pray.”

I recently began to search for a new book on prayer. I wanted to find a resource that could help me pray more faithfully and that I could share with others. I had books on the subject, some of them good. I came across a positively reviewed work by Paul Miller called *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*. I downloaded a copy onto my Kindle and read a few chapters. It looks quite promising, and I want to both commend it to you and share it with you. This is how he describes the content in his introduction:

The book opens with a chapter on our frustrations with prayer and another that describes where we're headed. Part 1, “Learning to Pray Like a Child,” examines the basics of relating to our heavenly Father like a little child. In part 2, “Learning to Trust Again,” we go deeper and look at some adult habits that can dull our hearts to prayer keep us from being drawn into the life of the Father. Part 3, “Learning to Ask Your Father,” examines barriers to asking that come from the spirit of our age. Part 4, “Living in Your Father's Story,” is where it all comes together. When we have a praying life, we become aware of and enter into the story God is weaving in our lives. The final part, “Praying in Real Life,” introduces some simple tools and ways of praying that have helped many people learn to pray. As we look at these tools, we'll continue to learn about our hearts and how God weaves stories in our lives.

This year, I am going to be reading this through Lent, the weeks leading up to Easter. I invite you to read it with me. If you can, join me on Wednesday evenings in Lent and we will discuss the book together, as well as read scripture and pray together.

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Lent begins with a prayer service at 7:00 pm on Ash Wednesday, February 10. Starting February 17, we will take 5 weeks to discuss Miller's book, one part each week. I hope you can come too!

I don't think that anyone will ever write the last book on prayer. We will still need to learn. But I hope we can make some real progress and grow as praying Christians.

Lord, teach us to pray!

Yours, in Him



Pastor Dave

## Men' Bible Study

The Men's First Saturday Bible Study will meet next on February 6, at 9:00 am. We have been studying the book of Colossians. This month, we start at Colossians 3:18. Come join us for Bible study, sharing, spiritual conversation and prayer!

## Ash Wednesday Prayer Service February 10, 2016 7:00 pm

## Upcoming Sermons

February 7  
John 5:1-29

### **"What Do You Need: Can God Help?"**

<sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"<sup>7</sup> The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me."<sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk."<sup>9</sup> (John 5:6-8 ESV)

February 14

First Sunday in Lent

John 6:1-15

### **"What Do You Have: Is it Enough?"**

<sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him,<sup>9</sup> "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?"<sup>10</sup> Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number.<sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.<sup>12</sup> (John 6:8-11 ESV)

February 21

Second Sunday in Lent

John 6:25-59

### **"Is Jesus Important to You: How?"**

<sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.<sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.<sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.<sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:37-40 ESV)

February 28

Third Sunday in Lent

John 6:60-71

### **"Why Do Some People Stop Believing?"**

<sup>65</sup> And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."<sup>66</sup> After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.<sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?"<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,<sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:64-69 ESV)