

Highlighting Our Heritage

Week 3: Our Mission: Pray

Verse: Men ought always to pray and not to faint. – Luke 18:1 (partial verse)

Life Application:

Understanding the vital necessity of prayer as the basis of every ministry, and the way to spiritual maturity in Christ

Text: Matthew 6: 5-15; Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-21

Supplemental Scriptures: Matthew 7:7; 21:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Revelation 5:8; 8:4

Historical context: The disciples tarried in prayer before the Day of Pentecost. Prayer meeting preceded the Azusa outpouring in 1906. The concept of *Prayer* was chosen as the first of three keys in our mission statement. . It reads: “We make prayer the basis of every ministry and encourage communion with God as the way we grow to spiritual maturity in Him.” Prayer has been a vital part of the Apostolic Faith work from the beginning. Workers gather in a prayer room before services; prayer is made during every service; altar services conclude the meetings. The headquarters office staff prays over outgoing literature and correspondence. We have seen wonderful answers to prayer over the years.

Possible opener: Ask your students to write the initials of a person they most enjoy talking with. Then list as many reasons as they can why talking with that person is so enjoyable. After a few minutes, ask why they enjoy talking with the person they selected. On a dry erase board note their answers. Then discuss which of the reasons given apply to talking to God.

Alternative opener:

Bring to class a long piece of adding machine tape. Tell how Brother Norman Allen used adding machine tape for his prayer list. He wrote names in small letters on a long piece of this. He would go down the list each day—maybe more than once. When the list was worn out, he would make a new one. Do you have a prayer list?

Questions:

- Why do we pray? Can anybody pray to God?
- How powerful is prayer? Is it dependent upon our faith? If faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains, what does that say about our faith?
- What aspects of prayer can you identify in the Lord’s Prayer?
- What steps can we take to develop a regular prayer life? What are the benefits of doing so?
- What is meant by the instruction, “Pray without ceasing”? How is that possible?
- Name at least five different types of prayer and give a brief explanation of each.
- One Christian writer said, “Prayer is verbalizing God’s purpose and God’s provision in your life and submitting to it.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
- What elements are critical to effective prayer?
- Are there right and wrong things to pray about? Explain your answer and give examples.
- How do you know that God answers prayer?
- What are hindrances to receiving an answer to prayer?
- What do you remember most from your childhood about prayer or people praying?
- What do you think prayers does for those praying?
- In what ways does prayer bind the church together?
- What are five things a person in your age group should be praying about every day?

- When you were ill or in serious difficulties, did you ever feel the prayers of others? What was that like?
- Have you ever been fearful or reluctant to come to God in prayer? If so, what was the reason?
- Name at least four notable answers to prayer recorded in the Bible.
- People testify about backsliding because they did not read and pray. What are some ways to keep on track with daily devotions?

Extra resources for teachers:

Tract 36 – Prayer: Communication With God

“Taking Time to Pray” from Higher Way 94-1

“Our Role in Reaching the World” from Higher Way 94-4

“How To Take the Yawn Out of Your Devotions” from Higher Way 98-3

Activity ideas for younger classes:

Create a “prayer chain” using boxes of jumbo paper clips linked together. Cut out a large paper cross and post it on a board or wall. Make available a supply of index cards and encourage your students to write their prayer requests on the cards, and attach the cards to the chain.

Form groups of no more than four and give each group a newspaper section filled with world news. Say:

“Your group has five minutes to search your newspaper for one situation you want us to pray for, such as gang violence, drugs, famine, floods, or earthquakes.” After five minutes, gather groups and have them describe their situation. Close by praying for each world need.

Create a “World Prayer Needs” bulletin board. Throughout the quarter have kids cut out magazine or newspaper articles containing world needs they want the group to pray for. Have them tack the articles to the bulletin board as visual prayer reminders.

Share answers to prayer—either personal experiences or accounts they know of. Be prepared to start things going with a personal example of your own.

Print out the following “one-liner” excuses for not taking time to pray. Cut them into strips and distribute among your students. Have them go around the circle reading the excuses. Then discuss how the devil would put all kinds of reasons into our minds to avoid praying. Ask: Why does he try so hard to hinder our prayers?

- What? I can’t miss (latest popular TV show) now! I’m too into it!
- I haven’t seen the latest episode of “Survivor 41,” either.
- I need to spend more time with my family...yah, that’s it...my family.
- I feel overweight...I need to exercise to burn off those calories I consumed today.
- I’m too sleepy in the morning to read my Bible.
- I’m too sleepy at night to read the Bible. It’s been a hectic day!
- I’ve already been to church this week. Isn’t that enough time for God?
- This Physics textbook is so exciting...I’ll start having quiet times more regularly after I finish it.
- I have way too much homework.
- My “It’s-All-About-Me” and “Studmuffin Today” magazines came in the mail, and I’ll waste away if I don’t read them tonight!
- I’ve got so much to do around the house. I have to clean my room, walk the dog, scoop its poop, change the litter box, pick on my little brother....
- I just don’t feel like spending time with the Lord.
- I have to go to work after school. By the time I get home, I’m too fried to spend time with God.
- It doesn’t really hurt me to skip my quiet time today, does it?
- It doesn’t hurt to go a week without a quiet time, does it?