



Faith & Life Discovery Journal

Simple Prayer

monday

02/02

The American Heritage Dictionary describes prayer as the act of making a reverent petition to God, an act of communion with God. A friend recently shared one of the most beautiful definitions of the experience of prayer that I have ever heard. St. Theresa of Liseaux says *"For me, prayer is a surge of the heart, a simple glance heavenward. It is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trials as well as joys. It is something great, supernatural which dilates the soul and unites me to Jesus."* (Story of a Soul, p. 242). Her definition is simply beautiful. Sometimes we try to make prayer so complicated. We struggle to pray at the right time in the right way and become so overly concerned with how to pray that we don't pray at all. God, though, doesn't really care about how perfect your prayer is. He just wants your heart. I love to listen to the prayers of children. They are so innocent & so beautiful, uninhibited by worrying about praying correctly. They just share what is on their hearts. St. Theresa seemed to have approached prayer in this way. She says, *"I do like children who do not know how to read, I say very simply to God what I wish to say, without composing beautiful sentences, and He always understands me."* It seems like we can learn a lot about prayer from children.

Read Mark 10:13-16

What childlike qualities does Jesus encourage in this passage?

What keeps you from praying? God's greatest desire is to be in relationship with you. Communication is a vital part of any relationship. So what steps can you take to eliminate the obstacles that keep you from communicating with God?

What is your definition of prayer? What does prayer mean to you?

Ask a child how he or she would describe prayer & then pray with them.



Faith & Life Discovery Journal

Teach Us to Pray!

tuesday

02/03

Imagine being one of Jesus' first disciples. One day you're a fisherman throwing your nets from a boat & the next day you're sitting at the feet of the Messiah. I probably would have followed Jesus around with my pen & notebook listening to everything he taught, trying to capture everything I could on pen & paper. I would have wanted to have learned & experienced as much as possible. The life of a disciple was certainly not easy. I can only imagine the potential for stress that must have come from the demands of so many people who were desperate for the healing, hope, & love Jesus offered. During the time the disciples spent with Jesus they saw that prayer was an important part of his life. Over & over they watched Jesus withdraw to pray. It must have been amazing to witness Jesus go off for times of solitude & prayer & return strengthened, refreshed, & renewed by the loving grace of His Father. No wonder the disciples wanted Jesus to teach them to pray.

Read Luke 11:1-4

What lesson do we learn from Jesus' example of his time spent in prayer? How does the disciple's desire to learn from Jesus encourage you?

Jesus prayed at meals (Luke 24:30), after teaching crowds of people (Luke 9:18), in times of trouble (Luke 22: 39-41), & for his disciples (Luke 17). When do you pray?

Thank God for the person who taught you to pray. Who in your life might need you to teach them to pray?

Because we pray The Lord's Prayer regularly in worship, sometimes we say the words without thinking about what they mean. Ask God to show you the significance The Lord's Prayer has in your life. Then rewrite The Lord's Prayer in your own words.



Faith & Life Discovery Journal

Get Connected!

wednesday

02/04

Sometimes life can seem lonely. Ever feel like no one understands you? God knows your heart better than anyone. He wants us to be connected to him. Prayer is simply conversation with God. It is fuel for our hearts, a daily source of strength & hope for our life journey. God invites us to talk to him about anything, anytime, & anyplace. No one else can make that kind of promise – not your spouse, kids, or your best friend. God wants to hear what is on our hearts & He wants us to listen to what is on his heart. Too often we only come to God when we need something. But God wants more from us. He is the lover of our soul & wants us to seek him with our whole heart.

Read Jeremiah 33:2-3; Colossians 4:2

Jeremiah 33: 2-3 promises that God will answer you when you call on him. Do you really believe this? Why or why not?

The Israelites needed constant reassurance that God would fulfill his promises. In what ways do you need reminded of God's promises?

In Colossians 4:2 Paul instructs that we devote ourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. How devoted to prayer are you? How do you express thanks to God?

Take some time to pray today!



Faith & Life Discovery Journal

Right Approach!

thursday

02/05

Parenting teenagers can sometimes be a trying experience. They can be demanding & self-centered. When something doesn't go their way, they are quick to express their frustration. As I found myself complaining about the attitude of teenagers recently, it suddenly occurred to me that perhaps we approach God in the same way that teenagers approach their parents. Ouch! Approaching God on the wrong basis can hinder a fruitful prayer life. When we think of God as a Father who is obligated to care for us regardless of our attitude, it's time for an attitude adjustment. God will straighten us out when we take him for granted. God teaches us to approach Him with love & mercy. He knows the ugliness of our sin & still loves us. As we come to understand mercy, we will repent and will be unable to seek God with a sense of entitlement. The depth of God's mercy is behind every answered prayer.

Read Psalm 69:13-18

David seems to be begging God for help in this passage? When has your spiritual heart been similar to David's in this psalm?

When have you cried out to God for help? How did God respond?

What does mercy mean to you? How have you experienced God's mercy in your life?

Pray that God would reveal to you any areas of your life in need of an attitude adjustment!



Faith & Life Discovery Journal

Cry Out to Jesus!

friday

02/06

Third Day released a song a few years ago called 'Cry Out to Jesus'. The message of the chorus is beautiful. *"There is hope for the helpless, rest for the weary, love for the broken heart. There is grace and forgiveness, mercy and healing. He'll meet you wherever you are. Cry out to Jesus."* The Bible is full of examples of how God has heard the cries of the lonely & hurting and reached out & protected, loved, rescued, & cared for his people. No matter what challenges & struggles our lives might bring, God is always with us, waiting for us to call on him. He wants to pour out his blessings upon us.

Read Psalm 145:13-21 & Matthew 11: 28-30

To whom do you reach out when you feel like the world is falling on you? What kind of rest does Jesus promise?

Which of your desires has God fulfilled? If you are unfulfilled in some way, what might that indicate?

What does it mean to call on God in truth?

**Think of a time when Jesus has heard your cry.
Write a prayer praising him for his faithfulness and
love.**