

Following the Blueprint for Prayer
Luke 11:1-13

Whether it's for a house in a new subdivision, an automobile displayed in this year's auto show, an appliance that is in your kitchen or even the Lego set that you bought for a birthday, it is essential to follow the blueprints. They ensure that what you are building comes out right.

It is the same in prayer. Our passage today is a blueprint for prayer, a model of how and what we should pray for. It is the skeleton or outline that we flesh out. Turn in your Bibles to Luke 11:1-13 where we will learn about following the blueprint for prayer. Let's consider the following points:
The petition about prayer
The pattern for prayer
The persistence in prayer

I. THE PETITION ABOUT PRAYER – v. 1

A. An Example is Observed in Jesus – v. 1a

My Dad taught me a lot of different things. How to ride a bike, hit a ball, shoot a gun, fish, change the oil and set the gap in spark plugs. But there was something he taught me by his example and that was prayer, both in the doing and in what he said. We would see him after his morning devotions bow quietly and pray.

We heard him at meals or during evening devotions talking to God, humbly petitioning God, thanking God.

For the better part of a decade since retiring from his ministry at Barakel he meets almost every week with the Director on Friday afternoons to pray for Camp and the campers and the speakers and the staff. Prayer is important. It's a lifeline to God. His example in prayer is one of the greatest lessons we could learn.

Charles Spurgeon who was known as the prince of preachers once made the statement that he would

rather teach one man to pray than 10 men to preach.

Our text tells us that one day Jesus was praying in a certain place. The place isn't important. The fact is that Jesus prayed everywhere and anywhere and at all times.

He prayed in the desert.

He prayed on the mountain.

He prayed in the Garden.

He prayed on the cross.

He rose early and prayed.

He stayed up late and prayed.

He prayed throughout the day.

What a great example for us to follow.

Pray during our desert times.

Pray during our mountain top times.

Pray when the day is bright.

Pray when burdens are heavy and circumstances look bleak.

Pray in the morning when you get up.

Pray at night before you go to sleep.

Pray at meals.

Pray between meals.

Pray before, during and after a test.

Pray at work, in the checkout line, driving, while you're knitting, reading a book, or folding laundry.

Pray anywhere, everywhere and at all times.

There is no shortage of things to pray for and Jesus gives us an example to follow.

Most of the time we don't know what Jesus prayed for. There are those instances where we get a glimpse of His prayer like in the Garden when He prayed for the possibility of the cup of death to pass from Him, but continued by committing to do the Father's will and not His.

On the cross we hear His prayers.

"Father, forgive them because they don't know what they are doing."

"My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"

"Father, into your hands I commit My spirit."

An example of prayer is observed in Jesus.

Next we see an entreaty is made by a disciple.

B. An Entreaty is Made by a Disciple – v. 1b

When Jesus had finished one of His disciples asked if He would teach them to pray just as John had taught his disciples to pray. This gives us a glimpse into the life of John the Baptist. He wasn't just a fiery prophet calling people to repent. He was also a man of prayer who taught his followers the importance of praying.

There is no greater request they could ask Jesus than for Him to teach them to pray. They didn't ask Jesus to teach them to be better preachers. They didn't ask Jesus how they could be more compassionate. They didn't ask Jesus for a better evangelistic tool so they could reach more people. They had observed Jesus praying often and they wanted to know how to pray, not as a technique, but how to pray like Him so they asked Him to teach them to pray.

When J. Vernon McGee was growing up, he was never taught nor had he ever observed how to pray. When he was around eight he went to camp and the counselor told the boys to put their pajamas on and gather around for prayer. He thought prayer was a ritual that was done in your pjs.

E. M. Bounds is perhaps one of the greatest authors on prayer because he too was a man of prayer. He wrote "prayer is the greatest of all forces, because it honors God and brings Him into active aid."

E.M. Bounds also said that "prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty."

Jesus was entreated by His disciples to teach them to pray. Maybe in prayer they saw that Jesus gained strength and focus and power. All we know for sure is that they wanted Jesus to teach them to pray.

Five young college students were spending a Sunday in London, so they went to hear Spurgeon preach. While waiting for the doors to open, the students were greeted by a man who asked if they would like to be shown around the church. He specifically wanted to show them the heating plant. They weren't particularly interested because it was a hot day in July, but they didn't want to offend the stranger, so they consented. The young men were taken down a stairway where a door was quietly opened. Their guide whispered that this room was the heating plant. Surprised, the students saw 700 people bowed in prayer, seeking a blessing on the service that was soon to begin in the auditorium above. Softly closing the door, the guide introduced himself. It was none other than Charles Spurgeon.

Several years ago we encouraged folks to meet before Sunday school to pray. Several of you met and prayed and that went on for a time and then for some reason it slowly died out. It would be wonderful to see that begin again with people gathered to pray. I can't think of a thing that is more urgent, more necessary today than the need for prayer. Maybe you need to set your alarm a ½ hour earlier so you can come in to pray. Maybe you need to go to bed a little earlier Saturday night so you aren't so tired Sunday morning to come in. Maybe you can't make it in. Can you spend some time in prayer beforehand?

J. Vernon McGree writes "The barren lives of Christians and the deadness of the church today are the result of prayerlessness."

More than ever we need to take this model and shape our prayers by it.

Jesus set an example by praying and His disciples wanted Him to teach them how to pray.

There was a petition about prayer.

Next we see a pattern for prayer.

II. THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER – v. 2-4

Jesus is now going to give them the blueprint for prayer. It is not a prayer to be recited, but rather a model of what should be included as we pray. You may have heard the simple acronym of how to pray using the words ACTS.

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication

There is something important in the way Jesus answered their petition to teach them to pray.

This is not the same occasion at the Sermon on the Mount where He also gave this model for prayer. There are a few minor differences, but the substance is still the same. Take some time this week and compare this prayer to Matthew 6. Even between some translations there are differences. Some manuscripts have all the phrases as they appear in Matthew while the oldest manuscripts have the shorter form as it appears in the NIV.

Prayer was an important part of Old Testament saints. The elements we see there are seen in Jesus' prayer model.

There was adoration, love and praise to God.

There was an attitude of thanksgiving to God.

There was an acknowledgement of God's holiness and glory.

There was a desire to obey God resulting in a confession of sin.

There was perseverance.

There was humility.

Jesus is not giving them words to pray, but rather how to pray. He didn't say when you pray, pray this. He said when you pray, pray like this.

Elmer Towns says, "The effective prayer is not measured by how loud you pray, or how long you pray, or even if you say the words of the Lord's Prayer again and again in a repetitious fashion. Your prayer life will be effective if you are sincere (your approach) and if you ask for the right things

(what you say)."

Jesus lays out the components of prayer. Some relate to God, some relate to man.

A. Our Relationship in Prayer is Identified –
v. 2a "Our Father, who is in heaven"

Warren Wiersbe writes that "true prayer begins with a personal relationship with God that enables us to call Him Father."

As we begin our prayer, we must understand the relationship that we have with God. That is essential. The unbeliever who comes to God in repentance for sin seeking salvation cannot address Him as Father. At the moment of salvation our relationship with God changes and we are adopted into His family and can now address Him as Father. Galatians 4:6 "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying "Abba, Father.""

In the Aramaic language, there is no more intimate term for father than the word Abba. It expresses the close relationship that we now have with the one who has given us the new birth through Christ. Addressing Him as Father affirms our part in His forever family. The term "Father" is for true believers and puts to rest the notion that God is a universal Father to all mankind. It isn't just a name, but rather reflects the intimacy we should have with God.

We are invited to come into the presence of a loving, caring, compassionate, forgiving, merciful, gracious, unchanging, eternal Father. This is illustrated for us in the closing two parables.

Our hope in prayer is in our omnipotent, unchanging, eternal Father.

Our hope in prayer is in the unlimited resources of our loving Father.

We are invited as His children to make our requests known to Him. (Philippians 4:6-7)

We are invited as His children to ask for needs to be met. This is not a name it and claim it prayer. As our Father He desires to give us what is for our good and His glory. Prayer is not for our prosperity.

Praying to God as our Father means we pray with expectation and not with entitlement.

It may be today that your prayers aren't heard by God because you have yet to become part of His family. You can't address Him intimately because you have never begun a relationship with Him. Jesus invites you to trust Him as Savior. Acknowledge your sin and confess them before the one who took your place of punishment, paying your debt, bearing your sin. Today become part of God's forever family, so that you too can openly and often address Him as Father.

This prayer and relationship also identifies His residence. There is only one Father in heaven. Heaven is the place of His reign, His sovereign rule. As we recognize the place of His residence we also come to understand the resources that come with it. All the resources of heaven are at His disposal. Ephesians 1:3 Our Father "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory."

Heaven has the resources of our Father at His disposal for our good and for His glory. In the prayer that Jesus teaches us, our relationship with God is identified. He is our Father.

B. Our Reverence in Prayer is Required –
v. 2b "Hallowed be Thy name."

While we have this intimate relationship with God and can call Him Father, we still must understand that He is God and deserves our reverence. We are to treat Him as holy, for that is what He is. He is a

holy God. As we come to Him in prayer, His reputation is to be revered. Let us never forget that even in the requests we ask of God for us or for others, prayer is always for God's glory. Every request should be in harmony with His glory.

The word hallowed is related to glory and means that we are to lift up His name, exalt His name, give reverence to His name. It is to believe that He is who He is as revealed to us in Scripture.

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that comes to God (in prayer) must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Isaiah 42:8 "I am the Lord, that is My name! I will not give My glory to another or My praise to idols."

Psalms 29:1-2 "Ascribe to the Lord, O might ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness."

Psalms 72:19 "Praise be to His glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with His glory."

Psalms 79:9 "Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of Your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake."

Psalms 106:47 "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to Your holy name and glory in Your praise."

Psalms 115:1 "Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to Your name be the glory, because of Your love and faithfulness."

Revelation 4:8-11 "Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.'

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and worship Him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being.’”

In our prayers God deserves our reverence, He deserves our praise, He deserves our adoration. Jesus instructs us to revere God in our prayer. When we reverence God in prayer we are placing Him on the throne of our heart and acknowledge His sovereign reign over us.

A pastor asked “How do we “hallow” his name? We hallow his name with our lips, both privately and publicly, and by our actions. To pray that His name is “hallowed” means that first and foremost we desire our lives to reveal to others the name of Jesus and the character of God.”

Revering God’s name is to have a constant God awareness, to set His name above what is common, never using it profanely. It is to be held in awe. When scribes copied the Old Testament and came to the name Yahweh (God), they would stop and perform a cleansing ritual, change pens (quills) and then continue. They held the name of God in such reverence that they wouldn’t even spell it out, that’s how holy and sacred the name was to them. His name is more than a means of identification so we know what to call Him when we approach Him. It speaks of His character and attributes – all that He is. Revering His name acknowledges both His sovereignty and supremacy in our life. Such reverence begins in the heart and is expressed in a life that is constantly aware of God’s presence with a desire to obey Him. *Hallowing God’s name invokes trust, inspires good works, includes confession and ignites worship.*

When you pray how do you approach God?

C. Our Request in Prayer is Basic – v. 3
“Give us each day our daily bread.”

Matthew 6:25-34

The word “give” in our passage suggests a child-like trust in God’s care. It’s in a tense that refers to a continuous action meaning that the request is not just for today, but for every day. It is not a word making a demand, but one of asking only for daily needs to be met. Praying to God to meet our daily needs in no way negates our own responsibility expecting that God will shower us with what we need and all we have to do is sit around and watch those blessings come in. The word “give” implies responsibility on our part as well. God provided manna in the wilderness, but the Israelites still had to go out and pick it up each day. They could set all the jars they wanted outside the door of their tent hoping God would fill the jars for them, but at the end of the day the jars would still be empty. They had to act on what God gave them. Still ask daily.

The word “bread” speaks of all the basic temporal needs of life that we have – food, shelter, clothing, health. As we saw in the Matthew passage, the same God who feeds and clothes the birds of the air and the flowers of the field is the same God who cares for us and knows what we need.

We sometimes put demands on God and have expectations of how God should answer. It boils down to asking for needs or asking for wants.
Lord, I need a car. I want a new car.
Lord, I need a \$100 for a medical bill. I want \$1000.
Lord, I need a job. I want a job that pays \$25 p/hr.
Our Father knows what we need and as we seek first His kingdom He will provide what we need.
Our request is for basic needs.

D. Our Response in Prayer is Essential – v. 4

“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

This is a request that examines first our relationship with God and then our relationship with others.

Someone has rightly said that we are conscious of our daily need for food, but we are unconscious of our daily need for forgiveness. If we sincerely pray to be forgiven of our sin then we are openly admitting our guilt of sin during the day with a need for confession and forgiveness.

First of all we understand by faith that God will keep His promise to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Remember this prayer is for the believer. Our past, present, and future sins have all been dealt with on the cross. This request for sin to be forgiven is not referring to the judicial act of God who could not overlook sin, but had to judge sin and did so on the cross. Jesus is speaking here of relational forgiveness. Any sin we commit now affects our relationship with God, but not our standing with God. He doesn't kick us out of the family because we sin, but sin does affect our communion with Him and for that we need forgiveness.

We need to keep in mind that when we harbor sin in our life, God will not hear us. Psalm 66:18 “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.” That's why Paul urges us to examine ourselves before we take communion implying that confession is a part of that experience.

It follows then that because God forgives us when we confess our sin to Him, we should also forgive others when they sin against us.

When we say we can't forgive someone for what they have done, what we are really saying is that we won't forgive them. If God has forgiven us of our sin on the basis of Christ's finished work on the cross by paying our debt, sin that would otherwise

result in our being eternally condemned, then we have no right to withhold forgiveness of someone who has wronged us. But Pastor you don't know what he did to me or what she said about me.

If we have an unforgiving spirit several things happen.

We continue to live in the past and allow bitterness and resentment to grow. That dishonors God and is an affront to the forgiveness He has extended to us. We cannot rightly worship God and our worship is unacceptable to Him.

Matthew 5:23-24 “Therefore if Thou bring thy gift to the altar and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, then come, and offer thy gift.”

Ephesians 4:32 “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.”

Colossians 3:13 “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as God forgave you, so also do ye.”

It seems easy to ask God to forgive us. Why do we make it so difficult to forgive others? Our response in prayer is to seek forgiveness from God and to forgive others. Oh, and it also is in the present active imperative mood meaning it's to be a continuous action. Keep asking for forgiveness. Keep forgiving others.

The other part of the response is asking God not to lead us into temptation. Now James is very clear in stating that God cannot be tempted by evil and neither does He tempt anyone to do evil. That seems self-defeating on His part. After all if He wants us to be godly in our character, why would He dangle some temptation in front of us to bait us into giving in? James 1 goes on to say that we are drawn away by temptation because of our own lust.

We can't blame God for the temptation. Besides, I Corinthians 10:13 tells us that God always makes a way of escape from the temptation. So what does Jesus mean?

I think it simply means that we ask the Lord to deliver us from the situation that would cause us to sin. If you don't want to sin, don't walk by the counsel of the ungodly, don't stand in the way of the sinner, don't sit with scoffer. Instead delight in the Word of God, hide it in your heart so you won't sin. Walk in the strength of the Spirit so you don't give in to sinful desires. Don't be like the guy who wanted to give up donuts but kept driving by the donut shop.

Jesus is telling us to acknowledge our weakness and need for divine help. When we sin it's not because we were overpowered by Satan or his demons. We cannot say like the old Flip Wilson show "the devil made me do it." As believers we are dead to sin and so when we sin, we give in to the old nature.

Let's remember as we pray to claim what Paul says in Romans 6:6 "For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

M.E. Andross wrote "If the Christian does not allow prayer to drive sin out of his life, sin will drive prayer out of his life. Like light and darkness, the two cannot dwell together."

Our response in prayer is essential.

III. THE PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER – v. 5-13

Jesus then gives two parables to illustrate the importance of prayer.

In verse 9 we see its endurance.

In verse 10 we see its effect.

In the first scenario there are two neighbors. They are friends. One night John has a guest arrive from out of town after midnight. He isn't prepared to offer anything to his guest. Don't think it strange that someone came late at night expecting lodging. Because the days could be extremely hot in that region, people often traveled at night when it was cooler. Also keep in mind that hospitality was extremely important in that culture. If you didn't take care of a guest the whole town could be shunned and this guy didn't want to get a bad reputation for him or his village, so he went to a neighbor for help. He knocked loudly, again and again until he got the attention of his neighbor, Fred, who was not pleased that he has been roused out of a sound sleep. John explained his predicament to Fred. Unmoved by John's plight, Fred refused to help. But John unashamedly continued to persist until Fred relented and gave him what he wanted.

The point here is not that we should continue to pester God and whine about our need to the point where God finally gives in. This parable is about persistence but the contrast is evident. The man didn't want to be bothered. God on the other hand wants us to come to Him with our needs. We are to keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking. The idea is that we don't just come to God in times of emergencies but that we are in constant contact with Him.

The second parable is also one of contrast. If an unloving father knows how to give good gifts, God will give the best gift we need. In this case it is the Holy Spirit. Verse 10 says if we ask, we receive; if we seek, we find; and if we knock, it will be opened. God centered requests will be answered and Jesus gives us the blueprint to follow.