

# THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

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Today is Tuesday, January 21. This week we continue our study on the Practice of Prayer and explore what it means to talk with God.

## OPENING PRAYER

*In the quiet stillness of a bright January morning, I settle into the special space I have set aside to talk with God. I pause my thoughts and silence my mind. I breathe deeply and slowly and focus my whole being on the God who loves me. Holy Lord, teach me what it means to talk with You, express my innermost thoughts and share my deepest feelings. Today I bring You my prayers of gratitude, lament, petition and intercession. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***Then Jesus went on to say: Suppose one of you goes to a friend in the middle of the night and says, "Let me borrow three loaves of bread. A friend of mine has dropped in, and I don't have a thing for him to eat." And suppose your friend answers, "Don't bother me! The door is bolted, and my children and I are in bed. I cannot get up to give you something." He may not get up and give you the bread, just because you are his friend. But he will get up and give you as much as you need, simply because you are not ashamed to keep on asking. Luke 11:5-8 (CEV)***

## REFLECTION

Why does Jesus tell us a story about bothering a grumpy neighbor in the middle of the night? Is he comparing God to the grouch living next door? No. What He is trying to convey is that if someone like this man's neighbor will grant your request at an inconvenient time, how much more will God grant your requests at any time day or night if you ask. Keep on asking. Keep on knocking.

Our conversations with God begin where they need to begin, with other people teaching us to pray. Jesus taught his followers to pray the Lord's Prayer and we are committed to pray that together as a community of faith on a daily basis. We often learn to pray by praying the words of others. There are countless prayers written in every century and shared among believers in Christ. Yet, if we begin the practice of prayer with the words of others, it should lead us to more. Over time, we go deeper in our relationship with the God who loves us and we begin to have an ongoing conversation with Him.

We were born to pray. We were designed to communicate with our Creator God. Praying is as natural to us as eating, drinking and breathing. We shouldn't think about it too much or make it overly complicated. Keep it simple. Just talk with God. Author John Mark Comer lumps together four ways of praying and calls them "Talking with God."

The following four categories give us an accessible model for prayer that helps us talk with God on an ongoing basis. The categories are gratitude, lament, petition and intercession. Gratitude is talking with God about what is good in your life and in your world. Lament is talking with God

about what is bad in your life and in your world. Petition is asking God to fulfill His promises for you personally and overcome the bad with the good. Intercession is asking God to fulfill His promises for others and overcome the bad with the good.

God wants to hear from you. God is awake in the middle of the night when you have a problem to solve. God hears you when you haven't found your share of daily bread or when you need a few loaves for a hungry friend. God is not grumpy, inconvenienced, or asleep when you knock on His door. He wants to hear what's going well in your life and celebrate your blessings. He wants to hear about your struggles and concerns and share your remorse. Like a good parent wants to give good gifts to his or her child, God wants to fulfill your requests and meet your needs. God loves when you take time to pray for others and those prayers have real power. So don't hesitate to pray. Lift your words to God and talk with Him.

### **Prayer Prompts:**

- Take time today and share your joys and concerns with God.
- Knock on God's door and make your requests known to Him.
- Practice intercession and pray for others.

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.***

Resources utilized: John Mark Comer, Practicing the Way - The Prayer Practice, Session 02, Talking with God, practicingtheway.org.