

STAY IN THE CLOSET, 4  
Matthew 6:6-13

1. Finishing this series whose title is based upon the instruction Jesus gave us regarding personal prayer... Some explanation of my burden for doing this...
  - a. Prophetic word we were given back in November that to go where God wants to take us as a church will require that we be a church of praise and prayer... So these messages are for helping us move as a church in the direction God is calling us...
  - b. In order to be a church of prayer we have to be a people of prayer, not only at church but in our private lives... And Jesus specifically addresses that here in this Sermon on the Mount... [Matthew 6:6] Enter your closet, He says, emphasizing place of personal prayer as being a purposeful, private and even precious activity because of meeting the Father there...

c. And I do this because of our annual emphasis of fasting and prayer... It is unfair to parishioners for a pastor to urge them to practice any activity that they are not taught how to do... And I preach this to help somebody in your prayer life...

2. In this passage Jesus says something to us not just about the place of prayer, but also about the PRIVILEGE of prayer [through prayer we connect with the Father; “pray to Your Father”... We are able to pray because Father God has made it possible...]
  - a. Jesus further gives insight regarding the POWER of prayer... Your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly... That one word, reward, carries several meanings that indicate that prayer in secret will result in self-developing power [it will change me], in fruit-producing power, in situation-changing power, and in eternal affecting power...

b. But before He leaves this subject of prayer Jesus also gives instruction regarding the PATTERN of prayer... [Matthew 6:9] “In this manner, pray...” and following that the Lord tells us how to pray... We typically call this the Lord’s Prayer, but it is actually to be the believer’s prayer, a guide for how we ought to pray... This is not a prayer for us to only quote or recite together... It’s fine to do that, but this is really specific, practical direction to follow for your personal prayer life...

c. Several ways I have seen this categorized but I appreciate Pastor Rick Warren’s approach with this... My heart is that we go through this prayer guide together... Prayer sermon, trusting that as we do even now it will not only be a tool for teaching but tool for touching heaven in this setting... Jesus’ lesson on the pattern of prayer...

### 3. Praise

a. I begin by expressing my love and worship for God. "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*" When you come to prayer you want to begin by expressing your love to God. That puts your focus on Him, “Our Father...” Also, notice that basic to effective praying is right relationship with God... A quality prayer life starts with salvation... You must be born again and become a child of God in order to connect with Him in prayer...

b. There are many reasons why we should praise the Lord, but there are two main categories of praise. We first praise Him for His character. There are numerous traits about God that we should praise Him for. Some are His love, His power, His grace, His mercy, His faithfulness, His holiness, etc. Bible also reveals His character is also revealed through His names. For example, He is Jehovah-shalom, our peace and Jehovah-jireh, our provider, Jehovah rapah, our healer, etc.

c. We also praise the Lord for what He has done. We give Him thanksgiving for what He does in general, but we also have many specific favors that we need to focus on and thank Him for. 1

Thessalonians 5:18, “In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

d. Take time to for some praise for Who He is and for what He has done...

#### 4. Purpose

a. I commit myself to God’s purpose and will for my life. Jesus said, *“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* This is an acknowledgment that God is God and I am not. This is laying out myself and my plans before God’s total authority...

b. It is also requesting and even declaring that His will be done in your family and in your business, at your school or place of work in this church and among your friends and your community and even in this nation...

c. In prayer we take authority over the forces of evil that work to hinder God’s will in any area... Most important purpose to be fulfilled is His purpose... Not what I want, not the agenda of any personality, or political party, certainly not any hellish purpose... But beginning with me and then beyond His will be done and His kingdom (authority) come...

d. Pray to that end right here...

#### 5. Provision

a. “Give us this day our daily bread.” Jesus said talk to Your Father about your providing for your basic needs... Such praying teaches us to depend on God and to recognize that it is He Who owns everything and that He is concerned about every detail of my life...

b. In this same setting [Matthew 6:31-32] Jesus reminds His audience that the Father feeds the birds and clothes the flowers of the field and we have no need to worry because He knows what we need and we are of such greater value than birds and flowers...

c. Yet, we are to talk to God about our needs... James 4:2, we are told that we do not have from God because we do not ask Him... When you have a need, ask God to provide and be specific and stand on the promise of Philippians 4:19 that He will supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus...

d. Do you have a personal need for some kind of provision [material, emotional, physical]? Focus of prayer right now...

## 6. Pardon

a. The next part of this prayer is for forgiveness, "Forgive us our debts." Jesus is saying here that when you pray you need to examine your spiritual condition and allow the HS to put His finger on any issue that needs to be settled...

b. [Psalm 139:23-24] Psalmist gives perfect example of such a prayer, "Search me O God and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting..."

c. You may have to make restitution to another... Matthew 5:23-24 *"When you remember your brother has something against you, go at once to make peace with him, then come back and offer your gift to God."*

d. Always by faith accept God's forgiveness. 1 John 1:9, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,"* Turn away from that and go forward in God...

e. Prayer for personal examination and pardon...

## 7. People

a. I am to pray for other people. Along with the previous petition is the phrase, "as we forgive our debtors." This phrase puts our attention on others, and our prayer life should include praying for others... 1Timothy 2:1 (LB). *"Pray much for others; plead for God's mercy upon them, give thanks for all he is going to do for them."*

b. Pray for family and friend and those in need and in leadership... Pray for lost people to be saved... I personally use several prayer lists... and we have many to pray for... Let's pray together in that way... 1) Hold up prayer list... 2) Pray for people around you...

## 8. Protection

a. I ask for spiritual protection from God... "*And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.*" We, as believers, face a spiritual battle every day and Satan wants to defeat us through temptation and fear and attacks... We must begin each day fully armed and ready for what his ploys...

b. And I want to use this part of the prayer to prepare us as we face the enemy... God to give you protection and victory over him...