

Priorities of Faith

DAY 5 — FOCUSING ON THINGS THAT MATTER IN OUR PRAYERS

“So this is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, we pray that your name will always be kept holy. We pray that your kingdom will come—that what you want will be done here on earth, the same as in heaven.’” (Matt. 6:9-10 ERV)

A New Focus in Prayer

In our prayers, we need to focus on God and on things that are important. Often our prayers are weak and not successful because we pray only about ourselves. We pray to God about what *we* wish to have. We focus on *our* needs and challenges rather than focusing on God.

God likes when our prayers have a different focus. God wants our focus not to be on God Himself, not on what we want. Focusing on God and not ourselves can give us a new prayer experience. God likes when I pray because I know that God is my friend who I want to be with because *He* is important to me, not only because I want something from Him. *Who God is*, is much more important than the things He gives me. Knowing God is the reason I want to talk to Him. Without Him, my life is not focused and does not have the proper point of view. My desire to be with Him should be more important than anything I can ask for. His presence and who He is becomes the focus of true prayer.

God-focused Prayer Changes Us

God likes prayers that begin with us wanting to be with Him and not just with our wishes and requests. When my prayer requests are anchored in this loving relationship with Him, they are more about God and His will and less about me. When I understand that my relationship with God is the main part of prayer, my requests have a new focus. I begin to think and pray from God's point of view. I start to see my requests, my wants and wishes, and my whole life as God would see it. This understanding makes prayer better. Without a relationship with God, our prayer becomes one-sided, selfish, and wrong. God-centered prayer frees my thoughts from being about myself, and allows me to be honest with God. In the light of God's love and holiness, I see myself differently. The true purpose of prayer is not just getting what I want, but having a closer relationship with the life-changing God. It is so easy to ask God for something before I have enjoyed being with Him.

When I think about God's character, His qualities, and what He can do, and when I say how much I love Him in my own words, my prayers are filled with spirit, respect, and awe. Now my prayers do not focus on my problems, but on God, who is in control of all my needs. This kind of prayer lifts me up into His presence. This kind of prayer does not change God; it changes me. Why not start praying like that? It will change your life.

Let's pray together.

Prayer Time (30–45 Minutes)

All prayer groups have different ways of praying together. We want you to spend the next 30-45 minutes praying together, however the Holy Spirit leads you. Short informal prayers (1-3 sentences) are good. This way, more people can pray many times. Below are some examples of praying with Bible verses based on the theme. You may also pray through other Bible verses and include other topics in your prayer time. See the Leader's Guide and World Church Prayer Requests for other prayer ideas.

Praying God's Word — Matt. 6:9-10

"So this is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, we pray that your name will always be kept holy. We pray that your kingdom will come—that what you want will be done here on earth, the same as in heaven.'"

"Our Father in Heaven, We Pray that Your Name Will Always Be Kept Holy"

Our kind Father in Heaven, You are God. You are almighty, know everything; you are wonderful and glorious. You are beautiful and awesome. You are Truth, Righteous, and Love. We want to know You so much more. We want to daily appreciate Your character, all You can do, Your personality, and Your will. Free us from our selfish focus, and make our prayers focus on You. Amen.

"We Pray that Your Kingdom Will Come-That What You Want Will be Done"

Lord, Your kingdom is the only government we want to be loyal to. You are a King of love, truth, justice, and righteousness. Our ideas, plans, and ways are not perfect, but Your will is always perfect. Bring Your kingdom into our hearts and lives today. Show us who You are. Amen.

More Prayer Suggestions

Thanks and Praise: Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

Confession: Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

Guidance: Ask God to give wisdom for today's challenges and decisions.

Our Church: Pray for local and world church needs (see separate sheet with requests).

Local Requests: Pray for needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

Listen and Respond: Take time to listen for God's voice and respond in praise or song.

Song Suggestions

SDA Hymnal: Holy, Holy, Holy (#73); How Great Thou Art (#86); Sweet Hour of Prayer (#478)

Other Songs: Father, I Adore You; His Name is Wonderful; Is He Worthy?; Jesus, Name Above All Names