

# A Life of Prayer.

Week #1: Where prayer begins

January 06, 2019

Learning prayer is never easy, because it includes a large helping of biblical truth coupled with deep personal experience. It's one thing to study prayer, but it's entirely another to practice it. Prayer can be clear yet confusing, wonderful yet confounding, hopeful yet discouraging. For some, prayer is all about communion with God, while for others it is about bringing God's Kingdom to earth as in heaven. For some it's deeply personal. For others mostly cosmic. Many treat prayer like rubbing the lamp and demanding God do something about the mess our lives have become. Many others have abandoned prayer, because the desired outcomes have not been realized. Some see prayer as pure mysticism. Others see only pragmatism.

With the hope of cutting through the confusion, we are beginning 2019 by opening the scriptures together to learn more about prayer. Our goal is to build a biblical foundation that will lead to a robust practicing of what Jesus so clearly embraced in his life & ministry.

## **Study Questions: *Where prayer begins.***

1. Take some time to reflect on your understanding about prayer.
  - How is what you believe about prayer built upon what the Bible says, and upon what you have personally experienced? What scriptures form the foundation of your prayer life? What experiences? What scriptures might you struggle with, or even ignore? What experiences have left you confused or perhaps disappointed?
  - On a scale of 1-10, how knowledgeable do you feel you are regarding prayer? What would you like to understand & experience more deeply?
2. Pastor Ken began by saying that understanding prayer is not the issue - knowing God is the issue.
  - How does your knowledge of God influence your practice of prayer? What do you wish you knew more fully about God?
3. Ken went on to teach that prayer begins when our humanity encounters God's divinity.
  - Read Romans 1:18-32 & 3:9-18. Although he did not mention it this week, Pastor Ken's initial teaching on prayer is primarily grounded within an Old Testament understanding - it is the first half of the Christian foundation for prayer.
    - Beginning with Adam/Eve, and moving on through Abraham, Moses and the Prophets, investigate the relationship between God and humanity - both Jew and Gentile. How did these people living prior to Christ understand God and prayer?
    - How frustrating might it have been for both God and these people in terms of really knowing one another?
4. How dissatisfying is prayer for those who have not yet embraced Jesus - Who is the way to knowing God, and the truth about God (John 14:6)
  - When you tell unbelieving people that you will pray for them, what is their reaction? How does this shed light on *their* understanding of God versus yours?
  - Review Matthew 5:1-12. Note the progression of encountering God's divinity with our humanity, starting with spiritual poverty, but ending with our adoption into God's family.
    - Close in a time of prayer, thanking God for meeting us in our sinful humanity, and extending His rich grace to us in our poverty through Jesus Christ.
    - Pray, too, for the salvation of the 1 person you are praying for this year.