

IWC LILONGWE DISCIPLESHIP CLASS

LESSON: Prayer



(Understanding Prayer)

Introduction: Prayer is the foundation of a healthy spiritual life. It is the means by which believers connect with God, receiving His empowerment and guidance. A strong prayer life is essential for walking in the Spirit and maintaining a relationship with God.

1. What is Prayer?

Prayer is communication with God, including thanksgiving, worship, supplications, intercessions, and counsel. Jesus teaches that true prayer should not be for public recognition but rather for building a relationship with the Father (Matthew 6:5-6).

Reflection Question:

- Is my motivation for prayer rooted in a desire to commune with God?

2. Who Should We Pray To?

Scripture reveals that different types of prayer are directed toward different roles within the Trinity:

- Requests and petitions should be made to the Father, in Jesus' name, with the Holy Spirit guiding (Ephesians 2:18, John 16:23-24).
- Fellowship and thanksgiving can be directed to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:9, Philippians 2:1).

Reflection Question:

- How can I intentionally engage with all three Persons of the Godhead in my prayer life?

3. Where Should Christians Pray?

Believers are called to pray both in private and public settings:

- **Private Prayer:** Jesus modeled withdrawing to quiet places for focused communion with God (Luke 5:16, Mark 1:35).
- **Public Prayer:** Christians can pray in churches, homes, workplaces, and even during evangelism (Luke 10:9).

Reflection Question:

- Where can I find a quiet place to pray without distractions?

Application: Commit to a personal and communal prayer life, ensuring that your prayers are rooted in a genuine desire to know God and align with His will.

Conclusion: Prayer is not just asking for things; it is building a relationship with God. By understanding how and where to pray, believers can strengthen their spiritual journey and grow deeper in faith.

4. When and How Often Should Christians Pray?

Prayer should be a consistent and intentional part of a believer's daily life. While the Bible teaches that Christians should "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17), individuals must also find dedicated times for secret prayer.

- **Examples from Scripture:**
 - Morning (Mark 1:35)
 - Noon (Acts 10:9)
 - Evening (Genesis 24:63)
 - Three times per day (Psalm 55:17)
 - Jesus likely prayed even more frequently

Believers should choose prayer times that align with their personal schedule while maintaining ongoing communication with God throughout the day.

Reflection Questions:

- Am I more focused in the morning, noon, or evening?
- When am I free from distractions and responsibilities?
- How can I create a routine that helps me remain prayerful throughout the day?

5. For Whom Should We Pray?

The Bible outlines various groups for whom Christians should pray:

- **Ourselves** (Matthew 6:11-13) – Seeking provision, forgiveness, and deliverance from temptation
- **Other believers** (Ephesians 6:18) – Praying for perseverance and spiritual strength
- **Laborers in the faith** (Luke 10:2) – Asking God to raise up disciple-makers
- **Rulers and authorities** (1 Timothy 2:1-2) – Interceding for leaders to promote peace and righteousness
- **Enemies** (Matthew 6:44-45) – Showing love and intercession for those who oppose us

Reflection Questions:

- Which category have I been neglecting in prayer?
- How can I incorporate more intercession into my daily prayer life?

6. Who Should Pray?

Every believer is called to prayer. Prayer is central to knowing God and experiencing eternal life (John 17:3). Without prayer, a Christian is missing the essence of a relationship with the Creator.

Reflection Questions:

- Have I neglected prayer in my walk with God?
- How can I cultivate a habit of prayer in my daily life?

Conclusion: Prayer is more than a routine—it is a way to commune with God, grow spiritually, and seek His will. By understanding when, how, and for whom to pray, believers can deepen their relationship with God and fulfill their calling in faith.

7. Why Should We Pray?

Prayer invites God’s intervention in our lives and in the lives of others. Beyond requesting help, prayer is meant to deepen our connection with God and transform us through His Spirit.

- **Transformation through Prayer:**
 - When we spend time with God, the Holy Spirit renews us, shaping us into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18).
 - Like Moses in the tent of meeting, we should approach God boldly, removing any barriers between us (Exodus 34:29-35).

Reflection Question:

- How can I make prayer a daily practice that transforms my life?

8. How to Pray

Jesus provides a model for prayer, known as the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). Rather than a rigid, repetitive recital, it serves as a guide for meaningful communication with God.

Four Key Elements of Prayer:

1. **Praise and Worship** – Begin by glorifying God’s name.
2. **Intercession** – Pray for God’s will and intervention in the world.
3. **Personal Requests** – Seek provision, forgiveness, and spiritual guidance.
4. **Praise and Worship** – End in gratitude, acknowledging God’s glory.

Reflection Question:

- How can I start incorporating these elements into my daily prayers?

9. Benefits of a Consistent Prayer Life

Psalm 91 highlights blessings for those who dwell in the “secret place” of prayer. By maintaining a consistent prayer life, believers experience God’s presence, guidance, and protection.

Would you like me to further refine this lesson structure or add additional sections? I’m happy to shape it for specific teaching needs!

Conclusion: The Power of Prayer

Prayer is more than a religious practice—it is the foundation of a thriving spiritual life and a direct connection with God. Throughout this study, we’ve explored the purpose, method, and importance of prayer, recognizing that it is both a personal and communal experience.

Key Elements of a Strong Prayer Life:

1. **Understanding Prayer** – Recognizing prayer as communication with God that fosters a deeper relationship.
2. **Who We Pray To** – Directing requests to the Father, through Jesus, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
3. **Where and When to Pray** – Committing to private, focused prayer while maintaining a constant spirit of prayer throughout the day.
4. **For Whom to Pray** – Lifting up personal needs, other believers, leaders, and even enemies in prayer.
5. **How to Pray** – Following Jesus’ model of praise, intercession, personal requests, and gratitude.
6. **Why We Pray** – Seeking God’s intervention, transformation, and guidance in our lives.
7. **The Benefits of Prayer** – Experiencing spiritual renewal, peace, and divine protection.

Final Reflection:

Prayer is not just about asking God for things—it is about knowing Him, growing in His presence, and allowing the Holy Spirit to shape our lives. As we commit to consistent prayer, we open our hearts to God's wisdom, strength, and love.