

A blue square logo with a white border containing the text "PRAY FIRST" in white, uppercase letters.

PRAY  
FIRST

A horizontal grey bar with a blue border containing the word "SCHEDULE" in white, uppercase letters.

SCHEDULE

- September 13: Why Pray?
- September 20: How and When Do We Pray?
- September 27: Power of Prayer
- October 4: Principles of Prayer
- October 11: Hindrances of Prayer
- October 18: Models of Prayer (Lord's Prayer)
- October 25: Models of Prayer (Jabez; Tabernacle)
- November 1: "Unplugged"-Prayer Service

### Lesson 1: Why Pray?

“No matter how complete the armour; no matter how skilled we may be in the science of war; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated.”- Barnes Commentary

Luke 11:1, 2

1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

2 So He said to them, ...

#### **I. Meaning of prayer.**

*How would you define prayer?*

He was “praying”....teach us to “pray”...

#### **II. Importance of prayer.**

*Why do you think prayer is important?*

Jesus was “praying in a certain place.”

#### **III. Expectation of prayer.**

*Do you think God wants us to pray?*

And He said to them, when you pray...

“No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing. The people who are not praying are straying.”

– Leonard Ravenhill

## **Questions For Breakout Groups:**

1. Since prayer is expected, will you pray? Why?
2. When you pray, what topics dominate this time?
3. When you look at your prayer life, what needs to change in regards to what you pray for?
4. Do you struggle with the thought of “praying without ceasing”?
5. What are some personal benefits you have seen come from prayer?
6. Are there any particular moments or testimonies from prayer that you would like to share?
7. What do you hope to gain from being a part of this prayer course?

## Pray First

### Lesson 2: How and When Do We Pray?

“If Jesus felt that He had to pray, how much more do we need to pray!”  
– Billy Graham

**Luke 5:16** (Jesus got away from the multitude so he could pray)  
But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

**Luke 6:12** (Before Jesus called his disciples, he prayed all night)  
One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

**Mark 1:35** (Jesus prayed early after a long day of ministry)  
Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

**Mark 6:46** (Jesus prayed in the evening after sending the disciples away)  
After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

#### I. Place of prayer.

*Where do you most often spend time in prayer?*

#### **Matthew 6:5-6**

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

“Going into your room” or “praying in secret” is as much about what happens in your heart as it is about a physical location.

## **Mark 1:35**

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

## **II. Time of prayer.**

*What time of day do you find prayer time to be the most effective?*

## **Mark 1:35**

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

## **III. Prayer should be a priority.**

*Is prayer a top priority in your life?*

1. Make prayer a priority
2. Make room
3. Remove noise and distractions
4. Pray together with others
5. Don't make it about you

“Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him”

- Ellen G. White

## Questions for Breakout Groups:

1. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest, how would you rate your time spent talking with God this past week? Explain.
2. Can you tell any difference during your day when you make prayer a priority? If so, what kind of difference?
3. Would anyone like to share their favorite prayer locations and why that is your favorite?
4. When do most of you pray during the day? What time of day do you find to be the most powerful? Why do you feel that is?
5. It seems as though prayer is not prioritized in the life of most followers. Why do you think that is the case?
6. Do you have suggestions or examples from your own prayer life that have made prayer more of a focus and priority in your daily life?

## Pray First

### Lesson 3: The Power of Prayer

“Where God leads you to pray, He means for you to receive”.

- C.H. Spurgeon

James 5:16

“...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

#### **I. The possibilities of powerful prayer.**

“avails much”- it will accomplish much, produces wonderful results, has great power.

A. It's powerful enough to defeat our most powerful enemy.

B. It's powerful enough to change our world.

C. It's powerful enough to change me.

#### **II. Practice of powerful prayers.**

“... the effective, fervent prayer...” - to stretch or reach out.

A. Includes the promises of God.

B. Includes passion.



## **Questions for Breakout Groups:**

1. We were asked at the end; “Do you believe in the power of prayer”? If you do, why?
2. What’s the greatest “answered prayer” story you’ve ever heard?
3. Has there been a time that you prayed and didn’t receive the answer you wanted or any answer at all? How did you respond?
4. Describe what could happen if a core group of people in our church family prayed daily for our community, church, and the Pastors.
5. Do you agree with the statement “prayer is the real battle”? Why or why not?
6. Are you one of those living beneath your privileges and missing out on your potential by not praying? Explain.
7. C.H. Spurgeon said, “Whoever God determines to do a great work, He first sets His people to pray.” What great work is God currently desiring that you pray for?

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Lesson 4: Learning to Pray**

**I. Learn to pray by praying**

“The best way to learn how to pray is to pray”.

– Donald Whitney

**II. Learn to pray by meditating on scripture.**

**III. Learn to pray by praying with others.**

**IV. Learn to pray by reading about prayer.**

**V. Learn to pray by using different methods.**

## **Questions For Breakout Groups:**

1. Which brings you most quickly into God's presence; worship, prayer, or scripture reading? Why do you think that is?
2. What do you think of the statement "learn to pray by praying"?
3. How often do you pray and meditate on scripture? Is there one particular scripture that you pray more regularly?
4. Who in your life has been that "model" of prayer? What have you learned from them?
5. Has there been a book or a study that has helped to grow and "sharpen" your prayer life? Is there a study you would recommend to others?
6. What methods of prayer work most effectively for you? Is there one that you use more often?
7. Do you often use a prayer plan or follow a certain model? Why or why not?

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### Lesson 5: Hindrances to Prayer (Prayer Killers)

*Not to pray because you do not feel fit to pray is like saying, "I will not take medicine because I am too ill." Pray for prayer: pray yourself, by the Spirit's assistance, into a praying frame.*

– C.H. Spurgeon

*Pray as you can, not as you can't.*

– Dom Chapman

#### Ten Prayer Killers

1. The sin of prayerlessness
2. A lack of effort
3. Selfish or wrong motives
4. A lack of faith
5. Idols of our heart
6. Our unconfessed sin
7. Unforgiving spirit (unforgiveness)
8. A lack of persistence
9. Ignoring God's word
10. Un-surrendered will

## **Questions for Breakout Groups:**

1. What are some of the benefits of having open communication with God without any hindrances?
2. Are you often a forgiving person when people wrong you? Has there been a time for you or someone you know, when unforgiveness hindered prayer?
3. We spoke about a few, but what are some other wrong or selfish motives for prayer? What are some right motives?
4. How do you know when something has become an idol or not? What are some of the most obvious idols in our lives?
5. Why do you believe we need to be persistent in our prayers? Why do you believe God may make us wait for an answer?
6. Out of the ten hindrances we spoke about, which do you believe hinders prayer the most? Why?
7. Are there other “prayer killers” that have impacted you personally that were not mentioned?
8. What are some things we can do to prevent ourselves from falling into a habit of any of the “prayer killers” we spoke about?

## **Pray First**

### **Lesson 6: Prayer Models 1 (The Lord's Prayer)**

*“The Lord's Prayer is not merely the pattern prayer, it is the way Christians must pray.... The Lord's Prayer is the quintessence of prayer”.*  
– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

#### **Praying like Jesus:**

##### **1. Worship or Praise of the Father**

**“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”**

##### **2. Make Him Lord/Surrender**

**“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”**

##### **3. Offer our petitions/Requests/Daily Needs**

**“Give us this day our daily bread.”**

##### **4. Receive and give grace/You and Others**

**“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”**

##### **5. Be victorious/Protection**

**“Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”**

##### **6. Release faith**

**“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”**

# THE LORD'S PRAYER

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The Lord's Prayer is often recited in churches or at religious events, but there's so much more to this prayer. Jesus provided this model as an outline to teach us how to pray in a way that connects us to God and empowers us to accomplish great things through Him. This model takes us through each part of The Lord's Prayer, showing us how to pray the way Jesus instructed.

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray..."*

**LUKE 11:1**

*"Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your Name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."*

**MATTHEW 6:9-13 NKJV**

## Questions for Breakout Groups:

1. How does it encourage your prayers to know that we are praying to our Father in Heaven?
2. Are you aware of how much God loves you as you begin to pray? How does that shape the tone of your prayers?
3. Do you think that the kingdom of God is something that is coming in the future, or something that is present in our lives now?
4. When you pray for God's will to be done in the world and in your life do you really mean it? What does it look like for God's will to be done in your life?
5. Have there been times that you were disappointed in prayer? Looking back, do you see that the will of God may have been accomplished even though your will was not?
6. What kinds of things can be our "daily bread"? How have you seen God provide for you? How has this deepened your trust in him, or your relationship with him?
7. What things do you find hard to forgive? Why do we need to seek God for forgiveness on a regular basis?
8. Why would we pray and ask for God not to lead us into temptation? Do you believe that there is value in our faith being 'tested', or undergoing periods of temptation? Why or why not?

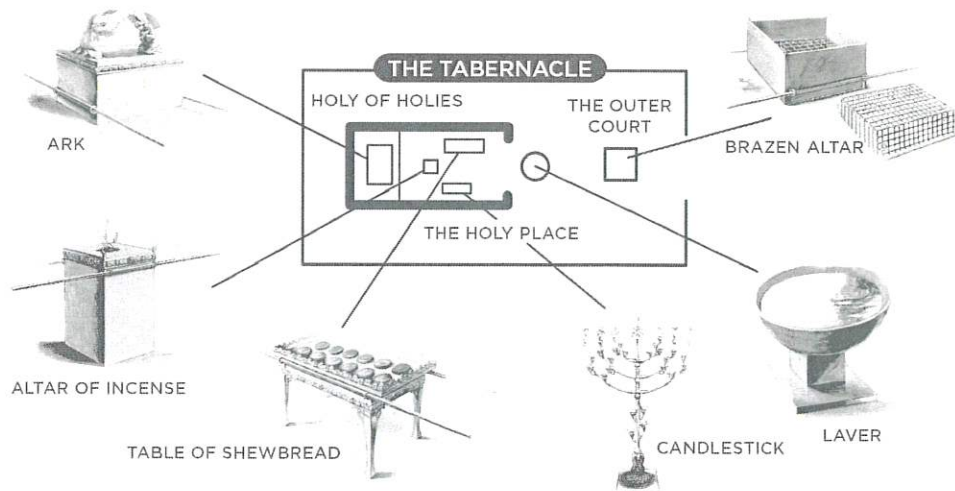


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### Lesson 7: Prayer Models 2 (The Tabernacle Prayer)

#### The Tabernacle Prayer:

- 1. The Outer Court**  
Thanksgiving and Praise
- 2. The Brazen Altar**  
The Cross of Jesus
- 3. The Laver**  
Cleansing and Preparing
- 4. The Candlestick**  
The Holy Spirit
- 5. The Table of Shewbread**  
The Word of God
- 6. The Altar of Incense**  
Worship
- 7. The Ark of the Covenant**  
Intercession



## Questions for Breakout Groups:

1. At the beginning of “the tabernacle prayer”, is the outer courts. The outer courts were for preparation. Each stage moving closer into the tabernacle created greater intimacy with God. As these steps brought greater intimacy with God, fewer people were allowed and able to take these steps. Why do you think this is so?
2. In the Old Testament, the brazen altar was used for sacrifices. People had to regularly bring these sacrifices. We don’t have to do that today because of what Christ did upon the cross. Now we are asked to offer ourselves as living sacrifices. What is the main problem of offering a living sacrifice? Why do people struggle with this thought?
3. Next is the bronze laver, which is like a full mirror investigation of ourselves. Here we learn how we appear in the eyes of the Lord. We know there is no human that can ever be “good enough”, that is why we need a savior. What are your thoughts on “investigating yourself”? What goes through your mind when you realize you need a savior?
4. The seven-branched candle stick and its fire represented the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that God guides, comforts, and empowers us as His followers. The Holy Spirit has been given in order to help us be light in the darkness. In what ways can followers of Christ be light in the darkness?
5. After the candlestick was the table of showbread. This represented the importance of God’s word. Just as we need bread to live, we need God’s word as part of our daily life. Why do you believe the Word is needed in our lives every day? What are the benefits we can obtain?
6. The altar of incense is next. The aroma of the burning incense would be pleasing to God and accompany the sacrifice. Praise and prayer would rise with the smoke and fragrance. How do you feel this form of worship is similar to and different from our worship today?
7. The final spot is the Holy of Holies. The Ark of the Covenant (containing the mercy seat of God) resided here. As we know, once Jesus was crucified, the veil was torn and men were no longer separated from God. Now we are able to enter the presence of God, worship and intercede for others. Reflect for a few moments on how this forever changed mankind’s relationship with God. Share your thoughts with the group.

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# UNPLUGGED

## *Night of Worship*

WEDNESDAY NOV. 1<sup>st</sup>

6:30 PM

FASTING

*You are invited to  
join us  
for a brand new Adult  
Wednesday Night Life Group!*

WEDNESDAYS AT 6:30 PM

*Beginning Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>*

*A vision of  
Clinton Community Church's  
PRAYER MINISTRY*

*Location: Front Sanctuary*

