

## Teach Us to Pray

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*And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.*

*– Luke 11:1 –*

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Prayer is perhaps the most dichotomous discipline of the Christian life. It is at once as natural as the cry of a newborn babe, yet as foreign as learning a new language while in a land far from home. In times of distress or exigency, it will effortlessly pour forth from our lips and hearts. But when no pressing need is at hand, we often find it an arduous, agonizing work to utter even a few heartfelt syllables. Prayer is the most natural and God-pleasing act of any child, and yet it is never mastered by the most seasoned of saints.

Prayer in its truest form takes the inmost part of our being. It is less about our words and more about our hearts. It requires familiarity with, and honesty within, the unique solitude of our souls, as well as reverent recognition and engagement of the character and mind of God.

Jesus' prayers had to have been unequivocally remarkable. He most certainly would have engaged in prayer as naturally as in any of His humanly discourse, completely and totally aware of the Father's thoughts toward whatever subject was the matter of the supplication. He must have passed in and out of verbally uttered prayer with amazing ease, without ever really breaking communication with heaven. All the biblical injunctions and descriptions of God-pleasing prayer were undoubtedly personified in our Lord. Let us recall that it was while He prayed that He was transfigured. In Him, prayer was truly without ceasing and marvelously unhindered. In Christ, prayer was completely unhypocritical and selflessly motivated. His prayers were wonderfully importunate, perfectly humble, and always fresh and spontaneous. In Jesus, prayer was wholly earnest, fully effectual, and intensely fervent.

How different are our prayers! How frequently do we find our communication with heaven to be forced, disjointed, earthly, stale, feeble, and emaciated? And yet, we are ever encouraged and commanded to continue to pray in His name, that we may receive. What a marvel – that the God who delighted in the impeccable prayers of His incarnate Son eagerly awaits and attends to the frail utterances of His lowly followers, even empowering and perfecting those groanings by His Spirit for the throne of grace, and graciously promising that whatever we ask according to His will, it will be done for us!

With the disciples we plead, Lord, teach us to pray!

*-- D. Murcek*