**PREPARING FOR PRAYER**

**Matthew 6:5-8**

Jesus - *“Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 When you pray, don’t babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words. 8 Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.”* (Matthew 6:5-8)

**THE BIG IDEA: Jesus contrasts the practice of “religious” people, who pray for self-serving reasons, with instructions on preparation for praying effectively.**

***PREPARING FOR PRAYER REQUIRES:***

**HAVING THE RIGHT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

* Jesus - *“Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.”* (Matthew 6:5)
* **The motivation for our prayers should be to foster a deep abiding relationship with our Heavenly Father as we seek His will.**
* **Praying with selfish motives will always lead to an empty and disappointing prayer life.**

***PREPARING FOR PRAYER REQUIRES:***

**HAVING THE RIGHT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

* Jesus – *“But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”* (Matthew 6:6)
* **When we pray to an audience of One we can be assured that God hears and answers our prayers.**
* *“Listen to my words, Lord; consider my sighing. 2 Pay attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for I pray to you. 3 In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I plead my case to you and watch expectantly.”* (Psalm 5:1-3)
* **Realizing that we are praying to God alone enables us to pray intently and transparently.**

***PREPARING FOR PRAYER REQUIRES:***

**HAVING THE RIGHT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

* Jesus – *“When you pray, don’t babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words. 8 Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.”* (Matthew 6:7-8)
* **Pride has no place in the presence of our Lord.**
* Read (Luke 18:9-14)
* **Pride will prevent you from praying in a way that honors the Lord and brings about His mercy and grace.**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Icebreaker:**

* Describe an event in your life where you had to do a lot of preparation?

**Start thinking:**

* If prayer is meant to be conversation between you and God, then why do you think “preparing for prayer” is so important?
* What are some improper motives for praying? Give an example of someone in the Bible who prayed with wrong motives. (explain)
* How can you overcome selfish motives for praying?

**Start sharing. Discuss in depth to create openness***.*

* Since we are praying to an audience of One, why is it not wrong to pray in groups out loud?
* How have you developed in your own prayer time as you have learned, and are learning more about prayer?
* What are some things that are hindering your preparation for prayer?
* Pray for one another to grow in this area of preparing for prayer, and for roadblocks to prayer to be removed.

**Start praying. Be bold, and pray specifically.**

* Heavenly Father, I am thankful that You listen to my prayers. As I learn how to prepare for prayer in a way that honors You, I pray that you would keep my heart pure, and my motives right. Remove any hindrances that keep me from deepening my walk with You. - Amen

**Start digging. Read Scripture about acknowledging sin and godly grief.**

John 15:7 Psalm 5:1-3

Romans 8:26 Luke 18:9-14