

COMMUNICATION: The Spiritual Discipline of Prayer
Lesson for Sunday, March 8, 2026

INTRODUCTION: *Use your introduction time for review – repetition is the best teacher!*

- ⇒ We are learning what it means to be a disciple. Who remembers the four calls of Jesus?
- ⇒ Who remembers God’s will for our lives? *Answer: To bear fruit!*
- ⇒ Who remembers how the Bible defines spiritual fruit? *Christian character, conduct, and converts.*
- ⇒ Last week we discussed the need for spiritual discipline/exercise (spiritual sweat) if we are going to become a disciple.
- ⇒ We identified six basic “exercises” that will lead us to godliness. Can you remember any of them?
 - Communicate, Learn, Obey, Store, Evangelize, Renew (*list on the board*)
 - The first letters spell out: CLOSER. If we apply these exercises, we will be closer to the Lord, and our lives will produce spiritual fruit – we will be a disciple!
 - Today we will look at Communicate – the discipline of prayer.
- ⇒ Discuss: Most Christians struggle to pray meaningfully. Why do you think that prayer can be so tough for so many? How have you struggled to pray in your life?
- ⇒ Let’s look at what we can learn from the prayer life of Jesus.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Jesus was a **Man** of Prayer (Luke 11:1)
 - a. Question: If you could have lunch with Jesus but were only allowed to ask Him one question, what would you ask?
 - b. It's interesting to note that the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, teach us to pray." Nowhere in the Bible did they ever say, "Lord, teach us to preach or teach or heal."
 - c. Jesus was a marvelous preacher, a tremendous teacher, and He was indeed the great miracle worker. But it was the prayer life of the Lord Jesus that captured the attention of the disciples.
 - d. It was His **business** to pray.
 - i. More than 40 times Scripture tells us that Jesus prayed.
 - ii. Discuss: Why do you think Jesus had to pray? What can we learn from His example?
 - iii. In John 5:19 Jesus says that He could do nothing on His own, but it was His Father working through Him. Jesus needed to pray.
 - iv. Martin Luther said, "As it is the business of tailors to make clothes, and as it is the business of cobblers to mend shoes, it is the business of Christians to pray."
 - e. When you study the prayer life of Jesus, you become convinced that there is absolutely no **substitute** for prayer: not energy, not enthusiasm, not intellect, not eloquence, not organization. No substitute for prayer.
2. The Prayer Life of Jesus
 - a. There are three simple things we want to recognize about the prayer life of Jesus.
 - b. First, Jesus's ministry **began** with prayer.
 - i. We want to recognize that prayer was the beginning of Jesus’s earthly ministry.
 - ii. First, His baptism in Luke 3:21.
 1. At His baptism, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. The anointing is a special touch for a specific task.
 2. Read the text and emphasize “and praying.” That touch comes because the Bible says that Jesus was praying!

- iii. Immediately following His baptism, Jesus is led to the wilderness to pray and fast for 40 days (Matthew 4:1-2).
 - 1. After praying and fasting for 40 days, Jesus was tempted by Satan.
 - 2. Then He returned to town and His public ministry took off.
- iv. The Point: Jesus's ministry began in a season of prayer.
- v. What can we learn from Jesus's example? We need to pray before doing anything! *Emphasize praying at the beginning of the day.*
- c. Second, Jesus's ministry **counted** on prayer.
 - i. Jesus found **direction** in prayer.
 - 1. Read Mark 1:34-38. Jesus is ministering everywhere. He is teaching, healing, casting out demons, etc.
 - 2. Notice, Jesus has had a tremendous day! The next morning, He gets up early to be with His Father. Peter finds Him and says to Him, "Come on! Let's get to work! Here's the crowd! Everything's ready!"
 - 3. Jesus said, "No. We're leaving here. We're going to another town. I'm on schedule. I have a job to do."
 - 4. Jesus found direction from God (direction that seemed the opposite what normal people would do).
 - 5. What kinds of things do students need daily direction?
 - ii. Jesus found answers to **decisions** He needed to make.
 - 1. Read Luke 6:12-13. Jesus was facing a great decision – the choosing of the twelve disciples. And so, the Lord Jesus goes to a mountain to pray.
 - 2. You should never make a great decision that you don't first soak that decision in prayer and let the Lord lead you! In the time of decision, we need to pray!
- d. Third, Jesus prayed when He needed **comfort**.
 - i. Matthew 26:36-37 – point out the last phrase of verse 37.
 - ii. This is Dark Gethsemane. This is before the cross. This is when Jesus' heart was about to break.
 - iii. The phrase at the end of verse 37 means He was in a state of discouragement, disconsolation, akin to despair and depression.
 - iv. Point out what happens as Jesus was praying. His will was surrendered to God's will (see vs. 39 & 42).
 - v. And the victory was won! Jesus made it through Dark Gethsemane! Jesus made it to Calvary and through the empty tomb!
 - vi. We may be tempted to think, "Well, that was Jesus! He had to go to Calvary!" So do we! Jesus said, "Take up your cross!"
 - vii. If you've not had a dark night of the soul, you'll have one. Remember this: *You'll never survive your Calvary unless you have a Gethsemane.* You must have a time where you say, "Not my will, but Thine be done."
 - viii. When do students need comfort? Discuss...

APPLICATION:

- ⇒ *Jesus lived His life by prayer; and if He did, don't you think we ought to? That's the lesson.*
- ⇒ Discuss: What keeps us from praying? What are the challenges? Are we willing to ask the Lord, "Teach me to pray?"
- ⇒ *What do you need to do this week that would improve your prayer life?*