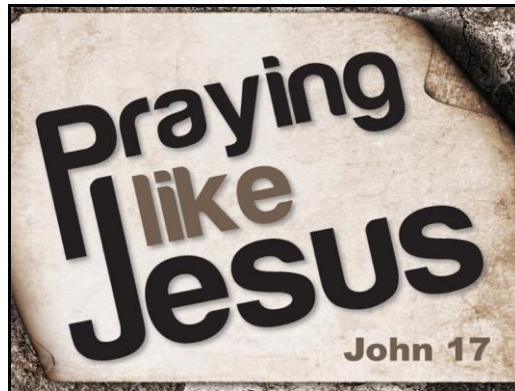


## PRAYING LIKE JESUS



### *Scripture:*

### **1 Peter 5:6-11**

<sup>6</sup>Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. <sup>7</sup>Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. <sup>10</sup>And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

### **John 17:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup>since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup>I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

<sup>6</sup>"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; <sup>8</sup>for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup>I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. <sup>10</sup>All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. <sup>11</sup>And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

### **This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!**



Prayer. Do you pray? How do you pray? There are many ways. One of the things I admire about the Muslim faith is their prayer practice of praying five times a day no matter where they are or what they are doing. If our faith had a

prayer practice like this, we might be better off mentally and physically.

In the Christian faith we are given freedom to decide when and how to pray. One definition of prayer is "the raising of one's mind and heart to

God.” That gives us a lot of freedom on how to pray, doesn’t it?

St. Thérèse of Lisieux described prayer as "... a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy."

### HOW TO PRAY

There are so many ways to pray: vocally, mentally in contemplation; prayers can be sung. The Psalms are prayers written to be sung. Prayers are read in unison or responsively, and they can be said along with a rosary or other prayer tool like a prayer labyrinth to facilitate a prayerful state of mind.

Since we have such freedom in how to pray, we might find it hard to choose the best method. Or the way we pray might change as we change throughout our life. There is no right or wrong way. Maybe you started to pray in a rote way of praying that you learned as a child. I always prayed at bedtime: “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, Guard me Jesus through the night and wake me with the morning light.” As I got older I added a list of intercessions to that prayer: “And please be with my Mom and Dad and brothers and Grandmas and Aunts and Uncles and I’d go on and on, asking God to keep them all well and safe. My mother would sit patiently at my bedside listening. She must have gotten pretty tired, especially when all three brothers were in Vietnam.

One of the greatest gifts Jesus gave us while here on earth was the motivation and modeling to pray. Connecting us to the God of the Universe, we are given peace, a sense of God’s presence and love, and a healthy life practice to help us deal with the stress of chaos in the world.

### ORIGINS OF PRAYER IN OUR TRADITION

To look at the origins of prayer in our faith tradition we look to Jesus to learn how to pray. This passage I read today is just part of a longer prayer that Jesus prayed for you and his other disciples. The whole of John chapter 17 is a prayer. As followers of Christ we are to imitate everything about Jesus that we possibly can, including how he prayed.

Praying like Jesus is one of the most important ways to imitate him because he came to earth to show us how to be the best humans possible.

### EIGHT HABITS JESUS MODELED

Here are eight habits our Savior modeled in order to teach us how to live a powerful prayer life. He showed us we should:

**First – Pray before making big decisions** – Luke 6:12-13 describes how Jesus prayed before he chose his disciples.

*"Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles."*

Prayer keeps us in tune with God's will and purpose. To know God’s will for us we must seek to know God and spend time with God in prayer and read the Bible regularly.

**Next – Pray habitually** – In Luke 22:39 Jesus showed his disciples the importance of prayer by going to a favorite prayer spot and praying there. *"And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him."*

Try to make a habit of spending time with God in prayer. It helps to have a special spot or routine or habit like the Muslim habit of five times a day at pre-selected times.

**Pray for Others** - John 17:20. After today’s part of John 17 Jesus’ prayer goes on to say, *“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*

**Isn’t it incredibly powerful to know that Jesus prayed to God on our behalf? Jesus prayed for all his people there with him that night and all who would come in the future. This prayer reveals the deep love Jesus has for his disciples which includes all of us today.**

This also shows that we are not to have a selfish prayer life. Our prayers are to include intercessory prayer, asking Jesus to intercede for us and for the needs of others.

**Another time to pray is when we feel weak and alone** – Matthew 26:41 encourages prayer when we are personally troubled.

*In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus said, "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

Prayer is necessary for strength in times of trouble and it prepares you for tough times that you might be anticipating anxiously

**Jesus also showed us how to pray with others in community** – Luke 9:28 tells of how Jesus brought others along with him to pray.

*"About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray."*

This is why we have the Hour of Prayer. Prayer in a group is powerful and it bonds you to one another as well. (With the new office hours, we will change it from Friday to Thursday noon Hour of Prayer.

**Praying alone is good, too** – Mark 1:35 *"Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray."*

Distraction-free, uninterrupted time with God will help your whole, body, mind, and spirit. It enhances your resilience and gives you a sense of peace to help you not stress over problems at home and in the world.

Know God is listening – John 11:41 reminds us that God hears our prayers

*"And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me."*

Be confident and trust that God is listening and cares about you even if the answer isn't as fast or exactly what you were asking for.

**And remember prayer before meals or during or after** - Mark 6:41 shows the importance of grace.

*"Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all."*

Doing this reminds us to share what we have been blessed with and that God is the giver of all things good and our ultimate provider.

**Pray with humility** – Luke 22:42 shows us that Jesus was humble in his prayers and understood that God's will is best.

*He said, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."*

**Humbly accepting our condition in life can come to us through prayer. When we don't win the lottery even though we prayed hard for it or when we don't get the outcome of a situation that we were hoping for, be it a cure for cancer or the birth of grandchildren we hoped for, that doesn't mean God doesn't care. God is still with us through the highs and lows and God is still waiting for us to reach out for help to cope with the disappointments and struggles that come with life on earth.**

John 14:27 tells us what we get when we turn to Jesus: *"Peace I leave with you (Jesus said) my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

## THANKFULNESS

Reverend Gordon Stewart writes a blog called *Views from the Edge*. In one blog he wrote about the connection between prayer and a sense of peacefulness and gratitude. He said, "I resonate with William Sloan Coffin's reflection in his last years of life following a stroke.

*"There is a Zen paradox whereby we may lack everything yet want for nothing. The reason is that peace, that is, deep inner peace, comes not with meeting our desires but in releasing ourselves from their power. (Basically accepting your condition or state of being.)*

*"I find such peace is increasingly mine. It's not that I feel I'm withdrawing from the world, only that I am present in a different way. I'm less intentional than "attentional." I'm more and*

*more attentive to family and friends and to nature's beauty.*

*"Although still outraged by callous behavior, particularly in high places, I feel more serene, grateful for God's gift of life. For the compassions that fail not, I find myself saying daily to my loving Maker, 'I can no other answer make than thanks, thanks, and ever thanks.'"*

Thankfulness leads to my last words today on prayer. I leave you with a quote from the great German theologian, Meister Eckhart, who said this back in the thirteen hundreds, thirteen hundred years after the death of Jesus, and it still rings true to guide us in prayer today.

Eckhart taught that it is important to not make prayer too complicated. Keep it simple and from the heart.

**He said, "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough." Amen**

Reference:

<http://www.beliefnet.com/ilovejesus/features/10-ways-to-pray-like-jesus.aspx#TFPWrYPOXzjpLcey.99>

### **Benediction:**

**In 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5 it says, Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.**

**Live your life as a prayer. You are meant to pray and to be another person's answer to prayer. Be kind, generous, loyal, non-judgmental, welcoming, and willing to make new friends. Then your life will be living the prayerful life you were meant to live - showing God's unconditional love for all.**

**And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever more. Amen**



**Rev. Dr. Cindy Alloway  
Presbyterian Church of the Roses  
2500 Patio Court  
Santa Rosa, CA 95405**