

# why pray

## message next steps

### HOW TO PRAY

JUNE 3

Prayer can be a great source of comfort and peace, but for many people—even dedicated Christ-followers—prayer can feel awkward and uncomfortable or become a task we simply look to check off our to-do list. How can we begin to pray in different ways that may reveal varied facets of God’s love for us and His will for our lives?

Work through the following questions and Scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your present-day prayer experience like? Do you find that it varies much in terms of time/place/content, or do you feel that it is largely the same from day to day?
2. How attuned are you to listening for God’s voice? How do you distinguish it (or think you would) from your own thoughts?
3. **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18.** Which of these three is easiest for you? Which is hardest to do and why?
4. Jesus promised that we will be fruitful when we stay connected to Him, but it’s so easy to allow the busyness of life to crowd Him out. What are some things you have done (or could do) in your life that help you stay connected to the God?
5. **Read Ephesians 3:16-19.** What does it mean to you to be “filled to the measure of all the fullness of God?”
6. How comfortable are you with solitude and silence? How do you (or could you) carve time out of the routines of life in order to be alone with God?
7. Prayer is a discipline that is improved and strengthened with practice. In the days and weeks ahead, which of these three types of prayer – listening, abiding, or solitude and silence – will you commit to practicing, and what do you hope that God will reveal to you through your time with Him?

### KEY SCRIPTURES

**1 Thessalonians 5:17-18** – Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

## KEY SCRIPTURES

**Ephesians 3:16-19** – I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

## DIGGING DEEPER

As you look to dig deeper into the topics of this week's message, consider exploring *meditation*. Although Eastern meditation is about emptying your mind, **biblical** meditation is about *filling* your mind with the truth of God's Word.

### **Biblical Meditation Exercise**

(as presented in Tim Keller's book, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*):

Choose a passage of scripture (for example, Ephesians 3:16-19 from above).

To meditate on the passage, ask yourself:

- What does this passage show me about God for which I should praise or thank him?
- What does the passage show me about my sin that I should confess and repent of?
- What false attitudes, behavior, emotions, or idols come alive in me whenever I forget this truth?
- What does the passage show me about a need that I have?
- What do I need to do or become in light of this?
- How shall I petition God for it?
- How is Jesus Christ or the grace that I have in Him crucial to helping me overcome the sin I have confessed or to answering the need I have?
- Finally, how would this change my life if I took it seriously—if this truth were fully alive and effective in my inward being? Also, why might God be showing this to me now? What is going on in my life that he would be bringing this to my attention today?

For more information and additional exercises like this, you can purchase Tim Keller's book from Amazon.com, or you can start reading the book for free at [a.co/2wwETII](https://www.a.co/2wwETII)

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