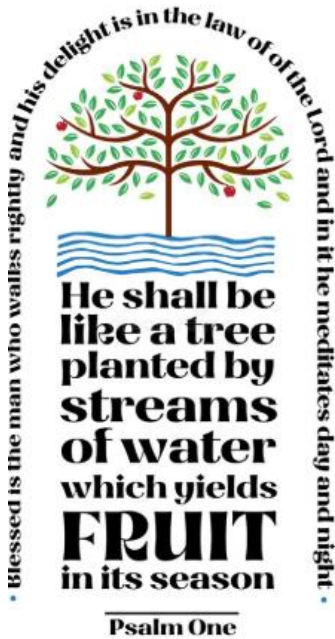




Christian Basics Course:

How Do We Pray and Grow Spiritually?



Theme:

Prayer is a spiritual discipline that strengthens faith.

Introduction:

Prayer is at the heart of Christian life. In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches his disciples not to pray for show, but to pray simply and sincerely, offering the Lord's Prayer as a model. Psalm 1 reminds us that those who delight in God's word are like trees planted by streams of water, they are rooted, nourished, and fruitful. Together, these passages show us that prayer is not about performance, but about relationship, and that spiritual growth comes from staying close to God.

Matthew 6: 5 - 13

Prayer

⁵ ‘And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ ‘This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”



Psalm 1

¹ Blessed is the one

who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,

² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.

³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither –
whatever they do prospers.

⁴ Not so the wicked!

They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

⁶ For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

How Do We Pray and Grow Spiritually?

- **Prayer is conversation with God.** It is both speaking and listening, sharing our hearts and opening ourselves to God's presence.
- **Prayer shapes us.** Jesus' model prayer is short, simple, and focused on God's kingdom, daily needs, forgiveness, and protection. It teaches us to align our desires with God's will.
- **Prayer is relational, not ritual.** It's not about impressing others or using fancy words, but about honesty before God.

- **Spiritual growth is rooted.** Psalm 1 shows that growth comes from being planted in God's word and presence. Prayer is one way we sink our roots deep into God's love, drawing strength and nourishment.
- **Prayer and growth are daily rhythms.** Just as trees grow steadily by streams of water, we grow spiritually through regular, ordinary practices of prayer, scripture, and trust.

Discussion:

- Does prayer feel real and relational for you, rather than just words? If so, what makes it so?
- Looking at the Lord's Prayer, what line of the prayer speaks most to you right now? Why is that?
- Which do you struggle with? Why might that be?

Takeaway points:

Prayer is not about performance but about relationship. It roots us in God's love and helps us grow strong and fruitful, like trees by streams of water. Whether you are new to faith or have walked with Christ for years, prayer is the way we stay connected to the source of life. Let's keep encouraging one another to pray - not perfectly, but faithfully - trusting that God hears and shapes us through it.

Our regular Sunday services are

St Andrew's 9.30am, St Peter's 9.30am and St Paul's 11.30am

This and other helpful material may be found on our website blackleycofe.church

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