

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

DEVO

JULY 21 - 25, 2025





Read **Matthew 6:5-8**

In the heart of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:1-18), Jesus outlines specific acts of righteousness that reach beyond outward actions and into the heart and motivations of believers. Jesus emphasizes that true righteousness includes giving, praying, and fasting with the right intentions—not for purposes of being seen by others, but for God’s glory.

The Jews were known for prayer. No nation ever had a higher ideal of prayer, and no religion ever ranked prayer higher in the scale of priorities. “Great is prayer,” said the Rabbis, “greater than all good works.” Jews were devout in their times of prayer. When the Babylonian public officials wanted to find a way to accuse Daniel, they knew he was vulnerable in his prayer life (Daniel 6:10). Even though the Jews were known for prayer, there was confusion and misconceptions about prayer.

Prior to giving His disciples the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), Jesus taught them: *“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. ... But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen ... in secret”* (Matthew 6:5-6). The trustworthy test of spiritual integrity, Jesus says, is your private prayer life. Many people will pray when they are required by social expectations, or by the anxiety caused

by troubling circumstances. Those with authentic relationships with God as Father will inwardly want to pray and will pray even though nothing on the outside is pressing them to do so. I look to have this prayer life, and it is both hard and great.

A rich, satisfying prayer life is worth pursuing! Knowing the God of the Bible can’t be achieved all by yourself. It needs to include the community of the church, participation in corporate worship and private devotion, and instruction in the Bible, as well as silent meditation. At the heart is knowing that God loves you and has sent His Son, Jesus, to give you life with Him.

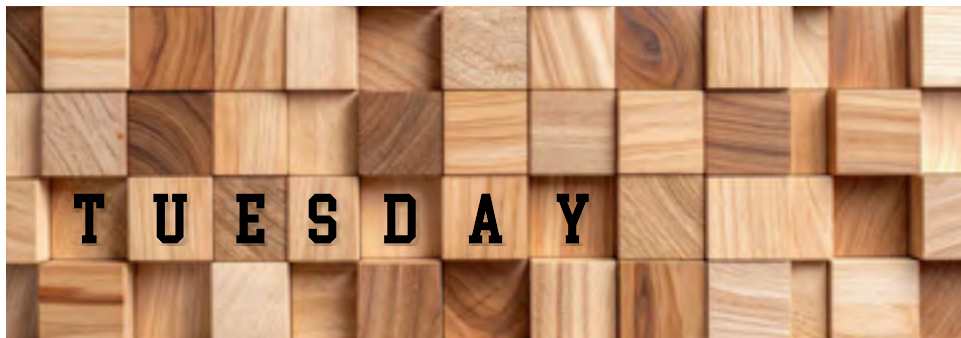
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

How would you describe your prayer time? How should believers practice prayer?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

Please pray for Michael Cassidy, AE’s Founder, as he is currently back at his home in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, after being in the hospital recently for issues related to his lungs. He has battled chronic leukemia and other ailments for several years and is currently 88 years old. Pray for peace, blessing and healing.



Read **Matthew 6:5-8**

“There is no pride so dangerous, so subtle and insidious, as the pride of holiness.” —Andrew Murray

Jesus warns of several wrong tendencies in our prayer life of which we must be careful. He pointed out the hypocrites who prayed standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others (v. 5). The word “*hypocrite*” was used of an actor in a play; they performed in order to receive applause from others. James Bryan Smith, the author of *The Good and Beautiful Life*, describes this as “*vainglory*.” Jesus is pointing out a heart problem that plagues people in their attempt to grow close to God. We all want to be loved. We all long to feel that we are valuable, worthwhile, and wonderful. Regardless of our physical appearance, talents, and abilities, we are amazing beings created in the image of God.

The solution to vainglory is praying to an audience of one. Stepping out of the public for private prayer is essential to building a secure foundation, prioritizing God’s opinion above all else. From private then to public prayer, your focus will be God honoring.

Jesus also warned us not to “*keep on babbling like pagans*” (v. 7). Christ was referring to the “*empty phrases*” (ESV) or “*vain repetitions*” (KJV), repeated words or phrases trying to coax a response from God. Prayer is not a magical incantation that if I say the right

words in the right order, I win. I am challenged to think about what phrases I repeatedly use without thinking when I pray.

Should there be repetition in our prayer? Yes. Jesus prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-42). Paul prayed three times for the thorn to be removed from his flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7). It is thoughtless words, with no heart or focus, that Jesus warns against.

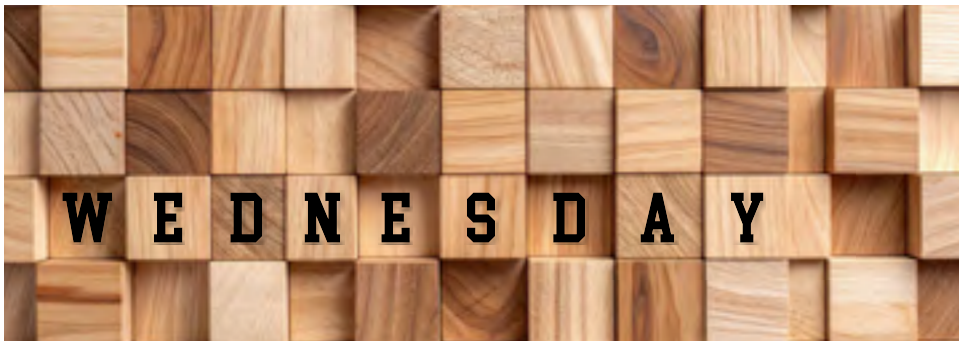
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

What are some modern-day illustrations of vainglory that we see in our churches? Have you ever been tempted to let others know about your good works?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for evangelistic missions coming up in Kinshasa, Congo, in mid-August and in Lira, Uganda, in late September. Pray that churches will unite in fellowship and shared commitment. Pray that the hearts of people in these cities would be open to hearing and embracing the Gospel message and Jesus as their Savior.



Read **Matthew 6:6**

I can think of nothing great that is also easy. Prayer is great, and thus one of the hardest things in the world. To admit that prayer is hard can be encouraging. If you struggle with this, you are not alone.

Prayer is our way of connecting with our Creator God who loves us. Here are some ideas to help you create a positive prayer time: Five P's of Prayer.

- *Priority.* Communicating and communing with God is the most essential thing we can do each day. Wisdom, guidance, and encouragement are gained (Matthew 6:33).
- *Period.* We need to have a set time so that prayer happens! Make an unbreakable appointment with God who delights in time with you (Psalm 149:4).
- *Privacy.* Jesus instructs us to go alone and close the door (Matthew 6:6). I encourage you to turn off your cell and tablet.
- *Person.* Draw near to God and He will draw near to you (James 4:8). We are connecting to a living person who loves, grieves, laughs, and hears.

- *Promise.* Here are a few verses I love to use in prayer time:

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." (Jeremiah 33:3)

"Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:12-13)

"It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear." (Isaiah 65:24)

"Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me!" (Psalm 66:20)

What are some things you can do this week to deepen and strengthen your communication and communion with God through prayer?

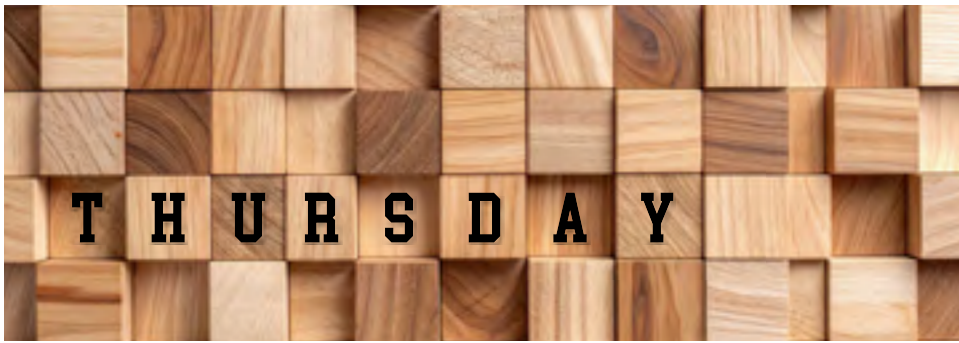
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

In which of these P's are you doing well? Which needs attention?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for AE's Community Transformation Groups where 15-20 people meet weekly to pray and read Scripture together and to help and encourage one another in their small businesses. They put a small amount of money into a common kitty from which they can make loans to one another. Pray for spiritual growth and economic upliftment.



Read **Luke 11:1-4**

“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’” (Luke 1:1)

Every day, before and after every conceivable situation, Jesus’ disciples saw Him pray. Sometimes when they were preparing breakfast, He wandered in from the hillside where He had spent the night praying (Luke 6:12, 9:28; Mathew 14:23). There were times they saw Him burst out in spontaneous praise to God, and they watched Jesus labor as He prayed about pressing needs. As they observed Him, they saw something about His time with the Father that captured their hearts and made them thirsty to learn from Him.

In the first century Jewish culture, famous rabbis and teachers often composed prayers for their followers (like John the Baptist). The disciples now asked Jesus to compose one for them. And He was ready. This prayer is very similar to the one recorded in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9-13). Jesus gave them this prayer as a template for them to follow, instructing them in how they should pray.

The prayer is well-designed in its simplicity. It begins with the affirmation of the majesty of God the Father and the desire

that His will be done on earth. The requests are for daily sustenance, forgiveness, protection, and direction. As with all prayer, Jesus understood that our hearts and minds need to be connected in communication and communion with God. Memorizing the Lord’s Prayer can be a good start to lead you into meditating and personalizing the prayer. It is a pattern that we supply the material to fill in rather than a straitjacket.

“Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays.”
—Soren Kierkegaard

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Using the Lord’s Prayer as a model, paraphrase each section and make it your own. Why is it important to begin prayer with a focus on the greatness and will of God?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for all the necessary funding resources to come through for the AE office in the U.S., as well as the offices in Canada, Australia, UK, Ireland, and Europe. Pray that the Lord would open the floodgates of Heaven (Malachi 3:10-12) and pour out much blessing so that ministry across Africa can flourish.



Read **Philippians 4:6**

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”
(Philippians 4:6)

Google says people worry most about:

Relationships	Failing	Pet’s health
Health	Getting old	Money
Sleep	Health and safety of loved ones	Appearance
Work	The future	Weight
Death		Job security

Has anything on this list made your “worry list” recently?

Worry can burden our lives. During the day, we worry that we can’t do enough; and at night, we worry that everything we’ve done will collapse. We replay conversations to find something we’ve said that could be misunderstood. We worry about being late, ill-prepared or unwise in decisions. We worry about our marriage; and if we are not married, we worry that we will never find a soul mate. The world specializes in bad news with the multiple news shows reflecting our appetite for its consumption. I could worry about my kids, my health, money, and on and on. What makes you anxious?

It is into this cesspool of destructive thinking that the Apostle Paul says, “Do not worry about anything.” “What?” we are tempted say, “There’s no way Paul understands the complexities of our culture and time.” Paul had plenty to worry about, but he learned to fix his thoughts on the goodness and greatness of God (see Philippians 4:8). And he practiced the habit of prayer. Prayer cannot coexist in the same mental space with worry; one will crowd the other out.

Many times we forget to pray, and we will miss out on the greatest source of peace, hope, and joy. When we pray about everything, thanking God for His wisdom and trusting God’s will to be done in His perfect timing, we can experience God’s amazing peace even in the most difficult of circumstances. Don’t ignore the power that prayer has to change the landscape of your mind.

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7)

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

What are some things you tend to worry about?

PRAYERS

For African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for a new AE Team Leader in Uganda and for the Board there to find the right new and effective person to lead the Team in that strategic country.

Sources



- James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Lisle, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.

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