

The Privilege and Power of Prayer

Text: Luke 11:1–13; James 5:13-18

Introduction

Imagine a barber in a small German town, razor in hand, standing over a man whose life could earn him a bounty. That barber was Peter Beskindorf, and the man in his chair was none other than Martin Luther. Instead of betrayal, Peter asked Luther a question that echoes through the centuries: **“Dr. Luther, would you teach me how to pray?”**

Luther responded by writing a little book, *A Simple Way to Pray*. Today, we ask the same question: **Why should we pray, and how should we pray?**

I. Why Should We Pray?

Prayer is not optional for the Christian—it is essential. Luther said prayer is like breathing for the soul. Scripture gives us three reasons:

1. Prayer is Our Duty

Jesus said, *“Men ought always to pray and not lose heart”* (Luke 18:1). Paul commands, *“Continue steadfastly in prayer”* (Romans 12:12). Prayer is not a suggestion; it is a divine mandate.

Look at Hannah in 1 Samuel 1. In her anguish, she poured out her soul before the Lord. God heard her cry and answered. If the saints of old prayed, so must we.

2. Prayer is Our Privilege

Romans 5:2 says we have **access** to God through Christ. In the Old Testament, only the high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year. But when Jesus died, the veil tore. Now, every believer can enter the throne room of grace at any time.

Prayer is not mystical absorption into God—it is communion with Him. Like a bride delights in her groom, so we delight in Christ. Prayer is not a cold duty; it is a love letter to our Savior.

3. Prayer is a Powerful Means

James 5:16 declares, *“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”* Prayer changes things because God uses prayer to accomplish His will.

Think of Monica, Augustine's mother. Her tearful prayers did not guarantee his conversion, but God used them. Prayer works—not because we twist God's arm, but because He ordains prayer as a means to His ends.

II. How Should We Pray?

The disciples asked Jesus, *"Lord, teach us to pray"* (Luke 11:1). He gave them the Lord's Prayer—not just words to recite, but a pattern to follow.

Practical Suggestions:

- **Set a time and place.** Luther told Peter to pray daily and in solitude.
- **Pray aloud.** It helps focus the mind.
- **Pray through Scripture.** Luther recommended the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed.
- **Use ACTS:** Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication.

When you pray, don't rush. Expand each petition. For example:

"Hallowed be Your name." Pray that God's name would be honored in your life, your family, and your nation.

III. A Call to Action

Prayer is not just a duty—it is a delight and a weapon. It is the Christian's lifeline. Luther said, *"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."*

So, will you pray? Will you set aside time today to commune with your Father? Will you pray for His kingdom to come and His will to be done?

Closing Illustration

Luther told Peter, *"Prayer is like your work as a barber. When you take up the razor, you must not let your mind wander."* Friends, when we take up the privilege of prayer, let us not wander. Let us pray with focus, with faith, and with fervor.

Amen.