

## ACTS 2:42 (NASB)

<sup>42</sup>They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

## MATTHEW 6:5-13 (NASB)

<sup>5</sup>"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. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup>"This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

## REVIEW

In Acts 2:42, we find the early church gathering and establishing a commitment to some basic practices that strengthened their young faith. The final habit that Luke writes about is their commitment to prayer. Prayer is a practice that establishes a follower of Christ on the dependency of God and belonging to the community. Indeed, all four habits were *worshipful* and obedient – as each practice invited both intimacy with God and edification of one another. Prayer is unique in that it is like building an altar. As such, the praying person brings the knowledge of the Divine into a personal exchange and receives blessing and mercy, while offering *something* to God. It's a *meeting place* of the holy and the ordinary where we offer our hearts.

## STUDY IT

- How did men and women experience blessing or mercy through prayer in the Old Testament?
- How does the early church receive knowledge and power through prayer? Consider these specific examples:

Acts 1:24	Acts 10:11	Acts 20:36
Acts 4:31	Acts 12:12	Acts 21:5
Acts 6:6	Acts 13:1-3	Acts 22:17
Acts 9:40	Acts 16:25	Acts 28:8

- From Jesus' teaching on prayer, what are the dangers of "praying like the hypocrites"?
- From the prayer itself, what are the requests (aka "petitions")?
- How does this prayer bring theological truths that guide us to know God better?
- How might the Holy Spirit use this prayer to help us know *ourselves* better?

## APPLY IT

- **Use the prayer tool (from Steve) at [bit.ly/WPCprayertool](http://bit.ly/WPCprayertool) and for a guide through the Lord's Prayer (and this Sunday's sermon).**
- Do you struggle with prayer in your life? If so, how? Is it a matter of time? Distraction? Lack of confidence? Incorrect knowledge of the One to whom you pray?
- How does prayer strengthen your knowledge of God?
- How does prayer with others (aka *corporate prayer*) strengthen your community?
- What steps are you willing to take *today* to enhance your communication with God?