*divING DEEPER* **Discussion Guide**

# Matthew 6:5-13: When we pray

**TEXT SUMMARY**Today’s text, Matthew 6:5-8, is the context for Jesus’s model prayer, which we know as “The Lord’s Prayer.” Jesus’s instructions on prayer include warnings not to let prayer turn into spiritual performance art or meaningless repetetion.

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The sermon

* … introduces our summer series on prayer
* … examines Jesus’s warnings about how not to pray
* … provides several practical suggestions for prayer

**INTRODUCTION** (observation)

Notice several things about Jesus’s instruction on prayer:

1. How he lays out a negative (v. 5), followed by a positive (v. 6), followed by another negative (v. 7-8).
2. The rationale behind each of his instructions: why *shouldn’t* we pray this way and pray that way instead?
3. How Jesus characterizes the Father and His role in our praying.

**Reading:**

Before you read the text, take a look at the questions on the back of the page.

The text of the sermon is Matthew 6:5-8. But for context, readMatthew 6:1-18 to see the broader picture of Jesus’s instruction on prayer.

**DISCUSSION** (interpretation)

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**Questions:**

1. The word “hypocrite” in Jesus’s day had more to do with performance art than with duplicity (living a lie). What does it mean to pray “like a hypocrite”?
2. Does Jesus here forbid us to pray corporately? Should all our praying be done in secret?
3. Joe quoted the New Testament scholar William Barclay: “When a man begins to think more of how he is praying than of what he is praying, his prayer dies on his lips.” Jesus tells us not to “heap up empty phrases” in our prayers. Does Jesus want to forbid us to pray memorized prayers?

**SO WHAT?** (application)

We don’t have to be told that we need to pray and that our prayer life is not what it could be. And yet prayer is such a struggle.

1. What are some reasons it is so hard to pray faithfully and consistently?
2. How would my daily habits look different if I were to make it a point to obey Jesus in the matter of my prayer life?

* *When can I set aside time to pray?*
* *What should I pray about?*
* *What kind of time am I willing to commit to prayer each day?*