

# Adult Sermon Outline for Week of Prayer 2010

## God Wants to Hear from You

*Developed in part from "Prayer Basics: Who Should Pray?," a downloadable teaching resource on prayer, available free of charge from the National Prayer Center Web site, [www.prayer.ag.org](http://www.prayer.ag.org).*

### Introduction

*"In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God."*

— Philippians 4:6

The invitation is clear. God wants us to tell Him about our deepest concerns. He's genuinely moved by the desperate cries of our hearts. At the same time, His ear is also tuned to our basic, everyday needs.

Yet in spite of God's incredible promises—and our assurance that He's ready and willing to listen to us—we often struggle to understand what exactly God wants us to pray about. We might even hesitate to take certain needs to Him for a variety of reasons:

- Guilt over past sins leaves us feeling unworthy of God's attention and love.
- We're in a hard battle with temptation, yet we struggle with the thought of the difficult life changes we'll have to embrace when our prayers are answered.
- We've prayed the same prayer for months, or longer, and fear a painful "letdown" if the answer still doesn't come.
- Our need seems so simple and unimportant compared to what others face; it's a big enough problem to us, but we wonder if God would want to concern himself with such a need.

Doubts and fears must not keep us from prayer. God gives us the invitation, and He wants to hear from us. Here are three principles to keep in mind when we're tempted to forget that we can tell it all to Him.

### Sermon Body

**1. God Cares about What We're Facing.** Our prayers must be rooted in the confidence that God is compassionate and willing to act on our behalf. His pure love for us can dissolve any insecurity we might feel about placing needs at His feet. We find great reassurance in the promises of His Word.

- *Nothing is too big for God.* (Ephesians 3:20,21)
- *God is there, no matter how hard the situation.* (Psalm 139:7-14)

*(continued)*

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Electronic edition published 2009.

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**2. We Can Take Even Small Needs to God.** We know God has the power to meet any request. We recognize His love and compassion. Yet sometimes we might still hesitate to pray, asking, “Could this great big God really be interested in my problems?” Even a brief look at the desperation surrounding so many in our world only strengthens these concerns. Yet we find great assurance in these promises:

- *All needs take high priority in God’s eyes.* (Matthew 21:22)
- *Prayer offers the cure for everyday anxieties.* (Philippians 4:6)

**3. Seek God No Matter What the Need May Be.** The Lord’s Prayer is our perfect guide when it comes to communication with our Father. This model prayer brings into focus a wide variety of needs, from physical provision to spiritual guidance. A phrase-by-phrase look at the prayer, found in Matthew 6:9-13, helps us better understand how to focus our prayer lives.

- *Our Father in heaven...* (There is a tenderness in God’s invitation that we address Him as “Father.” While formality and reverence are always appropriate, we must remember that prayer is intended to be a personal conversation between Father and child.)
- *...hallowed be your name...* (This phrase powerfully complements the previous words. God is both our loving Father and our holy, almighty Lord. Imagine...the God and Creator of the universe is intimately interested in our lives.)
- *...your kingdom come...* (We’re called to embrace an eternal perspective when we pray. While very real needs press us, our greater concern must be God’s kingdom priorities.)
- *...your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...* (This phrase has a twofold meaning: We pray that God’s commands will be obeyed and honored, and we pray that His plans for the world, salvation, and eternity will be accomplished.)
- *...give us today our daily bread...* (Jesus invites us to trust His ability and willingness to provide for our needs. This phrase also presents us with a challenge to surrender ourselves to God’s care rather than trust our own abilities.)
- *...forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors...* (Here Jesus moves to our relationships with God and others. When we’ve violated God’s plan for our lives, we must be willing to confess our sins and seek forgiveness. By the same token we also need to ensure that we’re not withholding forgiveness of others for their wrongs against us.)
- *...lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one...* (Our lives involve real spiritual warfare, and prayer serves a big role in this battle. We must recognize our need for God as well as express a willingness to overcome trials and temptations.)

**4. Accept the Lord’s Invitation to Prayer.** The invitation is clear: Seek God for whatever needs you face. Here are just a few examples from Scripture:

- *Do you need healing?* (James 5:14-16)
- *Do you need financial help?* (Philippians 4:14-19)
- *Do you need help in a relationship?* (Psalm 34:18; Luke 6:27-31)
- *Do you need direction?* (Jeremiah 29:11-13; James 1:5)