

Introduction:

Prayer is the _____ to experiencing _____ with God.

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

Matthew 6:5-8

Decluttering prayer

1. Prayer is not a _____.

Matthew 6:5

Religion is all about performance. Relationship is all about presence.

2. Prayer is not a _____.

Matthew 6:7

Developing intimacy with God

1. View prayer as _____, not just a nice idea.

¹⁵ Yet the news about Him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 5:15-16

2. _____ your heavenly Father who loves you.

⁹ "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!

Matthew 7:9-11

3. Set aside a _____ time and a _____ place.

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35

4. _____.

Discussion Questions:

1. After hearing this message, how has your view of prayer changed?
2. Why is “decluttering” our prayers so important? What are some practical ways you can do that today?
3. How does recognizing God as approachable and loving change your perspective of prayer?
4. What steps will you take this week to develop intimacy with God through prayer?