

**Why Pray?**  
*Family Devotional*

A Family Devotional Lesson on Luke 11:9-13

**Big Idea:** Why pray? God wants to give you good things!

**Ice Breaker:** This devotional lesson works best over dinner.

- Before dinner, have your children “place orders” for their dinner. Perhaps you can limit their choices to two or three options. After they place their order with you, prepare that exact meal for them. You will also prepare a plate that is absolutely horrifying (Get creative – have some really gross out fun! If you can find a rubber snake/serpent or a scorpion go with that option as it will help remind them of the scripture. You might even be able to find eels at your local grocery store in the seafood section.)
- When it’s time for dinner, have the children sit down at the table while dad and/or mom prepare the plates for a presentation before each child. Place a cover over each plate as you bring them to the table (perhaps another plate or a napkin can serve this purpose). Ask what each child had ordered for dinner. In response to the order, place the “gross” plate in front of that child and – with dramatic flourish – lift the cover off the plate.
- After everyone settles down, you can bring out the real dish for each child. Present it with the same dramatic flourish as you did the first plate. Bon appétit!
- You children will certainly ask you “What in the world were you thinking? Why did you give me a plate full of \_\_\_\_?”
- Now’s the time to launch into the Bible lesson on Why We Pray to God:

**Read Luke 11:9-13.**

- **Read v. 11-12 First!**
  - o How did you feel about getting \_\_\_\_\_ for dinner instead of what you ordered?
  - o What did you think about dad or mom when they lifted the cover off the plate?
  - o How did you feel about dad or mom after the second plate?
  - o Why won’t a father or mother give a scorpion or a snake to a child?
- **Read v. 13**
  - o Compared to God, how “good” is dad or mom? What does the Bible say here?
  - o If dad or mom can give you good gifts, what will God do? Do you believe that? Why (or why not)?
  - o If you asked for candy for dinner, would dad or mom give it to you? Why not? If you asked for something that’s not good for you, would God give it to you? Why not?
  - o What’s the best gift that God can ever give you?
  - o Let’s see why Jesus teaches us this lesson:

- **Finally, go back and Read v. 9-10**
  - Whom do we “ask”? Why should we “ask”?
  - What do we “seek”? Why should we “seek”?
  - How do we “knock”? Why should we “knock”?

**Final Charge: Why Pray?** Because you can trust God who wants to give you gifts that are good for you!

**Memory Scripture:** “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” *Luke 11:13*

## ***How to Pray*** ***Family Devotional***

Fun Time: SOME PRIOR PLANNING WILL BE NECESSARY – READ BEFORE THE FAMILY TIME BEGINS

- Parents, be very dramatic when asking for cards
  - o Be positive with some requests.
  - o Be very rough and negative with some (but keep it kind).
  - o Ask with repetition. “Do you have any nine’s, Do you have any nine’s, Do you have any nine’s?”
  - o Stand up and ask loudly...ask with long and drawn out sentences.
- Play a big game of go-fish
  - o Keep the game going...Change the rules as necessary to make it work
  - o Have fun with it...
- How did you feel about the different ways Mom and/ or Dad of asked for cards?
  - o Did you want to give them the cards they were asking for?
  - o Why or Why not?
- READ Matt 6:5-13
  - o Last week we talked about why we pray, tonight we are going to talk about How to pray
- What is God’s expectation for our prayers?
- How can we sometimes be like the hypocrites or the Gentile’s that Jesus refers to?
  - o When are we most likely to pray? What is our habit?
- Go through the direction on How to pray
- Talk about each one
  - o How can we make sure we are including each of these in our daily prayers?
  - o Practical – Pray together to finish the Family Devotional.
    - Choose different children to pray the different portions of Jesus’ prayer
      - Thankful prayer
      - Kingdom focus
      - Sin focus, etc.

**When God Doesn't Answer!**  
Family Devotional

Start the devotional the following activity. Get some music and play it loud. If applicable, use music that your children like to play loudly. Do a couple of rounds of "Simon Says" while the music is blasting. If you are "Simon", start by standing close to them and then take a couple of steps further away . As the distance increases the players will have a harder time hearing "Simon".

Now, compare two characters in the Bible who called on God and God did not answer. One is King Saul and the other is Job. Read the following passages (based on the ages of your children, explain the context of the story a bit):

**I Samuel 28:4-8**

*The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all the Israelites and set up camp at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."*

*"There is one in Endor," they said.*

*So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. "Consult a spirit for me," he said, "and bring up for me the one I name."*

**Job 30:20**

*"I cry out to you, O God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me.*

**Discussion Questions:**

Who was King Saul?

King over all Israel who was rejected by God but still would not give up the throne.

Tried to kill David.....

Had God tried talking to Saul in the past?

God spoke through Samuel, David, Jonathan....

Saul and his men prophesied (miraculous sign)

How do we feel when God does answer our prayers?

I feel mad, disappointed....

I feel God doesn't care about me, or love me.....

I feel like God does exist

How are we like Saul?

We take matters into our own hands.

We become more sinful.

We just want what we want, how we want it.

What are some things that hinder us from hearing God like the music hindered us from hearing "Simon"?

We have worldly or selfish desires.

We have a lack of faith in God or his plan.

When God gives us an answer, we say that it is the wrong answer.

What did it mean when God didn't answer Saul?

Saul's sin pushed God away.

What does it mean when we say God didn't answer?

God did not grant our request.

God is saying "no" or not right now.

Does God ever not answer?

"No" or "wait", are answers.

"Go read your Bible" or "Just trust God" are answers.

Does Saul act righteously when God does not answer?

Who is Job?

Job was a righteous man and God allowed Satan to kill his children, destroy his wealth and infect him with a disfiguring disease.

What answer did Job eventually get from God?

I am God and you are not.

This is the "un-answer"

What are some answers God could have given Job?

God could have explained the conversations He had with Satan.

God could have explained that millions of people will gain strength from his story throughout history

How does God's answer help us today.

We have the "un-answer" - God is God.

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

## ***Listening to God*** ***Family Devotional***

**Opening Game:** Guessing by the sound what food is being eaten. Use noisy foods, like potato chips, celery sticks, carrots, toast, apples, etc. The children have to guess what it is.

Discuss the different sounds that each food makes. How can you tell one from the other?

How would you be able to tell a lions voice from a kittens voice? (act it out)  
How would you be able to tell your parents/kids voice from your friends voice? (what is your parents/kids most popular phrase)  
How would you be able to tell God's voice from those around you?

### **Read Scripture: John 10:2-4**

- Who is the shepherd? Who are those that listen to his voice?
- How do the sheep know the voice of the shepherd?- **always hear it. Daily talking.**
- What type of things would a shepherd say to his sheep so that they would follow him?-**bleep, come,**
- What types of things would Jesus tell us so that we could follow him?
- **Have you ever heard someone calling you when you were busy and purposely ignored them? Why?**
- What things could possibly distract us from hearing Jesus voice?-friends, pride, career, t.v., etc
- How can we train our ears to listen to the right voices in our lives?-  
**reading the bible and knowing what his voice sounds like.**

**Illustration:** An Indian was walking in downtown New York City alongside a resident friend. As they approached a busy street corner in the center of Manhattan, the Indian seized his friend's arm and whispered, "Wait. I hear a cricket." "Come on!", the city boy sneered, "This is downtown New York — how could you possibly hear a cricket?" His friend persisted however, "No - seriously, I do!"

As cars were roaring, horns honking, people shouting, brakes screeching, cash registers clanging, subway clamoring and people bustling about, the Indian began leading his friend along slowly, every now and again stopping and turning his ear toward the seemingly noiseless sound. At last, the Indian insisted they were near and proceeded to follow the sound across the street and toward a small dark corner next to a graffiti covered wall. There, he bent down to a minuscule tuft of grass and pulled out the cricket. "I told, you", he said, "I heard a cricket."

Astounded, the New Yorker marveled "How could you have heard that cricket in the

middle of all this noise?” “Well”, said his foreign friend, “My ears are different from yours. It simply depends on what you’re listening to. Here, let me show you what I mean.” He reached into his pocket and pulled out a handful of change –a couple of quarters, three or four nickels, and a dime and a few pennies. “Now,” he said, “watch this.” He held the coins waist high and dropped them to the sidewalk. At once, every head within nearly a block turned around and looked in the direction of the Indian.

“You see, It all depends on what you’re listening to.”

To what sounds are our ears trained to listen? Are they trained to hear the sound of money, of gossip, of complaining, of worldly things or are they trained to hear the still small voice of the Most High, directing and advising us in the way we should go?

**Let’s ask the Lord to train our ears to hear the things of God today. We need to be listening for His direction in the hustle and bustle of this noisy and influential world or we will surely go astray!**

**Pray Continually...**  
Family Devotional

**Opening exercise:** Do as many as you like, pick at least one...

- Stare off competition: See how long you can stare at each other without blinking, first to blink loses. Pair off until there is a winner
- Strength competition: Find two 5 lb objects & time how long each person can hold them with their arms straight out from their sides & not lowering. Once either arm lowers your time is up.
- Balance Competition: Have each person stand on one leg with the other leg bent and being held up by the hand at the foot. Whoever is standing last on one foot wins.

**Question:** Why was it hard at some point to **continue** to keep your eyes open and/or **continue** to hold up the objects and/or **continue** to balance on one leg while holding up the other?

**Read together:**

Ephesians 5:20, 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-18; Hebrews 13:15

**Question:** Having spent the last month focusing on prayer, what are some of the challenges (Similar to our exercises above) to living a life described by the scriptures we just read?

**(Leader-read this aloud or summarize yourself)**

The above passages make it clear that we should not just approach prayer as a thing to check off our spiritual-to-do-list; but prayer is more a state of mind, a way of life, a continual focus in which we stay connected to God's presence and plan in our lives everyday. Reality is however, just as our exercises showed; at some point no matter how determined we may be, we will not be able to always pray as we would like.

**Concluding exercise:**

So...outside of a regular, daily prayer time (Highly recommended and biblical); what other ways can we continue in prayer to God throughout our busy days? FOCUS NOT ON EFFORT BUT CREATIVITY - PRAYING SMARTER/NOT HARDER. For example: Set an alarm on your watch/cell phone at increments throughout the day (every hour, etc.) and devote a few minutes to prayer when it goes off (Unless your work makes this impossible- don't get fired over this). Commit to one idea individually and one as a family. Follow up in the month to come.