

# Session 2

## UNITED AND PRAYER

*February 12, 2023*

### Memory Verse

*They all were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*

– ACTS 1:14, CSB




## United in Prayer

**THEOLOGICAL THEME:** Prayer is vital in the life of Christ-followers. It is spoken about, preached about, and taught about often, yet Christians still struggle with this discipline.

Have you ever run out of gas or power in your vehicle? There are those who stop and fill up when they have less than half a tank, those who stop as soon as the warning light comes on, and those who wait until the last second just to see how many miles they can actually go on their previous tank or charge.

No matter where you fall on the scale of adding fuel to your tank or power to your battery, the one thing all people can agree on is that without fuel in the tank or power for the battery, a vehicle won't run. You must be intentional about your power or fuel source to use a vehicle to its maximum effectiveness. It is also important to note that the power charge or fuel you use needs to be correct or you may damage your vehicle. **Today we are talking about an important type of "fuel" for faith that every Christ-follower needs to prioritize.**

 What are your common practices when it comes to refueling your car?

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 Have you ever had a fuel mishap? What happened?

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## Session Summary

As Jesus prepared to ascend into heaven after the resurrection, **He gave the disciples instructions to wait for the coming Holy Spirit.** They did exactly as He told them and spent time in an upper room together, unified in prayer. Today, **the Holy Spirit is still the difference-maker and fuels a believer's prayer life.**

Most Christians recognize how important prayer is to their walk with Christ, yet most would also admit that they struggle with prayer. The disciples had questions about prayer too, so they took their need to Jesus so that they might grow in this area.

### 1. United in Prayer (Acts 1:12-14)

At the end of the forty days following Jesus's resurrection, His disciples obeyed His final instructions and met together in an upper room to wait for the Holy Spirit. There was no delay in their actions, and we don't read anything about them questioning Him. They trusted their Savior and believed what He promised would happen. Even though He was no longer with them physically, they chose to obey what they heard from Jesus.

 **Why do we struggle to trust, believe, obey, and apply what Jesus tells us to do instead of primarily questioning His instructions?**

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Acts 1:15 says there were about 120 people waiting together in the upper room. Imagine all the disciples—minus Judas, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, various brothers of Jesus, and other followers—gathered in one room. There were likely many strong personalities and opinions in the room. There were likely various stages of joy and grief being experienced too.

We don't have a lot of details about what happened in the waiting period, except that they were all in one accord. This is another way of saying they were unified. While this may seem like a small detail, it was significant given the context of their waiting and the reality that unity is difficult for any group of people, no matter the context. Tensions may have been running high, and it was a situation that easily could have devolved into a competition for who would be in charge and decide the next steps for the group. How often in today's world would an eclectic group of people confined into a limited space be unified?

## What would you say is required for a group to find unity?

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The key to the people's unity was tied to their focus. Scripture tells us they devoted themselves to prayer. As they continually sought the Lord in prayer, He knit their hearts together in unity. That is a powerful lesson for the church. When a body of believers prays together and continually seeks the Lord, He can do amazing and powerful things among them.

These people were the core of believers who would spread the gospel as Jesus called them to do. Their actions displayed wisdom. In the middle of a difficult time, they obeyed the Lord. They gathered in fellowship and devoted themselves to prayer. These are the same things that present day Christ-followers should be involved in to experience the power of Christ at work in and through us.

## Application: How much does our group model the actions of the early followers of Christ? How might we do that to a greater extent?

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## 2. Powerful Prayer (Luke 11:1)

Have you ever heard someone pray and felt like they had a better connection to God than you? Maybe their prayers seem more powerful and effective than yours. In this verse, the disciples saw Jesus praying and recognized there was something different and powerful about how He talked to the Father. Imagine them standing there, watching Him pray as was His custom. They were eyewitness to the relationship between Jesus and God the Father, and they recognized the power of His prayer.

## Who have you noticed praying that seems to have a better connection to God than you do? What is different about the way they pray?

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As they noticed a difference in the way Jesus prayed, they were smart enough to ask Him about it. When you see a deficit in your own spiritual life, it is important to ask questions and seek ways to improve in that area. There is no one better to learn from than Jesus and as the disciples watched and listened to Him praying, they were moved to desire that same power for their own prayer lives.

No one on the planet could have taught them, or us, more effectively about prayer than Jesus. We need to follow the disciples' example and seek to learn all that we can about how to converse with the Father. Prayer is so simple that a child can do it but so powerful that even the most mature of believers will never master the practice. We are always in the transformation process in our faith, and we can always become more like Jesus.

**?** Why does it matter who you seek to learn from for your spiritual walk? What have you learned from this experience?

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Notice the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. They didn't focus on theory; they focused on actually praying. Sometimes we get caught up in the "how to" of something instead of being focused on putting it into practice in our lives. Though it can be helpful to learn some new approach or technique of prayer. The key is to start praying and then pray some more.

**?** Application: How can you get started praying more rather than just thinking about it theoretically?

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### 3. Model Prayer (Luke 11:2-4)


Although these verses are often referred to as the Lord's Prayer, they can also be labeled as the Model Prayer. Jesus gave a pattern of prayer that we can also put into practice in our lives. It is not a precise ritual or specific formula that must be followed. This model prayer is exactly that—a model to consider when you converse with God and want it to be effective and powerful. It is simple and brief because God is not impressed with the number of words we use but rather cares about the manner in which we approach Him and the posture of our hearts.

 Why is it important to consider Jesus's words as a model and not a formula or ritual?

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Starting with how you address God is vital. Jesus used “Father,” which implies intimacy and familiarity. It is a familial way of addressing God and reminds us of our role as His children. Some believers struggle to recognize who they're talking to. You do not always have to use “Father” in your address but can call out to Him as Almighty God, King of kings, heavenly Father, glorious Lord, or other monikers to remind you who you are talking to and the glory and honor due Him. Sometimes you may want to cry out to “God who heals” or “God who sees” depending on the situation you're facing.


Jesus's use of Father stood out because of its intimate nature and because it was unusual for the Jews to address God with that kind of personal relationship. It was a teaching moment for them and for us. When we talk to God, we can address Him in a variety of ways, but we should always approach Him with reverence. By adding in the phrase “in heaven,” Jesus stressed the holiness and glory of God. When you pray, you are not talking to your neighbor or any other person. You are calling on Almighty God who has all power and majesty in the universe. That changes everything.

 Why does it matter how you address the Lord when you pray?

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The rest of the Model Prayer gives different elements we can and should include in our prayers. **Praise and adoration of the Lord tops the list.** God is worthy of all the praise we can muster. We also recognize His will is what matters. We should invite Him to work in our lives in the way that He wills according to His infinite wisdom. Our desires need to take a back seat to what God wants because His will is perfect.

We can also bring our daily needs before the Lord. This includes our need for provisions, forgiveness, and strength to face temptations. These are not one-time requests. Daily bread represents our ongoing need to depend and rely on Him for even the most basic of needs. When we surrender our will to His and admit how much we need Him daily, we grow more like Jesus and pray as He did.

 **Application:** An often used outline for prayer is ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. Have you ever practiced the ACTS outline for prayer? Consider assigning different people in the group one letter each of ACTS.


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## Conclusion


Prayer is vital to believers and yet is a discipline and practice many struggle with. In Acts 1, the disciples were unified in prayer as they waited for the Holy Spirit. The church today can also be unified when we pray in one accord. We must take this call to prayer seriously and be devoted to it as the disciples were.

When you struggle with something, it's important to reach out for help. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray like He did. In giving them the Model Prayer as a guide, Jesus also helps us with this practice. This is not a formula or even a ritual but a guide for how to address the Lord.


As we pray, the key is to focus on who we are talking to so that our prayers reflect praise and adoration for Him. We also need to pray with humble, surrendered hearts that acknowledge our need for God on a daily basis. A wise Christ-follower will recognize how little power he or she has without God. God supplies our daily provisions, forgiveness, and the wisdom and strength to face temptations that come our way. Prayer is how we invite Him to work His will in our lives and how we admit our need for Him.

 Where do you struggle with prayer? How can you be encouraged towards further prayer from today's study?

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 What will you do to promote unity in our group through prayer?

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 Who are you praying will come to know the Lord? How might you seek to have another gospel conversation with them this week?

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## Here's How to Become a Christ-Follower:

*Read the following verses and ask after each one: "What does this say to me?"*

- **All have sinned:** Romans 3:23 & 1 John 1:8
- **The wages of sin:** Romans 6:23 & John 3:18
- **But while we were sinners, salvation was provided:** Romans 5:8
- **Become a Christ-follower:** Romans 10:9-10 Confess and Believe

## Accepting Christ is Just the Beginning:

Next Steps:

- Publicly profess your faith by being baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 3:21; Romans 6:4).
- Join a church which follows the Bible, where you can grow in your faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship with other Christians.
- Get involved in groups for encouragement and accountability.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.
- Share with others what Jesus has done for you. Tell your story (Romans 10:14; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Begin to live for God (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; James 1:19-27).

For information on Missions, visit: *brentwood.church/missions*



# FOR NEXT WEEK

## Pentecost

### Main Passages

- Acts 2:32-41

### Session Outline

1. Bold Preaching (Acts 2:32-33)
2. Call for Response (Acts 2:34-37)
3. Powerful Invitation (Acts 2:38-41)

### Memorize

*They all were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*

- Acts 1:14, CSB