

Teach Us to Pray – Nehemiah

June 15 | Weekly Devotionals

Introduction

When the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray,” they were seeking to emulate the words of our greatest Teacher and find a deeper connection with God the Father. Today, we’re asking the same. In this six-week series, we’ll echo that ancient request and allow God Himself to be our guide. Teach Us to Pray explores six powerful prayers from the Old Testament - prayers from real people in real need. Their cries for help varied from forgiveness to healing to blessing to deliverance, but each of them reveals a rich, honest, and dynamic connectivity to God. Together, we’ll learn not only how to pray, but how to live in ongoing, transformative relationship with the One who hears.

To that end, we are going to look at several Old Testament examples of prayer. This week, we begin with Nehemiah as he returns from exile and sees the walls and city of Jerusalem in ruins.

Read Nehemiah 1:1-11.

Reflection questions:

- Read Nehemiah 1:5-11 one more time. As you read, note any moments where Nehemiah acknowledges God, confesses something to God, and petitions God for something he desires.
- Think about how you normally pray to God. How is it that you normally address God when you pray? How does this compare or contrast with how Nehemiah addresses God in prayer in verse 5?
- In Nehemiah’s prayer, he offers a corporate confession, taking ownership for the sins of his people and his family. In Nehemiah 1:6-7, he prays: “I confess the sins ***we Israelites***, including myself and ***my father’s family***, have committed against you.” What role does corporate confession play in your prayer life? If any, how so? If not, why not? What would it look like to include it?
- What are the two main things that Nehemiah petitions God for in verse 11? In context, Nehemiah’s asking isn’t for himself alone but for the betterment of God’s people (because he wants to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem). When you ask things from God, do your petitions tend to be self-focused or others-focused?

Write your own prayer.

Based on the different elements identified in Nehemiah's prayer above (acknowledging God, confessing to God, and petitioning God), write a prayer of your own that incorporates these three elements. Once finished, pray that prayer to God.