

# “Pause”

Susanna Wesley: Mother of Methodism

**Introduction** - New Series, Prayer Model: “P.R.A.Y.”

**Tension:** Canadian psychologist David Brenner describes prayer as “the soul’s native language”. Prayer is one of the most important things in life - but a lot of us don’t feel very good at it. Most of us are not taught how to pray. When it comes to math we don’t say, “here you go, do it” - we are taught  $1+1 = 2$ ,  $2+2 = 4$ ...later we’re taught the quadratic equation, taught linear equation, that  $y = mx+b$ , and that  $\text{Pi} = 3.1415926535897$

We Hear all the time, “you gotta pray,” but we don’t take time to teach people how to pray - that’s what this series is about; How to Pray. Using PRAY book - “How to Pray - A Simple Guide for (simple) normal people” has already been a help to us in our own prayer lives, and felt led to share some of what we are learning with you; Pete Greig - prayer rockstar - 24/7 prayer for 20 years - but even a Father of a 24/7 prayer movement say of himself that he struggles with all kinds of self-discipline: attending the gym, declining the chocolate cake, going to bed before midnight, bothering to floss my teeth, and yes, even maintaining regular time of prayer, but he has learned a lot worth sharing over the years.

## Luke 11:1-4

- Observations
  - Jesus was a man of prayer; was praying at a ‘certain place’
    - Prayer closet
      - Personal closet
      - Can be literal, also can just be a place
    - Rocking chair story
    - Where is your chair
  - Time
    - Regular time of prayer
      - Jewish times of prayer
      - Jesus
        - Morning, Noon, Night
    - First fruits
      - Morning
        - Psalm 119:147 I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word.
      - Just like tithing
- Disciples
  - Imagine looking at Jesus and being able to ask him anything?
  - Disciples could have asked “how do we perform miracles”, “how do we heal”, “how do we cast out demons”, “how do we proclaim/teach”? . . . . . Why mosquitos?, Why did you create the University of Florida? ha,ha
    - All great, legitimate questions
  - But when they had the opportunity to ask anything of Jesus, they asked “teach us to pray”
    - Why?= they knew that all the other things that Jesus did flowed from his prayer life!
      - Observed Jesus rhythm
        - Pray=heal
        - Pray=cast out demons
        - Pray=miracles
        - Pray= gifts of the Spirit (knowledge, wisdom, discernment)
      - Pete Greig in How to Pray “The disciples were to become mighty prayer warriors, but it wasn’t automatic. Prayer didn’t get beamed down on them from heaven. It wasn’t a guaranteed perk of the apostolic job. Prayer had to be learned the hard way, and their schooling was to begin on a particular day with this simple, touchingly vulnerable request: “Lord, teach us to pray.””

- The Church hasn't done a great job in discipling believers, people give their life to Jesus and then we say you need to read your bible, pray, etc., now go and do it, w/o any instruction

P.R.A.Y. =model that we will be teaching on

P=Pause: the best way to start praying is to stop and focus, get centered - 2 primary ways

- 1. Non-Kinetic Centering
  - Quiet the house; switch your phone to Flight Mode!
  - 4 steps = relax, breathe, speak, repeat
    - **Relax**; get a comfortable posture for praying (kneel, raise hands, lying prostrate, etc.)
    - **Breathe**; not some middle Eastern mysticism
      - Holy Spirit breath and Jesus breathing on the disciples; God breathing life into Adam...
    - **Speak**
      - Breath prayer: Like the Lord's prayer= Start by addressing God affectionately (Our Father in Heaven) and respectfully (hallowed be thy name) before we start bombarding God with our laundry list of needs
      - Praying in Tongues
      - Francis of Assisi: My God and My All
    - **Repeat**

### Psalm 46:1-3, 10

- Psalm 46 - a 'worst case scenario' and yet, able to 'be still'
  - Latin word for 'best still' = vacate; take a holiday, be free from current reality
  - God saying, "Why don't you take a break from playing god for awhile and let me be God, huh?"
- Prayer is an opportunity to take a vacation from our stress and worries and current reality
- Like Susanna Wesley who found daily ability to be still, even when her husband was in prison, schooling her kids, surviving the loss of nine children, a volatile marriage, etc.
  - Prayer not just about turning to God when things are tough and falling apart - but PAUSING and turning to God every day, regardless of what's going on
- Selah
  - 71 times in Psalms
  - Pause not meant to be read
  - Invitation to weigh the meaning of the words being said
- 2nd way to get centered - Kinetic Centering or Active pausing
  - Exercise research
  - Jesus hiking etc.
- Keep it Simple, Keep it Real, Keep it Up -Pete Greig
  - God wants to spend time with us
  - Simple= When Jesus 'teaches' the disciples how to pray, his example is 31 words long in original language= simple
  - Real= complain, cry, etc.
  - Up= Most of the battle is just showing up and up
    - Right after the Lord's prayer - the parable of the obnoxious neighbor
    - **Luke 11:5-8**
    - Rocks in the Swamp
      - "Educationalist Frank Laubach, whose literacy programs taught more than sixty million people to read, compared praying to throwing rocks in a swamp. Each rock sinks without trace. The exercise seems pointless. But keep going long enough, keep throwing those rocks, and the swamp will eventually be filled. One day, a rock will be thrown that will not sink. Solid ground will begin to appear.]" — How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People by Pete Greig
    - Keep It Up!

Closing