Prayer—it is the most essential daily task for a Christian, but the one that is most often overlooked. In America, we seem to have the idea that praying is a one-way activity. We think a person should be by himself, kneel down on the ground, fold his hands, close his eyes and tell all his worries to God. That’s not the case! Prayer is not something that has to be done in any specific way. Prayer is the most personal thing that a Christian can do to interact with God and, as such, the ways in which each person prays differ.

Juan Carlos Ortiz, an Argentinean evangelist, wrote a book called *Living with Jesus Today*. In it, Ortiz writes that he had banished the idea of rote religion and decided to make his communication with Jesus part of his real life. For example, he said “Good Morning” to Jesus before his feet hit the floor in the morning and spoke to him all throughout the day. By eradicating the idea of prayer as his duty, Ortiz strengthened his faith and found new intimacy in his relationship with God.

Prayer is simply communication. It is speaking and listening to God. Rattling off all the problems that need to be solved in the world is not creating a real relationship with God; neither is saying the exact same prayer every day. While we can ask penitently for our needs and ask each day for Him to assist us through that day, we should be wary of using the same phrasing. By repeating the same words, those words can lose meaning for us, and it also does not honor God. Christians should speak to God freely and spontaneously, whenever and in whatever words they want to, because that is how a real relationship works. God values and treasures honesty in prayer. In his book, *What on Earth Am I Here For?*, Rick Warren says, “[You] must choose to be honest with God. The first building block of a deeper friendship with God is complete honesty—about your faults and your feelings. God doesn’t expect you to be perfect, but does insist on complete honesty.”

Praying should not just be a practice; it should be a lifestyle. By setting a time to pray, Christians often overlook the fact that God is always available for, and always desires, communication. He is at your workplace, school and in your home. He is wherever you are. God is available to talk throughout the day, so why not talk to Him? If the Lord was in the room this very moment, would you acknowledge Him? If the answer is yes, then acknowledge Him even when you cannot see Him.

In Ephesians 6:18 (NLT), Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, “Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.” Paul instructed the young church to pray at all times, not just because they were dealing with problems, but because constant communication with God allows newfound depth of faith and trust in a Christian’s life. Paul knew the power of prayer—the power that creates the most intimate relationship with God—and that is why he always encouraged it.

IN THIS WEEK’S STUDY WE WILL FOCUS ON PRAYING ALL THE TIME, EVERYWHERE AND ABOUT EVERYTHING.
MONDAY – Prayer as Communication with God

Big Point: We need to pray all the time, everywhere and about everything!

This week we’re featuring excerpts of stories about prayer submitted by fellow Creekers. We hope that you will be encouraged and inspired to dedicate yourself to prayer as you see how God is working through prayer in the lives of others.

“God answered a prayer for me through Life Support. I had been the victim of child abuse and for many years I sought counseling and help. Nothing seemed to be working. I had been in ministry for 13 years, so I knew the Word. Still, I was so angry at God that I couldn’t let him help me. One day, I got an email stating that a session of Life Support was starting and they invited me.

I went to that session of Life Support and did the book. After, I was invited to join a Life Support small group. I went but stayed close to the door and didn’t really commit. I started struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts. “Sarah” could see right through me and called me out on my need for professional help. She not only told me of a good counselor, but she went to him with me. She told me in the beginning that she wasn’t here to coddle me but to keep me honest. That was the best promise I had ever had from someone.

God worked a miracle. He is healing me and helping me to be desperate for him. When I stumble is when I am desperate for other things. He is a rock in times of trouble. I still have miles to go but I no longer feel hopeless. I am supported and know where to turn in these heaviest, darkest of days. Yes, I have seen God work in ways unimaginable to my human understanding.” Submitted by T.M.

“Prayer is cooperation with God, a consent that opens the way for grace to work. Most of the time, the Counselor communicates subtly: feeding ideas...bringing awareness...inspiring me...shedding light...sensitizing me to another’s needs. God’s Spirit whispers rather than shouts, and brings peace not turmoil.”

Philip Yancey

READ and THINK....What does the Bible say?

* Read the scripture and answer the question about that scripture below it.

James 5:13-18 discusses the power of prayer in the life of the believer. The scriptural author teaches that prayer has a transformative impact on our lives as well as those we pray for.

Question: James 5:13a tells us to pray when we are suffering. Why are we instructed to pray to God instead of other forms of coping or problem-solving?

James 5:13a (New Living Translation)
Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray...

Answer:
2. As we read the New Testament, Jesus shows us a perfect model for our prayer lives. Even though Jesus was fully God, he still prayed as a way to staying connected to God and to demonstrate to us the importance of prayer.

**Question:** Read Luke 5:16. What benefit did Jesus receive from withdrawing often to connect with God in prayer that he could not receive any other way?

*Luke 5:16 (New Living Translation)*

16 But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.

**Answer:**

**LIVE...What will you do now?**

After this weekend’s message, we’re hoping you are fired up about being more intentional about prayer! If your prayer life was FANTASTIC, how do you think your life would be different than it is now?

Now, think about the things that are standing in the way of your FANTASTIC prayer life. List a few of those things:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM: WHAT’S IN THE WAY?</th>
<th>SOLUTION: WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you remember that you are supposed to pray all the time, everywhere and about everything, then:

- **How** can you pray to God more often this week?

- **Where** are the places that you can pray (that you might not be leveraging right now)?

- **What** do you need to pray more about this week?

**PRAY...God, what do you want me to know and do?**

Here’s an excellent opportunity to live out your commitment to pray more often this week! We’re going to start this prayer and then, you can use your answers to the last question to finish your prayer: Dear God, thank you for inviting us to connect with You in prayer. I am glad that You are ready and waiting for me to call on You. Sometimes, I can get preoccupied with worry or problem-solving instead of talking to you. So, God, right now I want to pray about...
Big Point: When you're not sure which way to turn, look up!

What do you do when you’re in a situation that seems impossible? What about when you have to make a difficult decision that you just cannot bring yourself to make? Here is the story of K.S., a ‘Creeker in that predicament.

“Here is my answered prayer. I had custody of my cousin’s two kids with every intention of adopting them. My cousin lost her kids because she is a heroin addict and her baby was born highly addicted. I took the kids, hoping to adopt them. Things didn’t go as planned. I’m a single mom of two kids. CSB did not offer me the financial support they said they would. I prayed on the situation for about a month and I felt God leading me to make the decision to give them up. They were placed in a home with a loving Christian couple, who are now in the process of adopting the kids. Both kids are very happy and we still get to stay in contact with them. God led me to make the best decision for the kids.”

Things don’t always go the way we want or the way we planned and we can’t always understand God will work it for the good. However, as long as we remember the situation is going as God planned, we can be reassured. Sometimes, the Lord leads us to hard decisions, but as we see from K.S.’s testimony, it turned out to be the best decision. God’s will always is. When you aren’t sure which way to turn, turn to the Lord in prayer. He will lead you, if you are willing to follow.

READ and THINK....What does the Bible say?
* Read the scripture and answer the question about that scripture below it.

1. In this passage from James, he tells us that we should be glad when trouble and tough times come our way, for it is then that we learn to trust the Lord.

**Question:** What should we do when we need wisdom or advice? How does God tell us what to do? (Hint: Think back to Lee’s message last week on the Bible)

**James 1:5 (New Living Translation)**

*If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him, and He will gladly tell you...*

**Answer:**

2. In this passage from 1 Chronicles, the Israelites were losing the battle, so they cried out to the Lord for help. Because they trusted in Him, He answered their prayer.

**Question:** What will happen if we trust the Lord and pray to Him for help?
1 Chronicles 5:20 (New International Version)
They were helped in fighting them, and God delivered the Hagrites and all their allies into their hands, because they cried out to him during the battle. He answered their prayers, because they trusted in him.

Answer:

3. In Jeremiah 6:16, these are the words of God to the people. He wanted them to walk in the old ways of righteousness. These words still apply to us today.

Question: Write down the 4 steps to take when you come to a crossroad in your life. What will you receive if you follow these instructions?

Jeremiah 6:16 (New Living Translation)
This is what the LORD says: "Stop at the crossroads and look around. Ask for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls..."

Answer:

LIVE ... What will you do?
Think of a time you were at a crossroads in your life. Did you spend anxious time trying to figure out what to do, or did you turn to God in prayer? Do you think you did the right thing? What could you do differently the next time this situation occurs?

God promises to hear and answer our prayers. Even when the answer isn't what we thought it would be, when we are open to His will presiding over it all, we can see that the answers help us through our crossroads. Can you recall a time that God answered your prayer, just like He did for K.S., whether His answer was yes, no, or there’s another way?

PRAY... God what do you want me to know and do?
Praise God for His ability to hear and answer our prayers. Ask Him to help you trust Him, and turn to him in times of trouble or confusion. Ask him to be your guide when you are at life's crossroads so that instead of looking left and right in confusion, you will look up.
WEDNESDAY—Everywhere There Should be Prayer!

Big Point: Here a prayer, there a prayer, prayer, prayer everywhere!

There is not a bad time or place for prayer. In every situation we can be in conversation with God. There are many ways to fit more prayer into our lives. Even when we feel like we don’t have time, there are ways to make it work. We can pray in the car, while we exercise, in the shower, in bed; anywhere will do. The more we pray, the more connected we are with God.

A story submitted by A. H. tells us about a baby born 3 months premature. He only weighed 2 pounds when he was born. He had bleeding on both sides of his brain and the doctors told the family that if the baby survived, he would have horrible things wrong with him and would probably be a ‘vegetable.’ The doctors told the family to “consider their options”. The family prayed nonstop throughout the next several months. Mom stayed at Ronald McDonald house for three months and says she never stopped praying the whole time. There were many complications and many surgeries, but the family continued to pray. Now, Wyatt is able to stand on his own and even walk with the use of braces and a walker. He has mild Cerebral Palsy, but is otherwise a normal boy. He is a miracle baby!”

This is the power of unceasing prayer. There are so many ways to incorporate it into your daily routine. By putting a prayer list in your bathroom, your car, or even in your phone, you can integrate more and more prayer into your day. Imagine the difference that being that connected to God can make in your day and throughout your life!

READ and THINK….What does the Bible say?

* Read the scripture and answer the question about that scripture below it.

1. In this scripture Jesus is describing how we should pray.

Question: What is one way that Jesus tells us to pray in this scripture?

Matthew 6:6 (New Living Translation)

But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly.

Answer:

2. This verse from Acts tells us how and when the early Christians got together to worship God.
Question: How often did they meet? What is the purpose of corporate (group) prayer?

Acts 1:14 (New Living Translation)
They all met together continually for prayer...

Answer:

3. In this scripture, Paul is giving the church in Thessalonica advice on how to keep their Christian faith strong. Some theologians consider the three pieces of advice given here to be the three main precepts of the Christian church.

Question: What are the three instructions Paul mentions, which demonstrate that we belong to Christ?

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 (New Living Translation)
16 Always be joyful. 17 Never stop praying. 18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

Answer:

LIVE ... What will you do?
God does not condemn public prayer, in fact, He sincerely approves of it, but in the intimacy of private prayer we are with the One who knows our whole hearts. Praying this way can also make you less liable to pride, hypocrisy and vanity. How does praying in secret increase your intimacy with God?

What are some ways that you have incorporated prayer into your daily life, publically and privately? Can you think of others that are not listed in today’s intro? Go to our Facebook page, Livingitout.tv, and tell us your suggestions!

PRAY...God what do you want me to know and do?
Thank our Heavenly Father for giving us a way to communicate with Him any time and anywhere we are. Ask Him to help you to remember to pray in all circumstances; alone, in a group, or on the go. Praise Him for using His Word to teach you how to pray.
THURSDAY—Praying for Everything: What You Need, Want and Have, the Church and Others

Big Point: God wants to hear everything; bring it to Him in prayer.

Throughout the Bible, we are encouraged to pray. Prayer is not only an act of communication, but an act of fellowship and love. God offers us the privilege of speaking with Him, coming to Him with our needs and wants. He doesn't have to, but it shows us how caring and loving He is and helps us to grow and mature in faith. God wants to hear everything. He asks you to trust Him with your life, to offer everything to Him in prayer, and He promises to provide. The following is a story from a CedarCreek attendee, K.P., whose husband was recently laid off:

“God has been truly supplying our needs before we even have them. I can’t even begin to explain how overwhelmed with gratitude I am. For so long, it felt like my prayers fell into a pit of emptiness. I have spent the last four years asking God to please tell us what to do and until now, I never got an answer. I believe that He is simply telling us to trust Him to supply our needs one day at a time. Even though I want to look at what is coming next, I know that I need to rely on Him to take care of tomorrow. I am actually really excited to see what He is going to do next. I just have to trust Him today.”

God hears our prayers. As we seek and align ourselves with God’s will, our prayers will also become more “other focused”. Part of being in the family of God is praying for others, especially for their spiritual growth. In praying for one another, we strengthen and build up the church. Prayers for the church enhance the kingdom and strengthen the people of God.

READ and THINK….What does the Bible say?

* Read the scripture and answer the question about that scripture below it.

1. Prayer is a continual process of inviting God into every moment of your day.

**Question**: What does Paul encourage the Philippians to pray about? From what does offering everything to God and thanking Him for all He has done for us?

**Philippians 4:6 (New Living Translation)**

*Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.*

**Answer:**

2. In the following verse, Paul asks the Colossians to pray for God to open doors for him to preach the gospel and lead others to Christ, even as he sits in prison chains.
**Question:** In asking for prayers for opportunities to share the gospel, how is Paul encouraging others to pray for the church?

*Colossians 4:3 (New Living Translation)*

*Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains.*

**Answer:**

3. Paul is writing to encourage Timothy to be in constant prayer for all people, always asking God to help them.

**Question:** When praying for others, what should we be asking from God?

*1 Timothy 2:1 (New Living Translation)*

*I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.*

**Answer:**

**LIVE ... What will you do now?**

Is your prayer life purely self-focused? God desires for you to offer up your wants and needs to Him; however, in our spiritual growth, our prayers should also become others-centered. Who do you need to pray for today? Try using the prayer that Lee presented during the message to pray for those you list below.

---

**How to pray for others’ spiritual growth**

(taken from Colossians 1:9-14)

*Pray that they:*

... will understand God’s will
... will gain spiritual wisdom
... live a life pleasing to God
... will do kind things for others
... will know God better and better
... are filled with God’s strength
... will endure in patience
... stay full of Christ’s joy
... are always thankful
... will recall God’s forgiveness of their sins

**PRAY... God, what do you want me to know and do?**

Praise God for granting you the privilege of coming to Him with your wants and needs. Thank Him for all you have, which He has given, and ask for His help in becoming other-centered in your prayer life.
FRIDAY—Pray for Everything: Worship and God’s Will to be Done

Big Point: Worship God in prayer and seek His will in all things.

Prayer blesses us in many ways, but it’s important that we remember to whom we are praying. Prayer is an act of worship. In making our requests, we often forget the love that God shows us in keeping His promises.

The box to the right includes an alphabetical list of some of the “names” and characteristics of God. Next time you pray, remember to worship the one you come to with your needs, desires and hopes. If God never does anything for you, He still sent His son to die on the cross to free you from your sins. For this, and so much more, God is deserving of your worship.

As you worship God in prayer and offer your life to Him, remember that He knows and sees all, past, present and future. God’s perspective is much broader than our own and because He is omnipotent, we can trust that His will is greater than our own. God’s will cares for us, loves us and keeps us close to Him.

CedarCreek attendee, D.K. says, “Recently God answered my prayer regarding my Mother. She was suffering badly in the hospital. It broke my heart to see her suffering, but I was not ready to say goodbye to my mother. Out of love, I prayed that God would give me the strength to accept His will, even if it meant taking her. I did not know what His will would be, but I prayed continually for her pain to be eased and for me accept His decision. God answered my prayers by allowing her go home with Him. He also gave me the strength to survive the loss of her.” Following God’s will isn’t always easy, but it always provides peace.

READ, THINK and LIVE. Read the Bible and apply it to your life.

1. In Matthew 6:9-10, Jesus teaches the disciples how to pray. This is the offering of the prayer known as the “Our Father”.

Question: As we begin to pray, what should we acknowledge about God and for what should we pray?

Matthew 6:9-10 (New Living Translation)
9 Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.
10 May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Answer:

2. Even Jesus struggled with fulfilling God’s will for his life, but as he prayed before his Father, in worship, sweating blood in agony, Jesus trusted God’s plan.

When you pray, PRAISE and THANK Him for who He is…
A: Alpha–The Beginning
Beauty
Constant Companion
Defender of Victims
Everlasting Life
Faithful One
Great Comforter
Holy One
Indescribable
Justice
King of Kings
Light of the World
Master Creator
Never Failing
Prince of Peace
Omnipotent
Quietly Waiting
Refuge and Hope
Solid Foundation
Trustworthy
Unimaginable
Valiant
Way, Truth & Life
XXL – Bigger than life!
Yahweh
Z: Omega –The End
Question: How do Jesus’ words teach us to trust God’s answers to our prayers?

Matthew 26:39 (New Living Translation)
“...Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

Answer:

Questions for Discussion— Try these in a group, with friends, or at the dinner table.

1. Do you think that God listens to your prayers? What expression do you think God has on His face when you pray? How does your view of God impact when or how often you pray?

2. Discuss a time when you felt God listening to you or when He has answered a prayer. How did this experience impact your faith?

3. We are supposed to pray all of the time, everywhere and about everything. What are things you pray about most often? When are you most likely to pray? What are some things that you are reluctant to pray about? Why?

4. In this week’s LivingItOut Bible study, there is a poem based on Colossians 1:9-14 about praying for others. Check out this poem and name specific individuals who can benefit from the different parts of this prayer. Extra: Ask the people in your group to remind you to pray for them.

5. This weekend’s message had LOTS of verses about prayer. Choose the verse that encouraged, challenged or inspired with you most. Share that verse with your discussion group and talk about why you chose it.

6. One of the most important things we can do is surrender our will to God's will in prayer. How can we pray all of the time, everywhere and about everything YET ultimately surrender our hopes and desires to God's will? What would that look like in your prayer life?

7. What do you think God wants you to think or do differently in your prayer life after this weekend’s message?

Weekend Updates!

- **Saturday Daily Bible Reading**—July 27: Psalms 43:1-45:17
  1 Corinthians 14:1-40

- **Attend the Global Leadership Summit**: Be sure to mark your calendar for the Global Leadership Summit, August 8-9th. www.cedarcreek.tv/summit. The cost is just $109 for this world class event!

- **Next Week’s Sermon**: Join us this weekend, as Ben Snyder will continue on with the Deep Roots series, with a message entitled “Rooted in Relationships.” Hope to see you at the Creek! Watch us on the iCampus if you’re going to be on vacation! Check us out at www.cedarcreek.tv/live.
Living It Out: July 2013

Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.
- Colossians 2:7 (New Living Translation)

Living It Out

It is the dream of CedarCreek that everyone who calls this their church home will be reading and studying the same topics, both individually and in groups. Each week, join with thousands of others at CedarCreek Church in applying God’s Word, the Bible, into your daily life. Our hope is that while we learn and grow together, as individuals and as a church, we will collectively live out the weekend message.

Living It Out resources, such as the Daily Bible Study, Daily Bible Reading Plan, Discussion Questions and Scripture Memory Verses, are designed to help us embrace a missional mindset...a mindset that compels us to love Jesus, serve others and tell the world about Christ.

Living It Out: Daily Bible Study...Daily Bible study activities to reflect on the weekend message.
Living It Out: Daily Bible Reading Plan...Read through the Bible in a year
Living It Out: Discussion Questions...Weekly questions to discuss with others
Living It Out: Scripture Memory...Memorize one Bible verse per month

All of these resources are also available electronically at www.livingitout.tv, where you can subscribe to have any or all of them emailed to you as they are updated and you can listen to the audio study by subscribing to the podcasts.

We Want Your Feedback! Tell us about any questions or comments you have about this week’s Living It Out: Daily Bible Study. Forward them to dianap@cedarcreek.tv.

CedarCreek Church
29129 Lime City Road
Perrysburg, Oh 43551
Phone: 419.661.8661
Fax: 419.661.8665

www.cedarcreek.tv
www.livingitout.tv

RESOURCES:
Stories provided by CedarCreek attendees

Living It Out: Daily Bible Reading Plan scriptures are listed for each day. By completing each of the daily readings, you will read the entire Bible in 1 year. These readings are separate from the Daily Bible Study.

This week’s Living It Out: Daily Bible Study written by:
Katelyn Irons
Becky Miller
Barb Roose
Kelda Strasbourg

Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.
- Colossians 2:7 (New Living Translation)