

Why Pray?

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[0:00] Dear Heavenly Father, we do just give you thanks. You are all we need and you continue to provide everything that we have and never could need. We thank you so much for all that you have given us in Jesus Christ.

As we recall of his death and burial and resurrection this morning and just the fact that you have done everything to save us and to reconcile us to you today, Father.

And Father, we just thank you now as we open your word. We know that you desire to teach us and we just pray that as we look into your word and hear these words, Father, that you would use them to change us and use them to cause us to know you more.

And we just pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. And you may be seated. Those of you that don't know me, my name is Rick Aldridge.

I'm one of the elders here at Christ the King Church. And it's my privilege today to bring you a message in our continuing series on prayer. My message is not about a specific prayer from Scripture, but rather it's about prayer itself.

[1:07] The elders have made prayer an emphasis for our church and have stated a desire for us to be a praying church. I believe it's something we can always improve in. And I want to look at it today from that angle, but from more of an individual level and how we can improve our own prayer lives.

So what do I mean when I say I want to pray better? Sometimes the answer to that is I just want to pray more. I want to spend more time in prayer, be more consistent with my prayer time.

But even sometimes when that's going good and my prayer life is consistent, I still lament the fact that sometimes it just feels like work. And if I let my guard down for a moment, I can just lapse right into prayerlessness.

My life is not always that of praying at all times or praying without ceasing, as Paul exhorts to do. And I want to be better about that. Another answer to that question could be just the content of my prayers.

Sometimes there are way too much asking and too little communing with the Father. Sometimes these requests, they come so naturally, but not always so much the thanksgiving, the praise and the confession.

[2:16] So I want my prayers to be full of those things as I commune with the Father in prayer. Also, I spend time praying with others, with my family, with friends. I pray aloud here at church.

And I want to be better at that. I want to be a good example. I want to be an example to the church body, to my children. I want my prayers to encourage and bless those who are here, and to cause myself and them to be drawn towards God, to be conformed to his will.

And I always want our prayers to be God-centered and not self-centered. So I always want to improve in that area. I don't want to be like the man who was on a ship and there was suddenly an emergency, and he'd come across the captain of the ship and he asked, is there anything I can do? And the captain goes, no, me and the crew have it all under control. Why don't you just pray? And the man said, is it that bad? He saw prayer as a last resort. I don't want that to be me either. When all else fails, try prayer. That's not the kind of prayer life we want. Sometimes we can be a little too dependent on ourselves and not dependent enough on God. And then sometimes in moments of weak faith, we wonder if our prayer matters.

[3:27] You guys ever feel like that? You wonder, does prayer actually do anything? Does prayer get results? If you ask me to pray for you and I don't, are you worse off? We may say yes to all these questions, but sometimes our actions betray what we really believe.

Here's that same dilemma put a little more theologically. If God is sovereign, meaning that he sees all, knows all, and controls all, which I believe the Bible clearly teaches, is our prayer merely telling him what he already knows?

Sometimes that can feel a little less than satisfying. Or put it another way, if God is sovereign and he decrees or ordains all that has ever been, all that is or will come to pass, which I believe also the Bible teaches, what difference do our prayers make in that?

We can come to the conclusion, why pray? And so that's what I want to talk about today. We have these faulty conclusions, if you will, that can lead us to avoid praying.

And this can affect our prayer lives at times and sometimes can leave us prayerless. Or at best, prayer is just a joyless but dutiful time that we spend.

[4:40] So how do we avoid these two errors? How do we pray so that our prayer lives are joyful times of fellowship with our Creator? Well, it isn't by feeling more guilty or ashamed. I know that's not going to motivate any of us, just by thinking about how far we fall short.

But save time. We have compelling reasons that sometimes push us towards that. And we have a couple obvious reasons that we should pray. The first obvious reason is that God has commanded us to pray.

We see it numerous times in scriptures as he speaks through the prophets to the nation of Israel, telling them to call on him, to seek him, to pray to him. He wants to hear from his people.

This is obvious. There's also much evidence in the New Testament as well, in both the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. We've already looked at the model prayer that Jesus gave to his disciples, pray in this way.

And we see it other times where he instructs them in prayer to be persistent, to be praying at all times. When he comes to the Garden of Gethsemane, he prays himself and he tells his disciples, pray that you will not fall into temptation.

[5:49] And we see Paul's letters as well. I've already mentioned a couple. In 1 Thessalonians 5.17, he tells the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing. In the Philippians, he says, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication.

With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. He charges the Colossians in Colossians 4.2, Be devoted, devote yourselves to prayer. And we looked in Ephesians in our recent series, he says, With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit.

And with this in view, be on alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf. So Paul is very much encouraging us and telling us that we need to be praying.

And the point is clear. God has commanded us to pray. And our response to this command was, first and foremost, be that of obedience. But that, and oftentimes, that might be all that compels us to pray.

And that can be a struggle. Because we do see it more as just a duty. We think, pray without ceasing, pray at all times. Certainly, Paul doesn't mean all times. And never stopping, he can't mean that.

[6:55] And that's where we start to pile on the guilt on ourselves. If that's the only thing compelling us to pray, we're going to have those times where we just feel like this is too much.

This is too much work. A second compelling reason that we should pray is also found there, and that it's modeled for us by Jesus. We see oftentimes, it speaks of Jesus slipping away into the wilderness to pray, or going off to pray by himself.

He's a consistent example of fervent prayer, and we see this in all the gospel accounts. In the Gospel of Mark, it talks about Jesus, early in the morning, while it was still dark, he rose and went out into a lonely place to pray.

After feeding the 5,000, it says that Jesus went off by himself, sent away the multitudes, and went to the mountains to pray by himself. Luke tells about Jesus spending all night in prayer, the night

before he chose his disciples.

And we see this over and over in the Scriptures. And ultimately, we've already mentioned, Ben mentioned today, is that we are supremely comforted by the fact that Jesus is still interceding on our behalf before the Father continuously, according to Hebrews 7.25.

[8:08] So there's still a lot of mystery here. We have God the Son praying to God the Father, and it's hard to understand, but we can't escape the fact that Jesus and his humanity spent a lot of time praying, and required this time, and it should cause us who are called to be imitators of Christ, to walk as he walked, to realize our lives should be characterized by that fervent prayer as well.

We should be praying for ourselves and for those around us. But again, this often feels like a burden. If this is what Jesus needed to spend so much time in prayer, how much more so do we? And that can just, again, bear down on us. It's like, man, we just fall so far short. We've got more guilt, less joy, more shame. So how do we begin to turn this duty into delight?

I'll steal one of John Piper's phrases. I think what's going to move us in that direction is understanding that our prayers do matter, that they do accomplish something.

This is not just something we do because God told us to, or that Jesus did it, but we understand that our prayers actually accomplish something. They are part of God's eternal plan.

[9:19] And I'm going to spend the next several minutes just kind of talking about that and showing you why your prayers matter. I told you before that the Bible clearly teaches that God is sovereign, that he controls and decrees all things that come to pass.

And you can feel the tension there. How can it be that God decides and declares what will happen, and at the same time, how can our prayers have a significant effect on the unfolding of his plan?

A.W. Pink, in his book, *The Sovereignty of God*, he explains the contradiction between these two truths when he says, the same God who has decreed the end has also decreed that his end shall be reached through his appointed means.

And one of these is prayer. So what he's saying there is that God, in his infinite wisdom, he was pleased to ordain prayer to be a means through which he accomplishes his good pleasure and in and through his creation.

Pink further writes here on this. He says, God has decreed that certain events shall come to pass, but he has also decreed that these events shall come to pass through the means he has appointed for their accomplishment.

[10:27] God has elected certain ones to be saved, but he has also decreed that these ones shall be saved through the preaching of the gospel. The gospel, then, is one of those appointed means for working out the eternal counsel of the Lord, and prayer is another.

God has decreed the means as well as the end and among the means is prayer. So we see this is part of the way that God brings his plan about. We see this relationship between sovereignty, his sovereignty in our prayers, and we begin to see that this is a big plan that God has.

It's very comprehensive. It encompasses everything we do. Richard Pratt has a book called *Pray With Your Eyes Open*, and he says this about God's plan. God's plan is so comprehensive that it not only includes the final destinies of things, but also includes the secondary creaturely processes that work together to accomplish these ends.

For instance, God does not simply ordain light to shine on the earth each day. He also employs the sun, moon, the stars, and countless other things to accomplish that end. God does not merely determine that somebody will recover from a disease.

He uses doctors and medicine and other things to accomplish this healing. He says as a playwright of history, God did not simply write an ending for the book of time. He wrote every word on every page so that all events lead to the grand finale.

[11:49] So in other words, these all things which God works out according to the counsel of his will, which we saw in Ephesians 1:11, this is how he works out all these things. It also includes the means that he uses to bring about his ultimate ends.

God uses his son to bring the light to the earth. He uses doctors to restore people to health. And he uses prayer to bring about the many things that he has purposed in eternity past. And they will come across, they will come about as he answers the prayers of people.

And we see this in our own lives. We use different means to accomplish things. When we want to cross the street safely, we use the crosswalk. We look both ways before doing so.

If we want to provide for our family, we work hard at our place of employment. So we have these means that God has given us. When you desire your family members to turn to Christ for salvation, you seek opportunities to proclaim the gospel for them.

In the same way, when you desire something to happen, you pray to God about it, recognizing that prayer is one of the ways that God brings about his purposes here on earth. So we see that this is just part of how God has ordained things.

[12:57] And our prayers are actually a part of that plan. And we see this in several examples in scripture. If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Genesis 20. I'm not going to read through it, but just point out a couple of verses that are in there.

This is a section of scripture where Abraham, in escaping a famine, he's going to the country of Gerar, and that is where King Abimelech lives.

And remember, he goes, and he tells a lie when he gets there. He tells Abimelech that Sarah is his sister because he doesn't want Abimelech to kill him and take Sarah for himself. So Abimelech, King Abimelech, takes Sarah into his harem of wives.

And you see that in verse 2. And in response, God closes all the wombs of the household of Abimelech and threatens the king with further judgment if he does not restore Sarah to Abraham. So he reveals this to the king and tells him that he has to restore Sarah back to Abraham.

[14:05] But he also tells the king what his plan is. And in verse 7, it says, Now then, return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you and you shall live.

But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours. So God tells him that his plan is to have Abraham pray for Abimelech so that he can be healed and his household will be healed.

And we see that that's how God brings it about. We go down to verse 17. And, wrong chapter. There we go.

Verse 17, it says, it comes about just as God said it would. Abraham prayed to God and God healed Abimelech and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children.

And we see that this was all part of God's plan. That Abraham would pray. That God would answer that prayer. And that it would come about in that way. This is all part of God's ordained means of bringing this about.

[15:07] We see this again. Last week we looked at a passage in Jeremiah 29. And I'm just going to look at that real quick. If you want to turn there again. And you might be familiar, Samir talked about this, that Daniel saw this passage in the prophecies of Jeremiah.

And he realized that that seven years was up. And so he was excited. The exile is coming to an end. And in chapter 29, verse 11 through 14, same passage we looked at last week.

God, in verse 10, he says that the seven years are completed for Babylon. I will visit you and I will fulfill my promise to you and bring you back to this place. And then in 11, it says, For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me and when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, declares the Lord. And I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord.

And I will bring you back to the place from which I set you into exile. So here again, we see God responding to the prayers of his people. That's part of his plan is that the people would pray to him and he would respond.

[16:23] He's going to restore his people in response to their prayers. Those prayers aren't going to be an intrusion into God's plan, but they're rather a big part of his eternal plan. They are both the means

and the ends, the prayers and the restoration.

These have all been ordained by him and will be brought to pass by God. So we see the prayers being a part of that. So prayers then, they shouldn't be thought of as attempts to alter God's eternal purposes.

Again, in his book, Pratt writes, trying to alter the eternal decrees of God through prayer is like trying to reach the moon on a trampoline. It is impossible. Our petitions cannot interrupt God's plan for the universe any more than a trampoline can break the power of earth's gravity.

Instead, we should understand prayer to be one of the many secondary causes that God uses to fulfill his plan. So I think as we understand that, as we see our plans, our prayers as being part of God's plan, as him responding to our prayers and even ordaining our prayers to be a part of his plan, I think we're getting somewhere.

We're starting to see that our prayers matter. Our praying is part of how God brings these things about. They matter immensely to God.

[17:40] And we see even further is that a big part of how he gets one of the most important things done, that of bringing glory to himself, is involved with us praying as well.

I would say, in fact, that prayer is even a primary means by which God is glorified in our lives. Prayer, like everything else in the Christian life, is first for God's glory, but then also for our benefit. And everything that God does, everything that he allows and ordains, is in the ultimate sense for his glory. But we need to remember, while it's true that God seeks his own glory, we benefit when he is glorified.

It is to our great blessing that he's glorified. We pray to glorify him, but then we receive the blessings from him. Jonathan Edwards said it this way. He said, With respect to God, prayer is but a sensible acknowledgement of our dependence on him to his glory.

As he has made all things for his own glory, so he will be glorified and acknowledged by his creatures. And as for that, he should require this of those who should be subjects of his mercy.

[18:48] It is suitable acknowledgement of our dependence on the power and mercy of God for that which we need, but suitable honor paid to the great author and fountain of all good. Then he says, With respect to ourselves, God requires prayer of us because it tends to prepare us for its reception.

Fervent prayer, in many ways, tends to prepare the heart. Hereby is excited a sense of our need, whereby the mind is more prepared to prize the mercy we seek. Our prayer to God may excite in us a suitable sense and consideration of our dependence on God for the mercy we ask, and a suitable exercise of faith in God's sufficiency so that we may be prepared to glorify his name when the mercy is received.

So what he's saying is that this glory comes in a variety of ways. First, the prayer is just a simple declaration of our dependence on God for his mercy and grace. And that brings glory to God as we recognize that and our mind apprehends that, that we are fully dependent on God for this mercy and grace that we so greatly need.

But he also goes on to say that prayer is also a way that God prepares us, prepares us to see his glory more fully as we see him answer our prayers.

And he teaches us about his providence and his love as he answers our prayers. So if we are truly seeking what is best and believe that God is doing, going to do what is best, we are going to be looking for the answer to that prayer.

[20:16] And as we perceive what God is doing, our prayer becomes a powerful way that we understand God's will in our lives and in the world around us. And we even begin to have our hearts aligned to his purpose.

And so this is a, again, prayer is just such a big work that God is doing in our lives and in accordance with his eternal purposes.

So we're going to look at one more passage that demonstrates a lot of this, but I want to throw just one more little log on the fire to grow your desire to pray. I said last week, we pray to God because he is able to answer our prayers.

The sovereignty of God just ought to motivate us to pray more. Bingham Hunter says in his book, The God Who Is Here's, prayer grows from the certainty of God's omnipotence and sovereignty.

If we put it this way, if God does not reign sovereignly over his creation and is not able to accomplish whatever he desires in and through it, why bother asking him to do something that he can't deliver?

[21:17] But we come to God because he can pray, because he can do these things. In our house, we've, at various times over the years, had opportunities to pray with the kids about certain tragedies, I think especially when the tsunami hit years ago.

Our kids were, they were smaller, but some of them were old enough to understand that this, you know, there's a lot of bad things happening to people. And one of the things they understood specifically that there was a lot of children that didn't have parents anymore.

And so my kids, they were, they wanted to help these kids. And the way they wanted to help them is have them all come to our house and live. And, you know, dad, you take care of them.

You know, you be their dad. You be their mom. And, you know, this is crazy because we can't do that. You know, so the request is, this doesn't make little sense.

You know, I, much as I would like to do something like that, I just don't have the ability to do something like that. But when the children of God come before the throne of grace, we come before a God that is able to accomplish whatever he pleases.

[22:23] We have that assurance from scripture and we see that over and over. Nothing is too difficult for him. And this ought to motivate us to pray. Hunter further writes, to be worth praying to, God has, first of all, got to have the power to do what we ask.

And second, he must have sovereignty over creation to do what he wants to do. So then we think, perhaps the question shouldn't be, why, if God is sovereign, why pray? But if God isn't sovereign, why pray?

We kind of turn that question around. So we come to God, presenting him our requests because he has both the authority and the ability to grant what we have requested in our prayers. And we see example after example of this in scripture.

Right back to the time when the Israelites were in Egypt, they cry out to God and he sends a deliverer. Moses intercedes on behalf of the people and God relents from destroying the Israelites.

A great example is Elijah. He's up facing all the prophets of Baal and he prays to God and God sends the fire and shows he is the one true God. The New Testament again, we see Jesus pray and God immediately answering that, raising Lazarus from the dead in response to Jesus' prayer.

[23:42] He busts Peter out of jail in response to the church gathering to pray for him. And we have this miraculous rescue as angels lead Peter from prison.

And many of us could add to this list just personal testimonies of the way God has answered prayers for us. But lastly, I want to turn to 2 Corinthians 1, 8 through 11.

If you could turn there with me. We're going to be seeing an example of how Paul demonstrates that he believes that prayer matters. 2 Corinthians 1, 8.

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death, but that was to make us rely not on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead.

He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hopes that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf, for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

[25:02] So we see there, verse 10, that's a strong statement that Paul has of his confidence in God's sovereign control over everything, over every evil power that comes against him.

Paul is under attack. In fact, he thinks he's going to die. Men have attacked him. Spiritual forces of darkness have attacked him. Yet Paul hopes in God, and it's a solid biblical hope, not just a wish that things will be better.

He says he will deliver us. In him we have set our firm hope that he will deliver us. Paul's saying no matter who opposes us, no matter how hopeless the occasion may look, we know that God is in control.

He can overcome any opposition. There is no power in heaven or earth that can stand against him, and he is the one who knows the beginning from the end. I would say Paul strongly believes Isaiah 46, 9 through 10, which states, For I am God, and there is no other.

I am God, and there is no one like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all my good pleasure.

[26:13] We see God saying there, I will basically say, I will do all that I please. This is a statement that really defines God's power for us. He is the one being in the universe with all power, and only God can say, I will do all that I please.

God is, He is making the decisions. He is not just some force, like maybe in Star Wars, that we have bad guys and good guys trying to control this force for whatever side they are fighting for. Instead, we have a God who has the power, and He uses it the way He sees fit, to do what He pleases. So if we pray to God for something that doesn't please God, will He do it?

No. Surely, surely not. He will not do what He doesn't please. Remember the two errors I mentioned earlier concerning God's sovereignty in prayer. Here we see it. God does whatever He pleases. God knows the beginning from the end. So our prayers are just informing God, and at best can only change us. That's not what Paul believes, and we see that here as we continue on.

[27:17] He's not going to let that statement stand. In verse 10, continuing again, he says, he talks about God as being the one. On Him we have set our hope and that He will deliver us.

You also must help us by prayer so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of the many. Paul says explicitly that God will deliver them as they join in working in prayer, for Him in prayer.

He says that this blessing comes from the prayers of the many. He's not just putting it all on God. He's seeing this part as part of the whole. Basically, Paul is saying prayer works. Prayer is effective. Prayer gets results. Prayer is powerful. We see this is what Paul believes, and this is what he's encouraging these believers to believe as well, that their prayers are accomplishing God's purposes, that they are a part of what God is doing.

So the sovereign God works through prayer, and Paul affirms this. He says, He will deliver us as you join in working for us by prayer. Lastly, we also see in here, again, that one of those main purposes of prayer worked out as God answers them.

[28:33] He says there at the end, as you also join in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf, for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of the many.

So what is the result of this prayer? Paul sees so that thanks may be given by many persons. He's not just seeing that he's going to be delivered.

I mean, he's in trouble. He wants to be delivered. We can understand that. And the Corinthians pray, and Paul will be delivered. And this is the blessing that Paul is talking about. But that's not the end that Paul sees.

He also sees that this whole purpose of prayer, the whole purpose of everything that God does, is to show what God is like. He's going to bring glory to himself.

And these people are going to see God at work. They're going to see God answer the prayer to show what he's like to at least three groups here. To those who prayed, to those who received the deliverance, and those who heard about it.

[29:30] And Paul says that these people are going to give thanks to God, that he is able to answer prayer, and that he does answer prayer. And so here Paul says that this prayer results in thanksgiving to God.

This, rather than Paul's deliverance, is the most important result of the prayers of the Corinthians. So note this carefully. Paul is not primarily asking for deliverance from peril.

That's where we would normally focus. Now, we're under great affliction here. Please pray that we would deliver. But that's be delivered. But that's not Paul's focus. Paul's focus is always on the glory of God.

That God would be seen more clearly in a way that causes us to know him as the awesome creator and controller of all things. And as we look at more of Paul's prayers, we see these same priorities.

Paul prays for others and even asks for prayers for himself at times. But the desired primary result is that God would be glorified, that the gospel would be proclaimed. So does prayer work?

[30:36] We have to say it does. It definitely works. Prayer is effective. God uses prayer to bring out his good and wise purposes for his glory. Prayer is the most effective means that we have to get what we need.

Not necessarily what we want, but to get what we need, it is the most effective way. It's to pray to God for it. We are weak. We don't always know what we need. But through prayer, we can acknowledge that without his power, all our plans, all our efforts, all our organization, all our programs will accomplish nothing of eternal significance.

When we pray, we are saying, we are weak and you are strong. We can do nothing apart from you, but you can do all things. Whatever we do, we want to do for your glory. And so make it obvious that this work is from you.

This would be the motivation behind all of our praying. So in closing today, I just want to urge you to consider your own prayer lives. Do you pray with these biblical purposes?

Do you pray in faith, believing that prayer changes things, that this is the way that God works in his creation? If you cannot say yes to these questions, your prayer life will just continue to limp along.

[31:48] It will continue to be a struggle. It will continue to just feel like a duty. And you will really start your growth as a disciple. The key to seeing God at work in your life is the key to having that joyful prayer time.

John Piper, in his book, *Desiring God*, says this. He says, unless I'm badly mistaken, the reason we don't have a significant prayer life is not because we don't want it.

It's because we don't plan it. And so oftentimes, we want these things, but we just don't know how to go about doing it or getting it. So today, I want you to, even today, rethink your priorities and how does prayer fit into that.

I know as a church, again, we're trying to make an emphasis on being a praying church because we believe that's how God works in his creation and that's how he's going to work in this city in response to the prayers of his people.

We don't want to be controlled by the busyness of life. We want to, perhaps you need to make a new resolve, set a time, set a place, choose a portion of scripture to guide you. If you're at a loss, go back to the model prayer in Matthew chapter 6 where Jesus teaches his disciples to pray.

[33:00] Start there. If you don't know how to get started beyond that, ask one of the elders to help you. There's plenty of ways we can help you get started and help you begin to grow in that way. God wants you to pray.

As much as you could possibly desire to be in his presence, his desire to be with you in prayer is greater. We were created to communicate and fellowship with him and this happens through his word and through prayer.

And so, let me pray for us as we close today. Dear Heavenly Father, we do just give you thanks for the, again, for the knowledge that you have revealed to us that you are sovereign, that you know all things, that you can do all things, that you control all things, Father, and help us to be comforted in this.

But also, Father, help us this knowledge cause us to come to you knowing that you have ordained prayer as the means by which you accomplish your plans. Father, it is just amazing that you include us in this process of bringing about your eternal purposes.

And Father, we just thank you that we can come before you in prayer, not just because we are commanded to and not just to follow Jesus' example, but knowing that you desire to hear our prayers, you desire to work through our prayers.

[34:23] And that's, this is the primary means by which you accomplish what we desire, to see you glorified and to see you made known to the people around us.

Father, we pray that you would just, again, glorify yourself today to us as we think back on the many ways that you have answered prayers in our lives, have answered prayers to those around us in the scriptures.

There's so many ways that we can see that you have answered prayers. Father, help us to, to cause us to be, to be a motivation to us to pursue you in prayer.
Father, that it would then become a joyful time as we spend time with you in prayer and response to the word and just contemplating how much you, you do care for us and love us.
Father, again, just pray blessings on these people as they consider us and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.