



Jesus at Prayer in Gethsemane

*St. John the Baptist Church
New Brighton, MN*

JESUS, A MAN OF PRAYER

Jesus prayed in church. Jesus observed the Third Commandment, “Remember to keep holy the sabbath day” (Ex 20:8), and he did so by going to church.

Jesus was in the custom of going to the synagogue to pray (Lk 4:16b), first in Nazareth, then in Capernaum, and then in the synagogues throughout Galilee. He also prayed in the Temple in Jerusalem. Similarly, we should go to church every weekend and at other times to pray.

Jesus prayed outside of church. The gospels do not state that Jesus prayed at home with Mary and Joseph, but it is safe to presume that they did so. Jesus prayed at the dinner table with his disciples (Lk 22:14-20). Jesus prayed outdoors in many different locations: in a cave, on a mountainside, along the seashore, and in a garden. If Jesus prayed wherever he went, we should pray at home, before meals, in the car, at school, at the lake, or wherever we may be.

Jesus prayed by himself. Jesus liked to go off by himself to pray, sometimes very early before dawn, sometimes late at night. Jesus prayed after he performed great miracles because power had gone out from him (Mk 5:30) and prayer renewed his strength. Jesus prayed before he preached (Mk 1:35,39) because prayer was his source of wisdom and inspiration. Jesus prayed before he chose his twelve apostles (Lk 6:12) because he needed the Holy Spirit to direct his decisions. Jesus prayed each day, and his prayer kept him close to his Father and gave him the strength and guidance he needed.

Private prayer was an essential part of Jesus’ daily routine and, guided by his

example, we should set aside some private time to pray each and every day.

Jesus prayed for others. Jesus prayed that Peter’s faith would be strong (Lk 22:32); that his disciples would be protected from the evil one (Jn 17:15), be consecrated to the truth (Jn 17:17), and be united as one (Jn 17:21); and that God would forgive his tormentors (Lk 23:34). As Jesus prayed for the welfare of others, we should pray for the welfare of our family, friends, fellow believers, and those in need.

Jesus prayed with Scripture. Jesus prayed by reading the Bible. When Jesus went to the desert for forty days to fast and pray, it is likely that he spent a large portion of his time in solitude reading and reflecting upon the book of Deuteronomy. This is evident by how Jesus immediately quoted three separate passages from Deuteronomy to repel the temptations of the devil (Lk 4:8,10-11,12). These verses were fresh in his mind, on the tip of his tongue. Jesus also read from the prophet Isaiah (Lk 4:17-20), and he regularly quoted passages from the Old Testament in his preaching and teaching. If Jesus prayed by reading the Bible, so should we.

Jesus prayed at pivotal moments. Jesus prayed before the most important moments of his life. Jesus prayed at the beginning. He prayed before he began his public ministry with forty days of prayer in the desert (Lk 4:1-13). Jesus prayed at the midpoint, at the crucial moment when it was time to conclude his ministry in Galilee and embark on the fateful journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:28). And Jesus prayed at the end, at Gethsemane on the night before he died (Lk 22:41-46). If Jesus prayed before the biggest events in his life, we should do likewise. We should pray before getting confirmed, before getting engaged or married, before taking a new job or changing jobs, before moving, or before making the decision to retire.

Jesus prayed at the end. Jesus prayed as he was dying. When he hung on the Cross, he prayed, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34), and then with his last breath he prayed, “Father, into

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Sunday:	Hb 1:2-3; 2:2-4/Ps 95:1-2, 6-9/ 2 Tm 1:6-8, 13-14/Lk 17:5-10
Monday:	Gal 1:6-12/Ps 111:1-2, 7-10/Lk 10:25-37
Tuesday:	Gal 1:13-24/Ps 139:1-3, 13-15/ Lk 10:38-42
Wednesday:	Gal 2:1-2, 7-14/Ps 117:1-2/Lk 11:1-4
Thursday:	Gal 3:1-5/Lk 1:69-75/Lk 11:5-13
Friday:	Gal 3:7-14/Ps 111:1-6/Lk 11:15-26
Saturday:	Gal 3:22-29/Ps 105:2-7/Lk 11:27-28
Next Sunday:	2 Kgs 5:14-17/Ps 98:1-4/2 Tm 2:8-13/ Lk 17:11-19