

“We Do Not Know What to Do”:
Jehoshaphat - Praying in Desperation
Sermon Notes

➤ **Lessons from the life of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, abound - but three in particular rise to the top**

**When trouble comes looking for God's people...*

1. Let us pray (vv.1-12; Philippians 4:6-7; James 5:16a)

2. Let us sing (vv.13-30; Acts 16:22-25)

3. Let us beware (vv.31-37; 1 Corinthians 10:12)

Next Sunday: Nehemiah 1-2 - “So I Prayed to the God of Heaven”:
Prayer & Fasting With Nehemiah

Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of June 13th-20th

*This week, let's read together and reflect upon this excellent article from a handful of years back at the Crossway blog written by Megan Hill titled: "**10 Things You Should Know About Corporate Prayer**".¹*

1. A Christian never prays alone.

When we think about prayer, we might first envision something like Eric Enstrom's iconic print, *Grace*, in which a man bows his head at the table alone. We tend to think of prayer as primarily a solitary and private activity, but the Bible tells a different story. According to Romans 8, the prayers of even one Christian are the occasion of a divine conversation in which Father, Son, and Spirit all participate. When we pray, God talks to God. What's more, Revelation 8:3-5 pulls back the curtain of heaven to show us that the prayers of all the saints are gathered together in the heavenly places and are poured out together to accomplish God's great purposes. Even one person in prayer is never truly alone.

2. God's people have been praying together since the book of Genesis.

We don't have to wander too far into the new-created world before we stumble upon a prayer meeting. Adam and Eve's children, Cain and Seth, form the two families of humanity's future, and these families could not be more different. The Cainites were extremely talented—they raised livestock, made music, and invented metal tools. They were also godless. The Sethites, on the other hand, didn't seem to have much in the way of outward credentials. We don't read of any great strides in science or technology. Instead, we read that they "began to call on the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4:26). In humble dependence on Yahweh—their relational, covenant-making God—the children of Seth held the world's first prayer meeting.

3. God's people will keep praying together for eternity.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism tells us that "prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God," and when we read Revelation 19:1-8 we see that God's people in heaven are doing just that. Their sin is removed, their human weakness is put to right, and they eternally shout with thanksgiving the perfected desire of their hearts: "Hallelujah! . . . Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!" (v. 7).

4. Corporate prayer is valuable work that every believer can participate in.

Sadly, even in the church, we sometimes value people who do things over those who can't. We value the twenty-something, college-educated woman who rescues sex-trafficking victims over the seventy-year-old widow in a suburban nursing home. We value artists and organizers and big thinkers over children with disabilities. But corporate prayer is valuable work for everyone in Christ's church. The hosannas of children are no less precious to Christ than the eloquent praises of adults (Matt. 21:15-16), and, to quote John Owen, "the prayers of the meanest saints may be useful to the greatest apostle."

¹ <https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-corporate-prayer/> . Accessed 6/11/21 @ 10:45pm.

5. Praying with other people teaches us about prayer . . .

Chances are, most of what you know about prayer you learned from hearing someone else pray. Mary learned to pray from Hannah (Luke 1:46-55; 1 Sam. 2:1-10). Saul (later Paul) doubtless learned something about prayer from Stephen (Acts 7:57-8:1). Even Jesus taught his disciples to pray by giving them an example (Matt. 6:9-13) and by taking them by the hand and leading them together to the place of prayer (Luke 9:28; 11:1; 22:39-46).

6. . . . and so much more.

But praying with others doesn't merely teach us about prayer. Theology, repentance, and right desires are also learned from the prayers of others as we gather together before our Lord. Indeed, praying together trains us in the whole life of faith.

7. When one person prays out loud, everyone is praying.

When I was a teenager, living for a time in the Highlands of Scotland, I worshiped with a Free Church of Scotland congregation. I'll never forget my surprise on that first Lord's Day when, as the elder began to pray, the entire congregation rose to its feet, standing for the length of the prayer. In that moment, it was clear to me that the church at prayer is not a passive, half-drowsy, group of listeners; the church at prayer is a body at work, an army at war, and a congregation at worship. Whether we stand or sit or kneel for prayer, we must understand that when one person prays aloud, every person in the assembly is actually praying alongside him.

8. Whole-church prayer is vital.

Even a casual glance through the book of Acts reveals that the early church was serious about praying together. They prayed together in the temple and in their homes, when they were sick and when they were filled with the Spirit, at mealtimes and in times of persecution. Again and again we find them all together, devoting themselves to prayer. As our local churches take up valuable projects in the places where we live and work, we must not neglect that most vital work that undergirds everything we do.

9. Household prayer is an important act of both hospitality and evangelism.

19th century minister theologian J. W. Alexander wrote: "We are, perhaps, ready enough to make our guests welcome, to provide for their lodging and refreshment, to show them the wonders of our environs, and to invite friends for their entertainment; but, besides this, we owe a duty to their souls." By including our guests in our times of family prayer, we provide for their spiritual needs. If they are fellow-believers, our prayers will be an encouragement to them, welcoming them into the spiritual life of our home. If they are non-Christians, our prayers can stand as a testimony before them, pointing them to the one who is Lord of our home. Who knows but that because of our household prayers, we may one day find past dinner guests seated beside us at the wedding supper of the Lamb?

10. Resolution and preparation are the best equipment for overcoming reluctance to pray publicly.

By some accounts, public speaking is the general population's greatest fear; public prayer may be its Christian equivalent. Each of us has had times when we face the awkward pauses during group prayer time with dread—knowing we probably should pray aloud but unable to overcome our inertia and timidity to do so. For these times, our best equipment is prior resolve to pray if given the opportunity and prior thought for what we will pray. Our topics might vary. We could pick a short verse of Scripture, a particular need, or a single ministry of our church as our prayer focus, but the important thing is that we come to corporate prayer with intention to lead others to the throne for their good and for God's glory. Brothers and sisters, let us pray.