



# NEW CROSSING CHURCH

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**Prayer Series: Upward. Inward. Outward.**

**Study 1: What is Prayer?**

Note: You can listen to or watch the sermon of the same title, Criag Robertson, Jan 9 & 16, 2022

Jesus shows us how to pray upward, inward, and outward. He calls us to follow his example to build our personal communion with Him.

**Prayer is Simple but Profound** - A child can do it, yet an adult can spend a lifetime learning it.

1. As a child learns how to speak from listening to those around them, how have you learned to pray from listening to others?
2. What are the positive role models that have inspired and helped you in your spiritual journey? What are the negative ones (without names) that have discouraged or hindered you in prayer?

**Prayer is Transformation** - Prayer is more about transforming you into the image of Christ than changing your circumstances (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

3. There are times when we meet the Lord in prayer and find ourselves changed from the encounter; either in our hearts, or the way we think, or how we live. Do you have a story of when you have been changed from an encounter with Jesus in prayer? In what way would you like to be more transformed into His image?

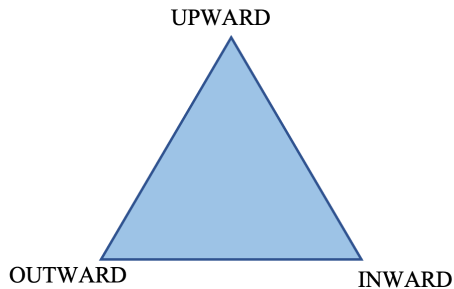
**Prayer Is A Story Of Calling Upon The Lord!**

**Read 1 Chronicles 16:8-11**

4. In the beginning man lost perfect communion with God and began to call upon Him (Genesis 4:26). Later God instructed Moses to build a tabernacle where people could worship and call upon Him in prayer. The Ark of the Covenant came to represent the Presence of the Lord and that is why David brought the Ark into Jerusalem so people could easily worship and pray to the Lord. If you were like David bringing the Presence of the Lord more central in your life, what would change?

## **Prayer Is Three Dimensional**

In the gospels we see Jesus role model three dimensions in his prayer life. We find He would have his Upward time of prayer with the Father, His Inward prayers with his Community of Disciples, and then His Outward prayers for individuals and crowds that were not yet believers. Here is a picture and simple explanation of these three dimensions that we will learn how to pray later in the series.



### **UPWARD Prayer – To Know and Worship God**

- **Prayer is Intimacy** - The passion of Upward prayer is entering into communion with the Lord before petitioning him for answers. “Our Father in Heaven.”
- In our upward prayers we focus on the Lord Himself. We seek to know Him more through revelations of the Scriptures and Spirit. We come to know His divine attributes, His good character, and love He has for us.
- We worship Him through our praises and thanks for who He is and what He has done in our lives.
- Laments are also our upward prayers as we passionately tell the Lord the things that grieve us and deeply trouble us.

### **INWARD Prayer – To Respond and Intercede for Us**

- Inward prayers begin with responding to any of the revelations the Lord has given to us in our Upward time with Him. We are transformed more into his image as we apply to our mind and hearts what He has revealed to us.
- “Us” includes yourself and other believers in the Church. We intercede for ourselves and others with prayers led by the Holy Spirit. We petition the Lord for the changes we believe will bring Him glory.
- Inward prayers include our asking the Lord to meet our daily needs, and our confessions of our sins and failures in following His will.

### **OUTWARD Prayer - To Intercede and Battle for Others**

- Outward prayers seek the Father’s Kingdom to come and His will be done on earth.
  - Outward prayers are missional in nature because they seek the lost to be found and all people to be saved.
  - With compassion we intercede for those in need outside of the Church.
  - Also in these prayers we battle spiritually for those under Satan’s attack.
5. How are your prayers skewed in one particular dimension? Draw next to the triangle above what your prayer triangle currently looks like.

### **Prayer Is Seeking The Face And Strength Of The Lord!**

6. **Read 1 Chronicles 16:8-11, 24** - Can you identify in these verses which are Upward, Inward, and Outward?
7. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for “presence” is the same word translated “face.” (ex. Gen. 3:8-9, 1 Chron. 16:11, Psalm 4:6-7, Psalm 27:8). In Genesis 3:8-9 we find Adam and Eve hiding from the Lord’s face and His asking “Where are you?” Is there anything that is hindering you from seeking the Lord’s face?
8. So often we seek the answers to our prayers more than we seek the presence of the Lord to simply enjoy Him and experience His love of us. What would change in your prayer life to move them more upward?
9. Prayer is powerless on it’s own. But after we have sought the Lord’s presence in prayer then we can seek His power in doing the Father’s will. Do you have a story of a time you experienced the Strength of the Lord in a way that it impacted your life or relationship with Him?

**Option 1 Prayer Time:** Share how you would like the Lord to strengthen your prayer muscles this year in one of the three dimensions.

#### **Option 2 Prayer Time: Upward Prayer**

1. **Offer Praise to the Lord as your act of worship**
  - What do you appreciate about God?
  - For what do you need to thank the Lord?
2. **Declare in your heart to the Lord that you will seek His face continually.**
3. **Enjoy His Presence now in silence.**
4. **In prayer seek His Strength where you need him most.**
  - Where are you in a difficult or desperate situation and need strength?