

FIELD-TESTED SERMON RESOURCES

SERMON SERIES

TRUSTED | BIBLICAL | FIELD-TESTED

Thank you for downloading this sample PDF from our Sermon Series line of resources.

When you stand up in front of students proclaim the Word of God, you need trusted, creative, Biblically solid content. YM360's Sermon Series is exactly what you're looking for.

Field-tested, from-the-trenches of youth ministry, YM360 Sermon Series are complete sermon outlines and graphic packages designed to help you lead students closer to God through proclaiming His Word.

SERIES OVERVIEW FOR CONNECTED

Communication is vital in any relationship, and our relationship with God is no different. There is a powerful tool every believer has, and yet many of us never use it to its full potential. If we want to stay connected to God, then we need to pray. This series is designed to answer four major questions about prayer to best keep us connected with Christ.

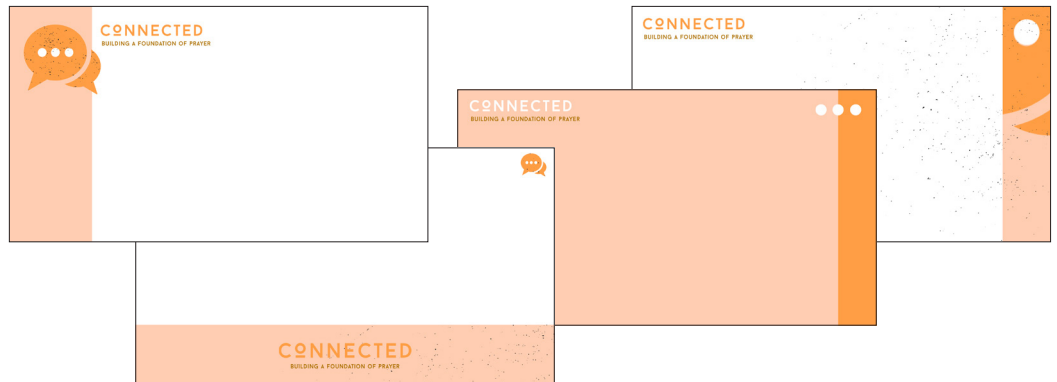
- **SESSION 1:** What is Prayer? We have all experienced prayer before, but in session one, we will lay out a scriptural definition of prayer, which will serve as the basis for the rest of our study.
- **SESSION 2:** How do we Pray? Jesus lays out a model prayer for us in Matthew. We'll use this model to help us see four requirements of our prayers.
- **SESSION 3:** When do we Pray? Is it meals, before bed, or during church? We are going to use this lesson to look at the peace which comes through a life of constant prayer.
- **SESSION 4:** Why do we Pray? Power tools can accomplish anything when they are connected to their power source. God has great plans for each of our lives, and prayer is how we stay connected to the real cause of strength.

Connected is designed to help students understand how important prayer is in the life of a believer. Prayer is not just tossing up some words with our eyes closed, but rather a gift allowing us to stand in the presence of a loving God.

BACKGROUND SLIDES, PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK, AND MORE . . .

Each YM360 Sermon Series comes with title and background slides, promotional art (including Instagram images), and logo treatments. Here is what to expect.

BACKGROUND AND TITLE SLIDES



PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK



INSTAGRAM IMAGES



LOGO TREATMENT



NOTE: Each YM360 Sermon Series also comes with the native files of the logo in case you want to replicate the design for other uses.

Connected Sermon Series Overview

The Sermon Series Overview is a one-page glimpse of the stuff you need to know to begin preparing to preach.

- **Session 1 Purpose:** What is Prayer? We have all experienced prayer before, but in session one, we will lay out a scriptural definition of prayer, which will serve as the basis for the rest of our study.
- **Scripture Passage(s):** Romans 8:26-27, Matthew 27:51
- **Session Snapshot:** Prayer happens all the time in Christian culture, but we can often forget its importance. We will formulate a definition for prayer, while also looking at Scripture to confirm this definition. We need first to understand what prayer is before we can start using it to remain connected with God.
- **What You May Need:** Optional illustration: Relaying a Message (Personal Story); optional illustration: Long Distance Communication (Personal Story)

Details on *Connected* Sermon Series Outlines

Communication is vital in any relationship, and our relationship with God is no different. There is a powerful tool every believer has, and yet many of us never use it to its full potential. If we want to stay connected to God, then we need to pray. This series is designed to answer four major questions about prayer to best keep us connected with Christ.

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How To Use the *Connected* Sermon Series

This sermon series outline is designed for use by a communicator in a large group setting. It provides various elements such as suggestions on illustrations or images, Scripture passages, background information, and application points that you will need to prepare your lesson. It also includes discussion questions that could be used in a small group following the message and artwork for promotion or message support.

These sermons are designed to be useful for all types of groups and churches, and you should feel free to make adjustments that benefit your particular circumstance.

I. Introduction

- a. Two things can directly impact the growth of the church and the impact of the Kingdom of God.
 - i. Students Reading Their Bibles
 - ii. Students Starting Actually to Pray
 1. This does not mean praying for practice instead of praying for movement.
- b. We *get* to connect with God in prayer. Prayer is a source of strength we need as believers.
- c. We are starting a series called Connected so that we can reevaluate prayer in our lives.
 - i. The series is broken into four weeks, answering four major questions.
 1. What is Prayer?
 2. How do we pray?
 3. When do we pray?
 4. Why do we pray?
- d. So how do we define prayer?
 - i. To borrow John Piper's Definition, prayer is "intentionally conveying a message to God."i
 - ii. We never want to take a person's words for granted, though, so we want to dive into Scripture to see where we find this truth.
 - iii. We must filter what we hear about God through the Word we have received from God.

II. Prayer is Conveying a Message

- a. [Read Romans 8:26-27]
- b. Optional Illustration-Personal Story Relaying a Message
[Tip: This is an excellent spot to connect with your group by sharing a story from your own life. This enables them to connect with you from beyond the pulpit. It shows you as more than a speaker, but a person. Here is the story I used to communicate the heart of translation: taking a message and moving it between to different contexts. Get a feel for how I used this story and come up with your own that functions similarly.]

When I was in high school, I had a friend named Jake. Jake could speak fluent Spanish, and we would use this gift to play a little game in public. The game was called, Translator. Now I am not fluent in Spanish, but most people would not know that based on this game. The game was, we would go into a public place where Jake would start speaking in Spanish. For an improv challenge, I would translate for Jake to every person we met (again, I don't know Spanish). If they knew Spanish, even better because Jake could talk to them.

This became a fun game for us because it made both of us react based on what was being translated. I was thinking on my feet about what Jake might say, and he was responding with his expressions and tones based on what I was saying. The struggle would be when people wanted to say something back to Jake. I would string together as much Spanish as I knew, while Jake knew exactly what the other person was saying because he also speaks English.

Now, why do I tell this story, because translation can be a powerful thing. We would watch as people's eyes lit up who encountered someone who spoke fluent Spanish. They felt they were fully communicating with someone in a different language.

Some people serve as translators across the globe as a ministry. We have a deep appreciation for those individuals because when a translation is done well, it allows us to communicate across barriers that were previously blocked. The beauty of prayer is that unlike our game, a real message is being communicated!

- c. When you try and make a phone call, you need a phone. To send a piece of mail you need a mailbox.
 - i. Prayer's beauty comes in our ability to reach out to God at all times. We can communicate with God in trouble, distress, or joy.
 - ii. When we feel a desire to reach out to God, we serve a God who is always with us.
- d. Sometimes we feel the need to communicate, but we don't know what to deliver. The amazing thing is that the Holy Spirit Serves as the Translator.
 - i. We are allowed to ask things of God, and this is where the Holy Spirit intercedes that message.
- e. Romans 8:26 tells us, "the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what to pray for as we ought."
 - i. The Holy Spirit serves to assist us when we try to communicate with the Lord.
- f. I see this same idea at work with babies and their parents.
 - i. If you have ever been around a baby trying to communicate, isn't it funny how the parent seems to know exactly what the child is saying.
- g. The Holy Spirit does a similar thing for us when we try and communicate our needs to God. Others will never be able to understand messages which are intended for our Father.
- h. Prayer is conveying a message to the Lord. But what types of messages do we convey?
 - i. Thanksgiving: We show our appreciation for what God has done.
 - ii. Praise: We honor God by declaring His known traits. This is not always about what He has done, but who He is.
 - iii. Requests: We come asking for God to work in His way.
 - iv. Hurt: We express our pain or suffering, knowing we serve a God who listens and cares.
 - v. Sharing our heart: We communicate with God just as we communicate with all those we care for. When we love God, we know we can communicate without need. We seek to communicate.

III. Prayer must be intentional.

- a. Our prayers to God are not to be passive things. We should seek God in prayer, and seek to speak with Him.
 - i. Prayer should not be something we hope happens.
 - ii. Prayer is not about hoping God figures things out, it's about having a conversation and communicating.
- b. We fall into a trap where we say, God knows everything, and He can see my heart, so I don't need to pray.

- i. There are people in my life who know I have needs, but I am responsible for sharing them.
- c. It's not about God knowing or not knowing, it's about us WANTING a relationship. Relationships are built on communication, and prayer is a powerful tool given to us through the Holy Spirit.
 - i. We wouldn't show up to a war without weapons, and yet we leave the house without prayer every day.
- d. In verse 26 it says in our weakness, we do not know what to pray for as we ought, WHICH MEANS WE ARE PRAYING!
 - i. Now here is the cool part about prayer, we see it in many different forms in the Bible: Songs. Conversation, hallowed gatherings, spiritual times
 - ii. We say it again because it's true: God is everywhere, so you can jump in and communicate with Him anytime.
- e. Optional Illustration-Long Distance Communication

[Tip: This is an excellent spot to connect with your group by sharing a story from your own life. Here is the story I used to communicate the idea of intentionally communicating even with those we love. Get a feel for how I used this illustration and come up with your own that works similarly.]

I mentioned my best friend and one of my brothers Jake a little bit earlier, and we loved growing up near each other. Sadly, Jake lives about three and a half hours away from me now. We saw each other all the time growing up, but when we began to live in separate states, our communication became scarcer. I love him to death, and if he called needing something, I would do everything in my power to help him with that. Here's the thing though, we don't talk every day. If I don't talk to Jake for two weeks, it doesn't mean I hate him.

What happens to our relationship, though, when we don't communicate? All of the work and love we have for each other as brothers is not diminished, but it does start to put us on different pages. When he shares a story with me about something that happened, I am not entirely confident about what he's talking about. When I try and share with him about something in my life, he has to ask more questions.

For my relationship with Jake to be at its best, I need to reach out to him intentionally. I need to want to communicate with him, and not just hope it happens. This is true in our prayer lives, as well.

IV. Prayer involves God.

- a. Here's the deal with many Christ-followers: they too often throw up some pretty empty prayers because they lack faith.
 - 1. Please, God help me with this test.
 - 2. Please, God, help me feel better.
- b. The only issue with this is that there is someone on the other side of the call.
 - i. What if I told you I had a celebrity's cell phone number, all you had to do was call?
 - 1. A famous coach? Life advice? Video Game Expert?
 - 2. Would you call it? Why would you call?

- ii. God is on the other side of the line of prayer. God has the power to create the universe, and He is excited to talk to you.
 - 1. The most powerful being in all existence knows you by name and looks forward to talking with you.
- c. Verse 27 says that the Spirit intercedes for us, the saints, according to the Will of God.
 - i. We ask because we believe, and we Love God. We speak to God because we think and love spending time with Him.
 - ii. If you believed God would say yes to anything you prayed, how often would you pray?
 - 1. Let this be your view of God because it helps us understand how to handle a no.
 - 2. When God says no to our desire, we know the Spirit has interceded and done things according to what is best for the will of God.
- d. God loves His people, so He makes a way.
 - i. When we read the story of the Old Testament, we see a group of people who are continually trapped in sin.
 - ii. They follow God, they fall away, and this cycle happens over and over.
 - iii. When the people were in sin, there was one way to repent. They would head to the temple to have a sacrifice made. The priest would intercede for them to God.
 - iv. Jesus comes to be the ultimate sacrifice.
- e. In Matthew 27:51, Jesus dies on the cross, and the curtain in the temple was torn in two.
 - i. We are no longer required to go through a priest to gain access to God. We are allowed freedom to connect with God.
 - ii. It gets stated often because it is a significant deal. The one who sits at the center of creation requests and desires to spend eternity with you.
 - iii. He is not waiting on us hand and knee, but He has made way for us to reach out and be in His presence.
- f. Jesus died for us to gain this right.
 - i. When Jesus died, He said I'm taking all of their sins with me because I want to be with my people.
 - ii. When we stop and pray, when we intentionally convey a message to God, we join His presence.

V. Conclusion

- a. Wrap Up the What
 - i. We came tonight to ask one question: "What is prayer"?
 - ii. We used the quote: "Prayer is intentionally conveying a message to God."
 - iii. In Romans 8, we see the Spirit's ability to intercede for us. We pray to involve God and enter into His presence.
 - iv. We are not just throwing up words but connecting with God.
- b. Gospel Presentation
 - i. The Holy Spirit is with believers ready to intercede on our behalf.
 - ii. Christ came and died to allow us the freedom to connect with God.
 - iii. When we enter into a relationship with Christ, we gain this connection to God through prayer.

ⁱ "John Piper-what is prayer?" Youtube Video, 5:04, "Desiring God," May 22, 2013.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=oK5sum-LFFA

Connected Sermon Series Outline | Session 1: What is Prayer?

Small-Group Discussion Questions

You can use these discussion questions to facilitate small groups after your sermon, or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go. These questions are designed to help students think critically about the sermon and what it means to them.

1. How would you define prayer before tonight?
2. Where are some places or times you pray?
3. Why would we believe prayer is useless at times? What can make us believe this?
4. Why does being intentional with prayer matter? What does unintentional prayer look like?
5. How does knowing God is involved with prayer change our view of it?
6. How does a consistent prayer life affect our relationship with God?
7. Why does it matter whether we enter God's presence in prayer? What would life be like without the ability to connect with God in prayer?
8. If God said yes to everything you prayed, how often would you pray? Why is it ok He doesn't?