

Lord, Teach Us to Pray Introduction

Key Scripture:

*Our Father, who art in Heaven
Hallowed by Thy Name
Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done
On Earth, as it is in Heaven
Give us this day, our Daily Bread
Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil
For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen Matthew 6:9-13*

Portion for the Journey:

The Lord's Prayer is undoubtedly one of the most beloved and often repeated prayers of the Church. The very familiarity of this prayer is what makes us most likely to overlook the depth and richness of all the LORD has placed within this simple prayer. While this prayer has traditionally been called, "The Lord's Prayer," it could more aptly be called "The Believer's Prayer." Not only is this prayer precious because it was given to us by our Savior, its true value is that it contains the essence of everything we need to know in order to enter a prayer relationship with the LORD.

Jesus taught this prayer to the disciples on two occasions, Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4. This prayer is the LORD's answer to the disciples request to teach them how to pray. They saw the tremendous power that was released when Jesus prayed to His Father. They had observed Him often going into the wilderness to be alone to speak with the Father -- sometimes praying all night. Jesus had just returned from a night with the Father in prayer. Was His face filled with the glory of looking into the Father's face? It is no wonder the disciples wanted to know how to pray as Jesus prayed!! The cry of the disciples who realized their need to ask for instruction in the place of prayer needs to be our cry as well because we do not know how to pray as we should. (Rom. 8:26-27)

Jesus responded by saying, "Pray, then, in this way..."

The Lord made it clear in the two verses preceding this teaching that prayer should not consist of meaningless repetitions or reciting of a prayer by rote. The Lord's prayer was not ever intended to merely be recited by rote! Jesus said, "In this manner you should pray." In this prayer He has given us a form or pattern by which we can base all of our prayers. (Matt. 6:7-8) Arthur Pink said, *"The Lord's Prayer was graciously furnished by Jesus to teach us both the manner and the method of how to pray and the matters for which to pray. It should therefore be*

*highly esteemed by Christians.*¹ The Greek word translated “this way or this manner,” is “hemon” (Strong’s 3779) meaning, “after this manner, fashion or pattern.” It means to formulate or fashion in a like manner. This prayer is given as a model or template of essential prayer points by which to fashion our own prayers.

“This prayer is not a formula for repetition so much as an outline for expansion. Worship is to be longer than a sentence. Petitions are not confined to bread. Forgiveness is to be requested in specifics...the entry of God’s Kingdom into present earthborn situations is not accomplished in a momentary utterance...without the intervention of God’s kingdom rule through prayer, Earth’s circumstances will succumb to inevitable consequences. Earthly scenes of need must be penetrated by God’s “will here as it is in heaven.” Either the weakness of man’s will (the flesh) or the viciousness of hell’s work (the devil) will prevail. God’s power alone can change things and bring heaven’s rule (kingdom) ...the prayer’s answers are His, however, the praying is ours to do.”² It is therefore very important for us to study this prayer and learn the essential elements of the prayer as Jesus taught His disciples and left as a legacy for the Church through the ages.

It was a common practice for a rabbi to teach his disciples a method or “form” for prayer. Yet Jesus instructed the disciples that they were not to pray as others did, who offered their prayers to show how pious they were, to seek the attention or admiration of men, or to employ meaningless repetitions, supposing they will be heard because of their many words. In Matthew 6:6, Jesus prefaces His instructions on prayer by telling them to go into their inner room, close the door and pray to “your Father who is in secret, and your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” He repeats, “So do not be like them; for Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.” (Matt. 6:8)

The prayer is only sixty-six words in length and can be prayed through in less than one minute. The beauty of its simplicity is that it encapsulates all of the essential doctrines of the Word necessary for us to understand our salvation and relationship to the LORD, as well as our calling as His children. Every part of this prayer is taken from the Word and demonstrates the power of praying the Word of God. As we meditate upon each of the phrases used in this prayer, we will receive the foundation for knowing the Father and participating in His Kingdom work in our own lives and the lives of others.

Digging Deeper in the Word: "Pray then in this way"

1. Ask the Lord to teach us what constitutes true prayer. The Greek word for prayer used in this passage is “proseuchomai” (4336) which means simply to supplicate, worship or pray towards God most earnestly. Even though the definition is simple, the verses that use this word tell us much about the place prayer is to hold in the life of the believer. Look up these verses and note what you learn from each passage. What role should

¹ The Beatitudes and the Lord’s Prayer, by Arthur W. Pink

² New Spirit filled Life Bible, “Prayer and Intercession,” Kingdom Dynamics note, p. 1409
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prayer should play in the life of a believer? Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 13:18; Jude 1:20; 1 Thes. 5:17

2. This prayer was given as a model or pattern by which we can fashion our own prayers. It is not to be a prayer in itself, but a form to learn to pray more comprehensively according to God's will. (Strong's 3779) It is therefore very important for us to study this prayer and learn the essential elements of prayer that Jesus taught His disciples and left as a legacy for the Church through the ages.

All aspects of prayer are included in the Lord's Prayer.

Relationship
Adoration
Confession
Petitions
Intercessions and supplications
Thanksgiving

3. The Lord's Prayer consists of seven petitions. The first three are focus upon God and His Kingdom. The last four are focused upon man's needs. How do you think this compares to the LORD's directions to 'seek first the kingdom of God and all of these other things will be added unto us?' Matt. 6:33

4. Re-read the Lord's Prayer and notice how many times the word, "I" is used. How many times are the words "our, us, we" used in this prayer? What can we learn from this perspective toward prayer? How does this compare with the content of most of the prayers we utter?

What is the Lord Speaking to Your Heart regarding Prayer?

How would you like to respond to God?

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast:

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward gleaming of an eye,
When none but God is near

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high:

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watch-word at the gates of death,
He enters heaven by prayer

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And say, Behold! he prays!

The saints in prayer appear as one,
In word, in deed, in mind,
When with the Father and the Son
Their fellowship they find

Nor prayer is made on earth alone:
The Holy Spirit pleads;
And Jesus, on th' eternal throne,
For sinners intercedes

"O Thou, by whom we come to God!
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer thyself hast trod,
Lord, teach us how to pray!"

MONTGOMERY —Adam Clarke's Commentary