

HOW TO PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

adapted from Ashley Harris, FaithfullyPlanted.com

“Lord, teach us how to pray...” –Jesus’ disciples in Luke 11:1

The Lord’s Prayer is found in Matthew 6:9-13. This is not a large passage, but it is deep and rich and full of goodness for us to emulate. In Matthew 6, Jesus tells us not to pray for the sake of impressing others, but to pray in secret for our own reward. He also tells us not to be repetitive or to babble on and on as we pray. Our prayers do not need to be lengthy or extravagant or wordy to be effective.

The Lord’s Prayer is actually quite short. This is how Jesus tells us to pray: with fewer words and more intimacy. Jesus not only teaches us what to pray, but how to pray well.

As you go through this guide and journal some prayers using these steps, you will start to create muscle memory for how you will pray in the future. Using the Lord’s Prayer as your roadmap will set you up to pray big, God-sized prayers and will help you overcome the hurdle of “I don’t know how to pray or what to say.” Jesus knew His people would struggle with this and gave us a step-by-step formula to follow.

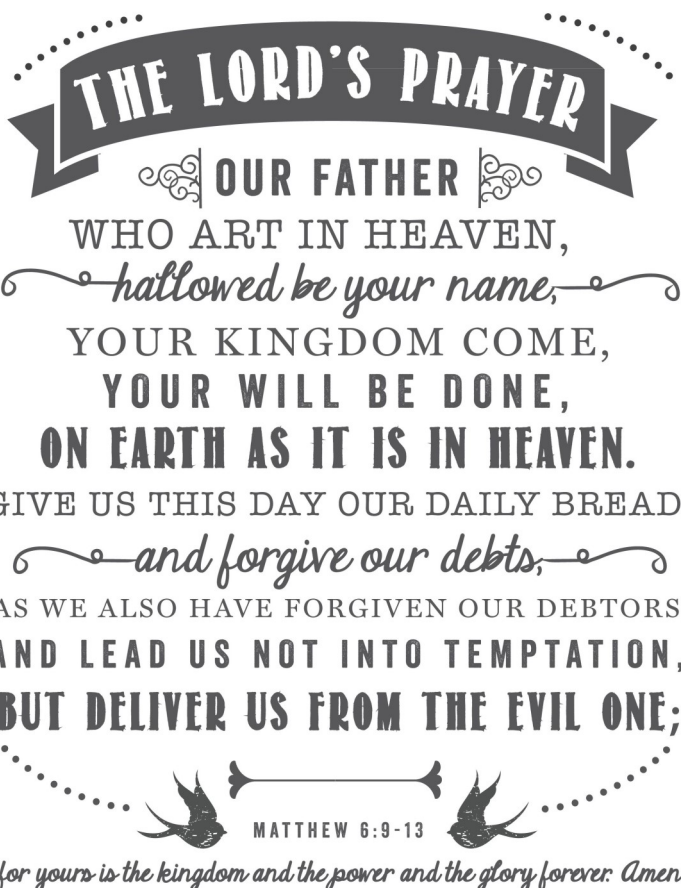
STEP ONE:

Start With Praise & Worship

The word “hallowed” means “honored as holy.” The first step to any prayer is to give God glory and honor and praise. This positions our hearts to be aware of God’s presence as we pray.

Here, Jesus also directs us to acknowledge God as our Father in heaven. God is the Creator of the universe, the Alpha and Omega, the King of Kings, the Almighty. But He is also our good, good Father who loves us and wants an intimate relationship with us.

Beginning prayer by calling him “Father” and praising His name brings us into His presence the right way; with reverence and

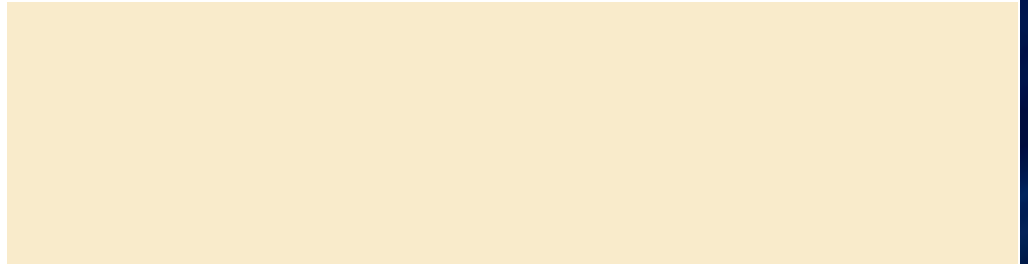


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awe, but also with intimacy and relationship. You aren't just praying to a distant, powerful King. You are praying to the loving, tender God of your heart, who knows you fully and loves you deeply. The words we choose have power; don't be hesitant or afraid to call Him your Heavenly Father.

Write Your Own!

Greet God in an intimate, relational way. Then list 3-4 characteristics that you love about Him:



STEP TWO:

Pray God's Will Be Done

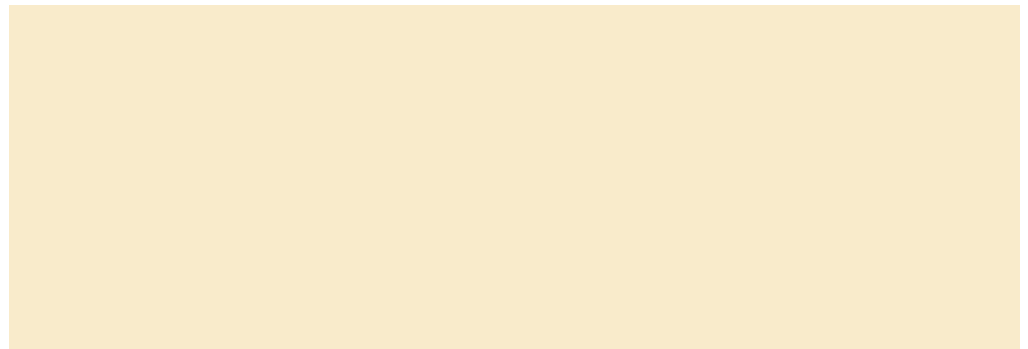
Jesus tells us to pray God's will over our own because the ultimate goal of prayer is not to convince God of our desires, but to align our desires with His will. Jesus instructs us to pray God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. What does this mean?

It means we ask God to help us align our hearts with His. To see the world through His eyes. To act according to His plan. To contribute to the fulfillment of His purposes on earth.

In heaven, God's perfect will is done at all times, without any hindrances or consequences of human sin. Jesus teaches us to pray that nothing will hinder the work of the Lord in our lives, homes, communities, and world.

Write Your Own!

List the places in your life where you want God's Kingdom to come, where you want to invite His perfect will to be accomplished:



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STEP THREE: Pray For Your Needs

Here, Jesus transitions into instructing us to pray for the provision of our needs, no matter how big or small, significant or mundane. God cares about our physical needs and our eternal souls! In the same way that our bodies need daily sustenance, our souls the wisdom and guidance and grace of the Lord.

Jesus tells us to pray for both physical and spiritual provision in our lives, and the lives of our neighbors. Pray for the things that you need, and thank Him for all that He has already blessed you with.

Write Your Own!

You can be honest and straightforward with the Lord: what are your needs right now? Physical, emotional, financial, spiritual...

STEP FOUR: Confess Your Sins & Ask For Forgiveness

Confession and forgiveness are of vital importance to the wholeness of our lives and souls. Prayer is about cultivating a relationship with Jesus, and in any relationship, intimacy requires humility and transparency. We need to regularly ask God to search our hearts and reveal our sin to us. Then we need to confess those sins to God, and ask His forgiveness.

Write Your Own!

What tempts you? What unhealthy compulsions do you have? What have you said or done to harm your relationship with God or others?

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STEP FIVE:

Pray for Spiritual Strength & Protection

"Lead us away from temptation, and deliver us from evil." Here, Jesus reminds us that we are not only human beings living in a physical world, we are also spiritual beings living in a spiritual world. We need spiritual help to fight spiritual battles! In our minds, our hearts, our relationships, in everything we do. Evil is real. And it is at war with the wholeness that God desires for our souls. But the devil is not God's opposite equal. Not even close! The battle belongs to the Lord, and victory is secured in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit!

Write Your Own!

What has been tempting you lately? What unhealthy or destructive thoughts or habits have been contending with your mind, your soul, your wholeness in Christ?

STEP SIX:

Declare God as Savior & Lord of Your Life

"For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen!" Jesus teaches us to begin and end our prayers with a praise-filled focus on God Himself! These are moments to lift our eyes off the world and fix them on our good and perfect God. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer is a declaration of God's gracious and glorious rule, reign, and dominion over all of life and all of creation.

Write Your Own!

What can you declare at the end of your prayer about the goodness of God? Conclude your prayer with a declaration about His rule, His Lordship, His power, His love, His glory!