

Prayer Practice

Week 1 - "Riffing" on the Lord's Prayer

This week pray through the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). If you're feeling up to it, try memorizing it. As you pray through it, pause after each line to reflect on the meaning. Summarize the meaning in your own words, then pray. Follow the outline below for help.

"Our Father in Heaven"

The Lord's prayer begins with an invitation into the same intimate relationship Jesus had with his heavenly father. As you pray this line, consider the implications of the relationship God desires to have with you. Pray something like this:

"Thank you, Father, for your guidance, provision, wisdom and discipline. I know you want what's best for me, your child. Help me to trust you in all things, and come to you with my worries, fears and mistakes."

"Hallowed be your name"

Our prayers should include praise and thanksgiving. To hallow God's name is to honour it and recognize its holiness. Pray something like this:

"Father, there is no one like you. You are good, holy and loving beyond anything I can imagine. Help me to honour you in every word, thought and deed, because you deserve it."

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

God's ultimate plan is to establish his rule on earth as it is in heaven. No more sickness, death, violence, or injustice. It's a beautiful vision for the future! We are invited to participate in the establishment of his kingdom through prayer. Pray something like this:

"Father, I know that heaven is a place of perfect peace and justice, but this world is not. Please make this world more like heaven. Give our leaders wisdom to act justly, strengthen marriages, help neighbours to love each other, heal the sick, liberate people from poverty and addiction, and bring salvation to the lost."

"Give us today our daily bread."

As God provided mana in the wilderness for Israel, he wants to provide us with all of our needs. This is a prayer of dependence on him as our source. Pray something like this:

"Father, please provide me with everything I need to honour you, love the people around me and take care of myself. Don't give me so much that I forget you, but not so little that I resent you. Just enough so that I can continue to trust you with everything and fulfill your calling in my life."

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Followers of Jesus continue to struggle daily with sin, so we need to regularly repent and ask for forgiveness. However, receiving God's forgiveness is tied up in our own willingness to forgive others. Unforgiveness reveals a lack of understand about our own great need to be forgiven. Pray something like this:

"Father, please forgive me of all my sins. Thank you that Jesus paid for each one of them on the cross. Help me to trust you better in the future. Also, please give me the grace to forgive those who sin against me. It's hard to forgive, but I know that it's wrong to hold others in the bondage of unforgiveness when you've so generously liberated me."

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

God is not the source of temptation. Our own hearts lead us astray, and our enemy the Devil is a tempter. God promises to give us a way out from every temptation, rescuing us from the work of our enemy. He also promises to lead us in paths of righteousness. Pray something like this:

"Father, give me the strength to resist temptation, and instead, to seek your kingdom and your righteousness. Lead me in the way I should go each and every day, and protect me from the schemes and traps of the devil."