

A Brief Guide to the Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Why is this 'how we should pray?' I see four major reasons (there are others):

- **Reminds us prayer is essentially a relational activity** - not a progress report on our successes/failures or a magic formula to stay on God's good side – we are praying to our *Father* not our Boss or the Supreme Deity
- **Places our life within the context of His rule/reign** – creates eternal perspective; *Your* kingdom come/will be done
- **Fosters childlike dependence upon the Lord** – life with God is less like filling up our car with gas (occasional) and more like breathing (constant); give us our *daily* bread
- **Forms the character of Jesus within us** – prayer produces fruit in our world and it produces fruit in our heart: grace/mercy (forgive as we forgive) and holiness (lead us not into temptation)

A Brief Guide: One way to approach the Lord's Prayer is to see each line as a 'heading' to point us in a general direction and we then fill in specifics under each heading.

Our Father who is in heaven

- Who we are praying to: Father - I think this is most important word in the prayer; frames entire dynamic of prayer in relational context
 - **Father-** speaks to the immanence of God, the accessibility of God, think 'Dad'- intimate without being childish
 - **In heaven-** speaks to the transcendence of God, His power and majesty
- Remember prayer is not informing God about things of which He is unaware (v8 – He already knows what we need before we ask Him), but rather inviting God to get involved (this prayer is made up almost entirely of requests)
 - Invite Him as your Father to get involved – He cares for you; and remember your Father is in heaven – He actually has the power and the wisdom to do something about the situations you are bringing to Him
- This is also a great place to thank God for who He is and what He has done in your life recently

Hallowed be Your name

- **Hallowed** - 'to make holy'
- **Name-** speaks to the character of a person, i.e. his name carries weight or her name is dirt
- 'May You be seen as/treated as holy'
 - Inward dimension (in the Church) – we express reverence, worship, and honor to Him
 - Outward dimension (in the world) - God has entrusted His name (reputation) to us, people draw conclusions about Him based on our actions; Matt 5.16 – let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven
 - We are approaching our Father in heaven and He is holy

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

- Imagine if God's rule and reign were fully exercised in your life, your community, our world; what would that look like? Imagine if God's will (the things God desires to happen) was being fully accomplished in your life, your community, our world; what would that look like? That is the heart of this petition.
- Won't fully be realized until Jesus returns, but there is room (1) for God's rule to be more fully exercised and (2) for the kingdom of darkness to be pushed back.

- Asking God to extend His rule and for His reign to increase on the earth – you can think of this:
 - Globally – where in the world is God’s will not being fully accomplished? Pray for specific places and ask for specific results: Father bring a just peace to Ukraine; Father have mercy on those in Israel and Gaza, etc.
 - Locally – our vision as a church: to see our community transformed by God – this is another way of saying, ‘Your kingdom come, Your will be done in Marietta, West Cobb, etc. as it is in heaven.’
 - You can think of the areas of influence in our community (we call them the wall) – Church, Family, Education, Arts/Culture, Science/Medicine/Tech, Government/Legal, Business
 - You can think in terms of people groups – single moms, teammates on my kid’s soccer team, teachers, etc.
 - Pray specifically: Father break cycles of poverty in our community. Father anoint our medical professionals to be channels of healing and hope.
 - Personally – where in your own life is God not ruling/reigning as He is in heaven? What about the lives of your loved ones? Pray specifically: Father open the eyes of ___ to Your love, draw them into Your family. Father give me grace to walk in self-control in _____ area of my life.

Give us this day our daily bread

- **Daily bread**- basic necessities of life; this a recognition of our dependence on the Lord
- Be specific- may not need bread, but what do you need?
 - Give us what we need today- think of the manna in desert for the Israelites
 - Most of us don’t ‘need’ to trust Him for basic necessities (we have them and should be grateful to God for them) so what do we need today - comfort, clarity, hope, direction, etc.?

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors

- **Debt**- what we owe; speaks to moral obligation
 - See Mt 6.14-15 – only part of the Lord’s Prayer that gets fuller explanation; very important
- Matt 7.2: with the measure we use (towards others) it will be measured back to us (by God); which measure will we use?
 - Mercy/Grace or Fair/Merit (get what you deserve)
 - think of an open hand (mercy/grace) and a closed fist (judgment/fair) – our hand cannot simultaneously by open and closed
 - if I want grace for my sins against God, then I must give grace towards those who sin against me
 - if I choose fair/judgment for sins committed against me, then I receive judgment for my sins against God
 - Parable of Unmerciful Servant in Matt 18.21-35 – God gives us measure of grace/mercy we have to choose if we will use it
- We need to both
 - receive God’s forgiveness – removes our sins as far as the east is from the west
 - extend forgiveness to others – to forgive is to release someone from judgment (God, I forgive ___ and trust You with him/her) not to pretend you aren’t hurt/they didn’t do something wrong to you; God helps us forgive so ask Him

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one

- Is that the type of thing He would do?
 - No. James 1.13-14 when tempted no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone but each one is tempted when , buy his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.
- This is a recognition of our propensity to sin – the Holy Spirit leads us and we are asking that in the leading He be aware of our weakness/frailty
 - ‘Don’t abandon us to temptation’ or ‘Don’t let us succumb to temptation’