

# WEEK 2: How did Jesus pray?



This second week, we are thinking about how Jesus approached prayer. When his followers asked him, “How should we pray?” Jesus gave them the words we now call “The Lord’s Prayer.”

So, we want to be inspired by this “pattern for prayer” that Jesus modelled in the Gospels and use it as a building block for developing a vibrant and healthy prayer life for ourselves.



Our primary reading this week is Jesus’ giving of “The Lord’s Prayer” to the disciples in Matthew chapter 6 verses 5 to 15.

***“This, then, is how you should pray:***

***“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.***

***If you forgive others when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”***

If you want to add a second reading, then you could consider Hebrews 5.7-9 (Jesus’ ministry of prayer) or Isaiah 55.6-12 (a powerful encouragement to seek God in prayer)



One of the “problems” with the Lord’s Prayer is over-familiarity. We all learned it—most likely as a child and (oddly) in old-fashioned language that has otherwise disappeared from our public worship.

Divorced from context, the Lord’s Prayer can become as repetitious as the kind of empty ritualistic prayer that Jesus himself railed against a few verses earlier in Matthew. So it’s good to take these familiar words—not as a piece of formal liturgy—but as part of the narrative of the Gospels.

What became "The Lord's Prayer" is found in two places in the New Testament Gospels: Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. It's absent from Mark and John.

In Matthew's Gospel, the Lord's Prayer is part of the Sermon on the Mount, a collection of teachings by Jesus found in chapters 5-7. In this "sermon", Jesus instructs his disciples on various aspects of righteous living—including prayer, fasting, and giving to the needy. The Lord's Prayer is given as a "model prayer", teaching the disciples a framework for prayer to adapt in their own lives.

In Luke's Gospel, the Lord's Prayer is prompted by one of Jesus' disciples, who asks him to teach them to pray, as John the Baptist had taught his disciples. Jesus then responds by giving them the Lord's Prayer. It is similar to Matthew's account but with slight differences in wording.

Overall, the Lord's Prayer is significant in Jesus' teaching as it provides his followers with a foundational model for prayer. It lays out key aspects of Christian faith and practice that all Christians need to consider. Additionally, it underscores the importance of simplicity and sincerity in prayer that we discussed last week (remember—last week, we looked at the preceding verses)

## Key Themes and Lessons

**Addressing God as Father:** In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus instructs his disciples to address God as "Our Father." This intimate term highlights believers' close relationship with God as their loving and caring Father. Jesus' use of "Father" reflects his teachings about God's fatherly care, compassion, and accessibility to all who approach Him in faith.

In our contemporary culture, we have to recognise that the concept of "Father" is problematic for many, and we should consider speaking more about "Parents" or even "Mothers." Of course, even those terms bring their baggage for some of our hearers!

However, whilst we need to be sensitive towards those amongst our congregations who have had a negative experience with parents, the fact remains that Jesus used his close and intimate relationship with his own Heavenly Father as a primary teaching theme in this prayer.

**I. Seeking God's Kingdom and Will:** This theme underscores the importance of aligning our desires and actions with God's kingdom. It reflects Jesus' central message of proclaiming the arrival of God's kingdom and inviting people to participate in its realisation. By prioritising God's kingdom and will in prayer, we acknowledge God's sovereignty and submit our lives to His wider plan and purpose.

**II. Asking for Daily Provision:** The Lord's Prayer highlights our dependence on God for daily sustenance. This theme echoes Jesus' teachings on trust and reliance on God's provision, as seen in his discussions about worry and anxiety in the preceding verses of Matthew 6. By including this petition, Jesus emphasises the importance of acknowledging God's role as the ultimate provider and trusting Him to meet our needs.

**III. Finding Forgiveness and Mercy:** Jesus highlights the significance of forgiveness in the Christian life. The prominence of this theme underscores the importance of repentance, humility, and reconciliation in the relationship between believers and God. Jesus' emphasis on forgiveness reflects his broader teachings on love, mercy, and the importance of reconciliation within the community of believers.

**IV. Resisting Temptation:** This theme is about Jesus recognising temptation's reality and evil's presence in the world. By seeking God's help in resisting temptation and overcoming evil, believers acknowledge their dependence on God's strength and grace to live faithfully amid trials and tribulations.

# Interpretation and Application

- We can learn to approach God with a sense of intimacy, addressing Him as "Our Father." This encourages a personal relationship with God, characterised by trust, openness, and dependence. Practically, we should prioritise regular prayer times to deepen our connection with God and express our deepest needs, desires, and concerns.
- By praying for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done, we are reminded to align our desires and actions with God's purposes. This involves surrendering personal agendas and submitting to God's sovereignty. Practically, we can seek guidance from the Bible and the Holy Spirit to discern God's will in our lives and actively participate in advancing His kingdom.
- Through the petition for daily bread, believers learn to trust in God's provision for their material needs. This teaches reliance on God's faithfulness rather than relying solely on human efforts or resources. Practically, Christians can cultivate gratitude for God's provision and practice wise stewardship of the resources entrusted to them.
- The prayer's plea for forgiveness and the commitment to forgive others highlight the importance of extending grace and reconciliation within the Christian community. We are called to emulate God's forgiveness by releasing grudges and reconciling with those who have wronged us.
- We acknowledge our dependence on God's strength and protection in the face of spiritual battles. In our walk with God, we can engage in spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Scripture meditation, and fellowship to fortify ourselves against temptation and grow in spiritual maturity.



"There is no "me" in the Prayer. When I started my journey, I would personalise the prayer: "My father who art in Heaven... Give me this day my daily bread," etc. Then, the Holy Spirit convinced me that I wasn't being faithful to Jesus' intent. It was when I realised that prayer is communal. The two persons in the prayer are "we" and "You" (God). It is a prayer for "The Church." Even when I pray alone, I join the communion of all saints. It begins with twelve men in Galilee and includes every believer who ever lived, the ones alive now, and those who will come after us. That is a huge choir."

taken from <https://iliteam.org/coreleadership/the-lords-prayer>

"The structure, language, and themes of the Lord's Prayer connect to the Jewish tradition at the time of Christ. This tells us that Yeshua (Jesus) used existing teachings and prayers as a way to set the common ground in His teachings about prayers.

For example, Jewish prayers contain three common elements of the Lord's Prayer: praise, petition, and supplication. Moreover, the word "Father" is actually a language commonly used in the Hebrew Bible.

The Talmud also contains pleas or prayers against temptations. Jewish prayers strongly focus on God's Kingdom, as seen in the Lord's Prayer.

taken from <https://becomingchristians.com/facts-about-the-lords-prayer/>

Addressing God as 'Our Father' marks a radical change in our relationship with God. While God is described as 'Father' just 15 times in the Old Testament, Jesus describes him as such about 165 times in the gospels, according to Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology. In most of those 15 Old Testament references, the 'Our' is not used with 'Father.' The two words appear together just twice in Isaiah 63:16 and 64:8. The first of these verses anticipates the first line of the "Our Father": Lord, art our father, our redeemer, from everlasting is thy name. (In fact, 'Our Father' is repeated earlier in the same verse.)

In the next chapter, we read: And now, O Lord, thou art our father, and we are clay: and thou art our maker, and we all are the works of thy hands (Douay-Rheims). Although the specific phrase 'Our Father' is not in it, in Jeremiah 3:19, God rues the faithlessness of the Israelites, who were supposed to regard Him as a Father. But later, in chapter 31:8-9, God predicts His people will return and call Him 'Father.'

taken from <https://catholicexchange.com/170638/>

Pope Francis has risked the wrath of traditionalists by approving a change to the wording of the Lord's Prayer. Instead of saying, "Lead us not into temptation", it will say, "Do not let us fall into temptation".

The Episcopal Conference of Italy's general assembly approved the new wording last month. It will appear in the third edition of the Messale Romano, the liturgical book that contains the guiding texts for mass in the Roman Catholic church. The Pope said in 2017 that he believed the wording should be altered.

"It is not a good translation because it speaks of a God who induces temptation," he told Italian TV. "I am the one who falls. It's not him pushing me into temptation to then see how I have fallen. A father doesn't do that; a father helps you to get up immediately. It is Satan who leads us into temptation – that's his department."

Taken from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/06/led-not-into-temptation-pope-approves-change-to-lords-prayer>



"First, Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will; then, give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us. The lesson is of more importance than we think" (*Andrew Murray, devotional writer*)

"In the initial phrases of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus fixes our gaze not on ourselves but on God." (*R.C Sproul, Christian writer*)

"Do you wish to find out the sublime? Repeat the Lord's Prayer." (*Napoleon Bonaparte*)

"The Lord's Prayer contains the sum total of religion and morals" (*Arthur Wellesley, 19th C British Prime Minister*)

"Witness the fact that in the Lord's Prayer, the first petition is for daily bread. No one can worship God or love his neighbour on an empty stomach." (*Woodrow Wilson, US President*)

"Before we can pray, "Lord, Thy Kingdom come," we must be willing to pray, "My Kingdom go." (Alan Redpath, Christian Author)

"The Lord's Prayer may be committed to memory quickly, but it is slowly learnt by heart. " (F.D Maurice, theologian)

"When Jesus gave his disciples this prayer, he was giving them part of his own breath, his



Many of us will have preached on the Lord's Prayer before (perhaps many times!) and have resources and materials to draw upon. And, of course, there are many resources online for this familiar prayer. However, for those who might find it helpful, here is a possible outline for a sermon, which you are welcome to adapt as you wish (or ignore as you please)

## **Opening Illustration/Anecdote**

Share a personal story or anecdote about the significance of prayer in your life or the life of someone you know.

## **Introduce the Passage**

Matthew 6:9-15 is the Lord's Prayer, a MODEL prayer given by Jesus to his disciples more than it is for us to recite by rote.

Today, we will explore the transformative power of this prayer and how it can impact our lives as Christian believers.

### **1. The Priority of Relationship (verse 9)**

Jesus teaches us to address God as "Our Father," highlighting our intimate relationship with Him as His children.

*Practical Application: How can we cultivate intimacy with God through prayer, acknowledging His love and care for us?*

### **2. The Practice of Submission (verse 10)**

Jesus instructs us to pray for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done, aligning our desires with His purposes.

*Practical Application: How might we surrender our will to God and seek to advance His kingdom in our lives and the world?*

### **3. The Power of Forgiveness (verse 12)**

Jesus emphasises the importance of forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer, seeking forgiveness from God and extending it to others.

*Practical Application: What can I do this week to offer forgiveness and grace and reflect God's grace in my relationships?*

### **Conclusion**

- **Recap of Key Points:** Reiterate the importance of cultivating intimacy with God, submitting to His will, and practising forgiveness.
- **Challenge to Action:** Encourage the congregation to incorporate the principles of the Lord's Prayer into their daily prayer life, seeking to deepen their relationship with God and live out His kingdom values.
- **Closing Thought/Challenge:** Leave the congregation with a thought-provoking question or challenge to apply the teachings of the Lord's Prayer in their lives throughout the week.



## Suggested Hymns and Songs

STF	H&P	
518	436	Father, hear the prayer we offer
707	776	Make me a channel of your peace
475	442	O God of Bethel, by whose hand
328	239	Jesus shall reign
332		Lord, I lift your name on high
531	559	What a friend we have in Jesus
440	215	Amazing Grace
338		There is a Redeemer
51	66	Great is Thy faithfulness
548	668	Blessed Assurance

## Prayers of Approach

Heavenly Father, as we gather before you today, we are reminded of the privilege and intimacy of addressing you as our Father. We come with hearts full of gratitude for Your love, care, and provision. Help us to cultivate a deeper relationship with you, recognising Your presence guiding us in every moment. **Amen.**

or

Gracious God, we acknowledge your sovereignty and the glory of your kingdom. May your will be done in our lives and the world as it is in heaven. Help us align our desires and actions with your purposes, seeking to advance your kingdom of justice, mercy, and love in all we do. **Amen.**

## Call to Worship

Let us enter into this space with reverence and gratitude,  
**opening our hearts to receive wisdom and grace.**

Together, let us lift our voices in prayer,  
seeking the guidance and presence of our Heavenly Father,  
**who hears and answers the prayers of His children.**

May our worship be a reflection of our longing for God's kingdom to come,  
**His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.**



# Kyrie Confession

Let us come before the Lord, acknowledging our need for His mercy and forgiveness. As we reflect on the themes of the Lord's Prayer, let us bring our petitions before Him.

For the times when we have failed  
to recognise God as our loving Father,

Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

For the moments when we have prioritised  
our desires over God's kingdom,

Christ, have mercy.  
**Christ, have mercy**

For the occasions when we have  
withheld forgiveness from others,

Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Gracious God, we confess our sins and shortcomings,  
knowing that you are merciful and compassionate.  
May your grace transform our hearts  
and lead us to lives of repentance and reconciliation.  
**Amen**

## Collect

Almighty and compassionate God,  
who invites us into an intimate relationship with you,  
Grant us the wisdom to seek your kingdom,  
the humility to forgive as we are forgiven,  
and the strength to walk in righteousness.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## Intercessions

Gracious and loving God, we come before you in awe and gratitude for the boundless love you pour upon us as our Heavenly Parent. In our worship and praise, may we deeply feel the warmth of your embrace, recognising that we find our most authentic identity and belonging in your tender care. Grant us, O God, the grace to approach you with childlike trust and openness, knowing that you delight in our presence and long to nurture us with your infinite love.

Your kingdom comes, O Lord.  
**Your will be done in our lives.**



Eternal God, whose kingdom knows no end, we humbly bow before your sovereignty, seeking to align our lives with your divine will. Grant us the wisdom to discern your purposes and the courage to surrender our own agendas for the sake of your kingdom. May your Spirit transform our hearts so we may joyfully participate in unfolding your redemptive work in the world.

Your kingdom comes, O Lord.

**Your will be done in our lives.**

Gracious Provider, source of all our sustenance, we acknowledge our utter dependence on your daily provision. As we pray for our daily bread, open our eyes to the abundance of your blessings surrounding us. Give us hearts of gratitude and generosity so that we may share with others the abundance you have graciously bestowed upon us.

Your kingdom comes, O Lord.

**Your will be done in our lives.**

Merciful and compassionate God, we confess our struggle to forgive as we have been forgiven. Grant us the grace to release the burdens of bitterness and resentment that weigh heavily on our souls. Help us extend the same grace and compassion to others we have received from you so we may experience the freedom and joy of reconciliation and healing in our relationships.

Your kingdom comes, O Lord.

**Your will be done in our lives.**

Almighty God, our refuge and strength, we acknowledge our frailty in the face of temptation and evil. Strengthen us, we pray, with your mighty power to stand firm against the forces that seek to lead us astray. Grant us discerning hearts and steadfast spirits, that we may resist temptation and overcome evil with the unwavering strength of your truth and righteousness.

Your kingdom comes, O Lord.

**Your will be done in our lives.**

## Sending Prayer (Benediction)

Gracious God,  
as we depart from this time of worship and fellowship,  
we carry with us the blessings of your presence  
and the wisdom of your Word.

May the grace of forgiveness  
free us from the bonds of resentment and bitterness,  
opening our hearts to reconciliation and healing.

May the power of your Spirit  
shield us from temptation and evil,  
empowering us to walk in the path of righteousness  
and to bear witness to your truth in all we do.

Go forth, dear friends, with confidence and courage,  
knowing that you are held in the embrace of God's love,  
and may the peace of Christ dwell richly within you  
both now and always.

**Amen.**



## JOURNALLING

Journaling is about setting aside time each day to write down things you're thankful for, acknowledging blessings and expressing gratitude to a higher power.

You can buy many Gratitude Journals on Amazon (other online sites are available!) on a dazzling array of themes. But you don't need to go to that expense if you don't want to—a simple exercise book from the Poundshop can suffice!

1. Set aside a specific time each day, such as in the morning or before bed, to write in your gratitude journal.
2. Begin by quieting your mind and reflecting on the events of the day.
3. Write down at least three things you're thankful for, whether big or small and why you're grateful for them.
4. Take a moment to offer a prayer of thanks to a higher power for these blessings.
5. Consider adding additional reflections or prayers as desired.

Since we are focussing on the Lord's Prayer this week, why not suggest that your people drill down into the petitions of Jesus' prayer?

Here are journaling prompts for each line of the Lord's Prayer, designed to encourage deep reflection and personal application. Each prompt invites you to explore the prayer's meaning and implications in your own life.

### **"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name."**

*Prompt: Reflect on your relationship with God as a Father. How do you experience God's love and care in your life? Write about a time when you felt particularly close to God. How can you keep God's name holy in your actions and thoughts?*

### **"Your kingdom comes, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."**

*Prompt: Consider what God's kingdom means to you. How do you envision a world where God's will is done? Write about the changes you desire in yourself and your community that reflect God's kingdom coming to earth.*

### **"Give us today our daily bread."**

*Prompt: Consider your daily needs and how God has provided for you. Reflect on times when you have experienced God's provision. Write about the things you truly need versus the things you want. How can you cultivate a spirit of gratitude for God's provision?*

**"Forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who have sinned against us."**

*Prompt: Write about a time when you needed to ask for forgiveness or struggled to forgive someone else. How has forgiveness, or the lack of it, affected your relationships and peace of mind?*

**"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."**

*Prompt: Identify the areas in your life where you feel most tempted or vulnerable. Reflect on the sources of these temptations and how they impact your spiritual journey. Write about ways to seek God's guidance and strength to overcome these challenges.*

**"For Yours is the kingdom, power, and glory forever."**

*Prompt: Reflect on how you see God's power and glory at work and in your personal life. Write about ways you can honour and glorify God in your daily actions.*

**"Amen"**

*Prompt: Reflect on the significance of ending your prayers with "Amen," meaning "so be it" or "truly." What does this word signify to you? Write about the moments when you have seen your prayers answered or experienced God's presence profoundly.*

*These prompts guide thoughtful journaling that explores the meaning of each line of the Lord's Prayer and encourages personal introspection and spiritual growth.*

## Prayer Meditation

Today, let's take some time to reflect on the Lord's Prayer. These words are more than just a prayer to say; they invite us to connect with God and align our lives with His purpose.

Let's think about each part of the prayer, allowing it to touch our hearts and guide us.

### **Our Father in heaven**

We start by recognising that God is our loving Father, close to us, and the Creator of all. Take a moment to feel His love and care for you. Imagine God looking at you with kindness and love, always near and ready to help.

### **Hallowed be Your name.**

God's name is holy and special. Think about the times you've felt God's presence and love in your life. Let's show respect and honour to God, thanking Him for who He is.

**Your kingdom come.**

We ask for God's kingdom, a place of peace and love, to be present in our world. Picture a world where love and justice rule, where everyone cares for one another. Let's commit to bringing a bit of God's kingdom into our lives by loving others and working for good in our communities.

**Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

This means we want God's plans to happen in our lives and the world. Think about areas in your life where you need to follow God's way. Let's ask for the strength to live according to God's will, trusting that it leads to a better life.

**Give us today our daily bread.**

We depend on God for what we need every day. Think about what you need today: food, strength, or peace. Trust that God will provide for you, and thank Him for His care.

**Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

We all make mistakes and need forgiveness. Think about the things you've done wrong and ask God to forgive you. Also, think about those who have hurt you and ask for the strength to forgive them, just as God forgives you.

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

We ask God to help us avoid things that lead us away from Him. Think about any challenges or temptations you are facing. Ask God to give you the strength to resist them and to keep you safe from harm.

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

We end by remembering that everything belongs to God, and He is in control forever. As you go about your day, remember that you are part of God's kingdom, and He is always with you, giving you strength and peace.

Take these words into the week ahead, letting them inspire you and guide your actions, bringing God's love to everyone you meet.

# Ice Breaker Questions

If you had to send a postcard to "Our Father in Heaven," what would you write or draw on it?

or

If you were tasked with creating a recruitment poster for God's kingdom, what quirky or humorous tagline would you use?

or

You're stranded on a deserted island. Besides actual bread, what one non-food item do you think God would include in your "daily bread" package to keep you going?

# Discussion Questions

Here are some punchy and provocative group discussion questions based on The Lord's Prayer. These questions challenge conventional thinking and provoke deep, meaningful conversations.

- How do you reconcile the image of a loving Father with the suffering and injustices in the world?
- In a world where reverence for anything seems to be fading, how can we genuinely make God's name holy in our daily lives?
- Is it realistic to think God's kingdom can come in today's world? What does that even look like in a practical sense?
- How does asking for daily bread challenge our consumer culture's obsession with abundance and excess?
- Is there a limit to forgiveness? Should we forgive even when it feels like the other person doesn't deserve it?
- Do you think God actually leads people into temptation or is this more about our responsibility to avoid it?
- How do you interpret the concept of evil in a modern context? Is it a supernatural force, a human tendency, or something else?
- Does reciting The Lord's Prayer without truly understanding or meaning it have any real impact? Why or why not?
- How can we actively participate in bringing about God's kingdom in practical, everyday ways in our communities?

*These questions are meant to provoke thoughtful discussion and reflection, encouraging participants to engage with The Lord's Prayer in ways that challenge their perspectives and deepen their understanding.*

# Interactive Study

Print out this sheet and give everyone a copy. For each line of the Lord's Prayer, there is a statement that applies that line to our lives. On a scale of 1-10, each person "ranks" themselves according to how much that statement applies in their lives (where one is hardly at all, and ten is stellar). These responses form the basis for a discussion about how we can best apply the teachings of the Lord's Prayer in our lives.

## 1. Our Father in heaven...

I will embrace God as my loving Father, seeking to build a relationship rooted in trust, intimacy, and reverence

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## 2. Hallowed be Your name...

I will honour and glorify God's holy name in all my words and actions, reflecting His sanctity in every aspect of my life.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## 3. Your kingdom come...

I will actively work towards manifesting God's kingdom on earth by promoting justice, peace, and love in my community.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## 4. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...

I will strive to align my life with God's will, seeking His guidance and wisdom in all my decisions and actions.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## 5. Give us today our daily bread...

I will depend on God for my daily needs, living with gratitude and contentment and sharing His blessings with others.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## 6. And forgive us our sins, as we also forgive those who sin against us...

I will seek forgiveness for my wrongdoings and extend the same grace and forgiveness to those who have wronged me.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## 7. And lead us not into temptation...

I will remain vigilant against temptation, seeking God's strength and guidance to make righteous choices.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## 8. But deliver us from the evil one...

I will trust in God's protection and deliverance, standing firm in my faith against all forms of evil and harm.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## 9. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

I will proclaim God's eternal reign and power, dedicating my life to His glory and acknowledging His sovereignty in all things.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10