

Effectively Praying Through the Lord's Prayer

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There are many good models for prayer we can utilize, but the best is the model given to us by Jesus Himself. In Matthew 6, Jesus gives us a wonderful framework for prayer that has been utilized by the Church ever since:

Matthew 6:9-13 (NLT)

9 Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,

may your name be kept holy.

10 May your Kingdom come soon.

May your will be done on earth,

as it is in heaven.

11 Give us today the food we need,

12 and forgive us our sins,

as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

13 And don't let us yield to temptation,

but rescue us from the evil one.

Our Father in heaven...

While we can pray to any member of the Trinity, as they are all God, Jesus teaches us to direct our prayers to the same person He prayed to – His Heavenly Father. He is the Lord of earth and heaven!

...may your name be kept holy.

God is the Holy, Holy, Holy God, and we are to approach Him as such. Yes, He is our dearest friend, and we can find intimate joy in relationship with Him. At the same time, we are to revere Him as Holy and completely above and beyond us in every way. Worship Him as holy, good, perfect, all-powerful, all-knowing, and more in your prayer time.

May your Kingdom come soon.

Praying for God's Kingdom to come has two different elements to it. First, we pray for the return of Jesus to come usher in the final state of the Kingdom of God on earth. Secondly, we pray for His Kingdom to advance today, in and through our lives and His Church. While the Kingdom is not yet fully here with the return of Jesus, it is still here in the power of the Holy Spirit speaking, moving, healing, transforming, and saving. It is good to pray for His Kingdom to advance in specific ways in the specific lives of our family, friends, and neighbors.

May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Pray with hands open to God, asking for what is on our hearts and believing Him for it, but trusting that what He has for us and those around us will be for the best. (Romans 8:28)

Give us today the food we need...

The Lord provides for his children, whether it be food, resources, and more. Pray for the needs of self and others. Pray that the Lord will continue to provide all that we need, trusting that anything we don't receive will work out for His good purpose in our lives.

...and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

We all need forgiveness. Sin hinders our relationships with God, as does harboring unforgiveness. Repentance and forgiveness deepen that relationship. Make use of the "Key Steps of Repentance" guide, available on the website, and experience the forgiveness the Lord wants to extend to you. Don't allow your prayers to be rendered ineffective because of unforgiven sin in your life.

And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

We all need Holy Spirit empowerment to withstand temptation. Pray daily for the Lord to empower you for godliness, striving in His strength to refrain from all sin. Pray for protection from the attacks and temptations put in motion by the enemy of our souls, Satan. He and his demons want us to fail and fall. Keep in mind that we are his targets for destruction. Because of that, daily put on the full armor of God listed in Ephesians 6:10-18, standing firm in His truth, power, and authority.

If we use the Lord's Prayer as a model for our own prayer times, we will be praying in line with the heart and teaching of Jesus. I encourage you to use this model as a primary means of engaging in effective prayer. May the Lord bless your time with Him!