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Lord, Teach Us To Pray

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Prayer was a very important part of Jesus' life. He often made time to be alone with God in prayer (Mark 1:35). Jesus prayed before eating (Matthew 14:19), before selecting His apostles (Luke 6:12-16), and before offering Himself as the sacrifice for our sins (Matthew 26:39-46).

The disciples were so impressed with the Lord's prayers they asked Him to teach them how to pray. "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples'" (Luke 11:1). There is no better person to whom we can go to learn how to pray.

Jesus responded to their request with what is often called "The Lord's Prayer" (Luke 11:1-4). Unfortunately, the words of this model prayer have been turned into a memorized chant that many people misuse. Jesus intended these words to be a simple model to teach His disciples the proper content of prayer.

1. Addressed to God the Father. "Our Father in heaven..." Prayer is man talking to God. It is a great blessing for sinful man to have an audience with his Holy Creator. God welcomes our prayers.

Notice that Jesus said to address God as "our Father." God should not be a stranger. We should feel close enough to Him to approach His throne at any time with a confident belief that He cares about us and wants to hear from us.

2. Filled with praise. "Hallowed be Your name." The word hallowed means greatly revered and honored. Before we present our requests to God, we should

be mindful to praise Him for His greatness and express thanksgiving for answers to past prayers.

- 3. Seeks first the kingdom.** “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” While prayer is a time of personal communion with God, we must always be of a mind to seek God’s will first in our lives. Jesus prayed this prayer before He went to the cross (Luke 22:42). Likewise, we can make our petitions to God, but should leave prayer with a mind to seek and do God’s will in our lives.
- 4. Lists physical needs.** “Give us day by day our daily bread.” God provides every physical need for our lives (Matthew 6:25-34), but we are not to take His provisions for granted. We ought to live each day remembering our dependance on God.
- 5. Asks forgiveness for sins.** “And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.” Forgiveness of sins is available for God’s children, but it is not automatic. We must repent, confess, and ask for this forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). Jesus also said we must be willing to forgive others if we expect God to forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15).
- 6. Asks for spiritual help and guidance.** “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” God has not abandoned us to face life’s challenges alone. He wants to hear about the things that are troubling us (Philippians 4:6). He wants us to cast our cares on Him through prayer (1 Peter 5:7). We need to pray for God’s help every day.