

Spiritual Practice: Praying the Lord's Prayer

Prayer is a central component in the life as an apprentice of Jesus. After all, how can we learn from a Master if we don't talk together?! Dallas Willard has said that, "Prayer is talking with God about the things we are doing together."

Prayer was intended by God to be an amazing gift, and yet most Christians, at some point in their life, find prayer to be a struggle. Sometimes we get distracted or feel like we're making 'speeches' to God (often with words that don't sound like us – why do we do that?). Sometimes, the issue is that we don't know what or how to pray.

The disciples of Jesus understood how we feel! They too, wondered about the difference they saw in Jesus' prayer life and their own. One day they asked Jesus about this (cf. Luke 11), and we are grateful that the Gospel writers recorded Jesus' answer so we could all learn from him.

What we often call 'The LORD's Prayer' provides a wonderfully helpful framework in which to 'talk with God about the things we're doing together.'

This week as a spiritual practice, take some time with the Lord's prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 and experiment with praying the ideas expressed in your own words. Remember, Jesus was not giving a 'formula' but rather a 'framework' within which to grow deeper with God.

To get you thinking, consider this example:

Our Father, who is good and faithful and just, your love for me amazes me and I am in awe of you. You are from the beginning and you have no end. May your name be lifted up above all other names, because there are no others who can compare to your greatness. Would you bring your kingdom to bear in our world? God, would you bring justice, would you bring peace, would you bring love, not just for those we like but also for our enemies, that we would see our world transformed? You are the one who provides for my needs and I give you thanks for all that I have. Continue to teach me what it means to rely on you instead of my own strength and ability for my daily needs. Forgive me for the ways I have been short with those closest to me. Recognizing that I have been forgiven much, may I extend the same grace to those who have wronged me.

When You Pray...

Mike Sotski
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How would you rate your prayer life right now?

To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us.

Richard Foster – Celebration of Discipline

Matthew 6:5-8 NLT

When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

Luke 18:5 NLT

"...this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!"

Through PRAYER God invites us into the story.

Prayer is not informing God of something UNKNOWN but it is drawing us into the RELATIONSHIP with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and into the very MISSION of God in this world.

False Narrative

We think God is not TRUSTWORTHY.

Matthew 6:9-13 NLT

*Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.
May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us today the food we need,
and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
And don't let us yield to temptation,
but rescue us from the evil one.*

John 1:12 NLT

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

Romans 8:15-16 NLT

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.

Prayer is entering into the CONVERSATION that God started; to join with him as we journey through life.

We should not decide how to pray based on experiences and feelings we want. Instead we should do everything possible to behold our God as he is; and prayer will follow.

Edmund P. Clowney

Because we are CITIZENS OF HEAVEN we are expected to bring those values and principles to bear on our culture (Philippians 3:20).

Matthew 26:39 NLT

He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

What if the answer to our prayer is a "no." Or a "not now."

The daily bread is what God provided in the desert wanderings of his covenant people (Deuteronomy 8).

Proverbs 30:8 NLT

*...Give me neither poverty nor riches!
Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.
For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?"
And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.*