

Lord, Teach us to Pray! **NCC New Believers**

Here is a short document about some of the basics about prayer. We hope you find it helpful as you begin your new relationship with Jesus! Prayer is one of the best way to begin moving closer to Him.

One day, Jesus and his disciples were hanging out, and Jesus was teaching them about a bunch of stuff. At one point the disciples turned to Jesus and asked, "Lord teach us how to pray!" Jesus' answer to that question is what we call the Lord's prayer, and it gives us a really good foundation for our prayers!

But before we look into that, here are a few introductory things...

- 1) There isn't some wrong way to pray. There isn't some special ritual you need to do first, there aren't special words that must be said, there isn't a tone you need to keep. You just talk with God. Talking involves both speaking and listening.
- 2) As we will see, honesty is key and no topic is off limits. If it's in your heart, no matter what you are going through if you (or someone you know) are going through it, you can talk to God about it.

As mentioned above, Jesus gives us a great foundation, or structure to think through when we pray in the Lord's prayer. His model of Prayer is found in the Bible as recorded by His followers: Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. An easy way to remember it is the **5 P's of Prayer**.

Praise, Progress, Provision, Pardon, and Protection

1. **Praise** - “Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name...”

The first thing to see is that God is called Father, and He should be approached as honestly, and freely, as a kid would approach their good father! Come to Him knowing His love for you, and His desire is to hear from you!

Secondly, Jesus says “hallowed/holy is your name” This is ascribing worship and honour to God. Humbly approach God and remember that He is God and we are not! Plus, who He is, is so incredible. He is holy, loving, good, wise, powerful, present, majestic, and beautiful. And even if He didn’t ever do anything, He would be worthy of our worship. So we take some time just to remember how great He is.

Also, God has been so good to us in the incredible ways He has blessed us, especially with what has been given to us in our salvation. There are endless reasons why we can praise him. Take some time to thank Jesus for grace, for salvation, for forgiveness, etc. And take time to thank him for all that He has done and for who He is. The Bible encourages us to always be rejoicing, always be thankful, and always have a long memory of the good things God does.

So, take some time to praise God when you pray. You can also do this in singing like we do in church, or even journalling your thoughts. It’s not so much about the how but your heart.

2. **Progress** “Your Kingdom Come, Your will be Done, on earth as it is in Heaven”

We can also pray for progress. What this means is that we can and should take time to pray that the Gospel reaches more people and continues to transform people around the world, in our city, in your family (spouse, kids, spiritual growth), friends, and through our church.

As we are aware, this world is full of suffering, injustice, oppression, and sin. We can take time to ask God to bring his kingdom to these areas of life. In light of these things, we can ask God to bring peace, or justice, or redemption to our world. We can

pray for those effected by suffering and ask for God's comfort. We can pray about a friends, or even our, marriages if they are in rough patches. We can pray about any kind of hardship and ask that as Jesus says, what it is like in heaven, will what it is like on earth.

Jeremiah 29 instructs us to pray for the peace and prosperity of our cities. So, we should take time to pray for our city, neighbourhoods, and workplaces.

One last thought... don't just keep praying prayers that you could be the answer to and not do anything! If God makes you aware of something that you could work to help bring his kingdom come to, put action to your prayers.

3. **Provision "Give us this day our Daily bread"**

We can also come to God in times of personal need. It can be a physical need, be it financial, hunger, a job, housing, etc. - Jesus tells us in Matthew 6 and 9, that God knows our needs and He is faithful to provide. It can be emotional needs like we when are feeling fearful, weak, confused, hurt, distressed, or asking for help – praying the words of the psalms are good for that. Or we can pray that God gives us wisdom and guidance to make decisions and life choices. We believe that he leads and guides us, and He wants to help us make good decisions.

If you have a need, you can bring that to God. You can also bring Him the needs of others like families or friends.

4. **Pardon "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtor"**

Part of our prayer life should consist of personal confession of our sin to God. He already knows when we stumble and make mistakes, but part of the process of moving closer to Jesus is owning our mistakes, acknowledging our sins, repenting of it which means being sorry for them and doing our best to avoid them, and, relying on his grace, asking him for help to overcome our sin. This is also a really good time to thank God for the grace of cross that forgives us and cleanses us (1 John 1:9). In our

confession we are reminded of our need for God and it keeps us both humble and thankful for Jesus' death for us.

We should also take some time to ask God to reveal to us if there is any unforgiveness in our hearts towards others. If there is, we should take time to pray about forgiving those offenses and fighting against bitterness. Prayer is good time to be honest and raw with our pain – God has big shoulders he can handle it. Use prayer as a time to express what is going on, and ask God to help forgive any offense or fix any offense toward others.

5. **Protection** “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from Evil.”

The Greek word in Jesus prayer for 'temptation' has the a connotation of testing and trial. We know from the book of James that God never tempts us to sin, but certainly walks with us through trials and times of our lives that might feel like valleys of death (Psalm 23), and in those moments we can call out to God, our Father, for protection, help, strength, and encouragement. You might have heard a really bad saying before, “God won't give us more than we can handle.” He might, but only so that we continue to lean on him and trust him more. When we are facing things that feel to much to handle, we can pray for His help

We also know that we have an Enemy – the Devil and his demons – whose aim is chaos, destruction and distraction from the things of God. (Gen. 3, 1 Peter 5:8) This is called Spiritual Warfare. As a follower of Jesus we believe that our world is the same world that Jesus taught was real - a very spiritual world. One where the devil isn't some story book figure but a real and present evil, and we are told in the book of James (James 4:7) to resist the devil. Peter, an early follower of Jesus, tells us in a letter he wrote (1 Peter 5:8), that Satan is prowling like a lion waiting to devour but one of our best weapons in this fight is prayer. We can ask God for strength and protection, and

we can be praying for our family, marriage, kids, asking God's protection for them as well.

The Lord's Prayer is only one way to help you to learn how and develop the spiritual discipline of prayer. But like we said earlier, God is our father, a good father, who desires to talk with his kids. Be bold, be honest, be consistent, become a person of prayer.

For more information on prayer, Pastor Mike preached a sermon series on prayer back in the Spring of 2015. You can look it up in our Sermon Archives online.