



PRAYING THE MODEL PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

Prayer plays a vital role in our lives as well as the future of the church. Jesus taught about the foundation for an abundant life in His first recorded sermon, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). He included the vital element of prayer as a part of the foundation we need to live the abundant life He provides.

Jesus said, *This, then, is how you should pray.* (Matthew 6:9 NIV) It was not an instruction to memorize and recite the prayer He gave us. It is a call to consider the elements of this prayer as a pattern to guide our prayer, so we can have the full life He wants us to have.

Jesus' model prayer teaches us to put things in proper order and allow prayer to do what was intended. As William Law an 18th century English preacher said, "Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man's will done in heaven but for getting God's will done on earth." Jesus' model prayer leads us so we can focus on "getting God's will done on earth."

This prayer guide will use the Lord's Model Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) to direct our prayer. We will pray as Jesus taught, by considering the elements He included. By giving 10 minutes to each part you can spend a full hour in prayer. By giving 5 minutes to each part you can spend 30 minutes in prayer. You can spend as much or as little time as you want on each of these parts, but as you pray consider the benefit of praying in this order.

Adore: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,*

The Random House College Dictionary defines adore as "1. To regard with utmost esteem, love, and respect. 2. To pay divine honor to; worship...."

So many times we jump into praying about our needs and wants. But Jesus began the model prayer where all our praying should begin, **with God**. We address a God who is great and awesome, completely holy. He is separate from the world and above all. We have no right to come into His presence, but yet He loves us with Fatherly love. He brought us into a relationship with Him and He is worthy of all of our praise.

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. Psalm 9:1-2 (NIV)

Begin your prayer time by adoring God. Spend time doing nothing but praising and seeking Him. Think of all the reasons you have to praise Him and to seek His presence. Praise Him for who He is. Praise Him for what He has done. Praise Him for what He is doing.

Adjust: *Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

The goal of our lives is to do and be what Christ wants. To be sure that God's name is hallowed requires some adjustment on our part. Our selfishness turns us away from God and creates a barrier that hinders God's work. It keeps God's will from being done in our lives. Jesus knew that in order for us to really praise Him, we need to turn our attention completely to Him. Jesus said, *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.* (Matthew 6:33 NIV)

We have a tendency to get things backwards, but Jesus taught us the proper order of things. If we adjust our wills to conform to His and seek His will first, then He will provide everything we need. This is the only way to have an abundant life.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. 1 John 5:14-15 (NIV)

This part of your prayer time needs to focus on any adjustment you need to make. You can probably think of many things that others need to do to adjust their lives to reflect God's will. But Jesus wants you to focus on your own life. Are you really where you need to be in your spiritual life? Does Christ have the place in your life that He wants and you need? Are you really seeking His kingdom first, before anything else? Are you

growing, as Christ wants you to? Are you spending time with Him daily in Bible study and prayer? Are you worshipping Him in spirit and in truth like He wants? What adjustments do you need to make in your life?

Ask: Give us today our daily bread.

Jesus now directs us to pray for those things we need. If we do not follow Jesus' instructions, we could begin to wonder why our prayers are not being answered. James writes ...*You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.* (James 4:2-3 NIV) When we ask, we need to ask with the right motives. It is God first, then others and yourself last. This is where intercessory prayer begins.

Jesus tells us to pray for **our** daily bread. This is a time, when you focus on the needs of those around you first. You can think of friends and family who are in need of special help. Maybe you know of someone who is sick. Or you may know of those who have had a death in their family. There may be someone who is in need of a special amount of strength or wisdom because of difficulties they are facing.

Notice what Jesus asks us to pray for. He mentions that we need to pray for the necessities of life. We do not need to take God for granted, but rely on Him for all our needs. And those needs are many.

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
1 Timothy 2:1-4 (NIV)

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

One of the greatest blessings that Christ gives is to become a part of our lives and our prayer time. The forgiveness of sins frees us to become all that Christ wants and allows us to hallow the Father's Name and seek His will. Our gratitude should be expressed for this wonderful gift. But notice that Jesus says that our gratitude in word is not enough. We must be willing to act as well as speak.

In Matthew 7:1-2, Jesus tells us to be careful about the way we view others because...*with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.* The same is true of our forgiveness. We have been forgiven the greatest debt, a debt that we could never pay, but do we hold others in debt to us? Maybe you are resentful for something somebody said or did. Maybe they do owe you, but is it a debt that will really settle accounts? We can never be free until we set others free from the debt they owe us. Jesus said, *Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.* (Luke 6:37 NIV) Christ expects us to be people of action and not just words. Not only does He expect us to take action in this area but in any area that expresses His love.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
Colossians 3:12-13 (NIV)

Christ wants us to bear fruit so that others will know who we belong to. Pray about clothing ourselves with Christ and letting Him produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Pray for Christ to pour out His love through you.

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

Pride is one of the weapons the enemy uses most effectively. About the time we think we have overcome a bad habit or we feel like we can do no wrong, we have a fresh reminder of our inability. The evil one knows exactly when to attack us. He knows the moment we drop our guard and he knows exactly what will make us fall. He is more powerful than any of us.

You can probably identify with Paul and James when they wrote:

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who

do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

Romans 7:15-18 (NIV)

The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

James 3:6 (NIV)

We need to overcome sin and the evil one, but we cannot do it alone. As we humble ourselves before God and admit this weakness, He provides us with the help we need. Peter thought he was strong enough to resist, but remember what he did on the night Jesus was betrayed? We may deny Christ also if we are not careful, but remember what Christ did for Peter. Jesus told him, *Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.* (Luke 22:31-32 NIV)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)

Acknowledge: For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Our prayer time ends with a passage that is not included in many of the earliest manuscripts. The New International Version includes it as a footnote because it is found in some of the later manuscripts. We want to end our prayer time by reflecting on these words.

What would be the greatest way you could reveal that this time with Christ has had a real impact on your life?

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17 (NIV)

The greatest way to thank God and reveal that you are seeking His will is to acknowledge His presence in your life every day. You need to let Christ's name be revealed in every word you speak and in every action you perform. The greatest impact you could have for the name of Christ is to remember the last words He spoke to the apostles right before He ascended into heaven...*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...*

The apostles returned to the upper room and, along with the other men and women, they prayed for ten days. We do not know for certain what they prayed, but having been with Jesus changed their lives. The same thing can happen in our lives if we will spend time with Him. Wouldn't it be great if we could have the same impact on our world as they had on theirs? It can happen if we will desire the same things they did and follow Jesus as He continues to lead us in prayer every day.

As you end your prayer time, acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord in your life. Then go and live as He empowers you, because His *...is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*