



PRAYER



PRAYER

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PREFACE

Prayer is often talked about and practiced in the church world. And it's a concept that is referred to in other contexts as well. For instance, many who don't know Jesus say they are "sending thoughts and prayers," without much of an idea of the actual meaning of prayer.

Prayer is the way we communicate with the God of the universe, the One who created us, the One who desires a deep and intimate relationship with us. Think about how you interact with your best friend or a dearly loved family member. When you are apart, you long to be together. When you are together, conversation flows easily, feelings are shared, fears are revealed and defeated, silence can be healing, desires are voiced and encouraged, mistakes are acknowledged and forgiven. Now imagine how much more God wants to engage with you in these ways.

Jesus came, lived, died, and rose again so that we would have that kind of access to God. Think about how God created us originally, to walk with Him in the cool of the evening (**Genesis 3:8**)—to share with Him everything about us, to come to Him in every situation, to confide in Him our thoughts, fears, feelings, and hopes. Though we were once separated from God, now, because of what Jesus has accomplished through His death and resurrection, our relationship is restored. We get to come to Him in the "cool of the evening"; we get to call Him our friend.

Prayer is not a formula, like $a+b=c$, where if I pray a certain way (a) for a certain thing (b), then the outcome is [_____] (c). It's not like coming to a slot machine where we put in our coin and maybe get something back. It's so much more—so much richer and deeper.

“Prayer invites you to learn to listen to God before speaking, to ask like a child in your old age, to scream your questions in an angry tirade, to undress yourself in vulnerable confession, and to be loved—completely and totally loved, in spite of everything.”¹

In this study we will focus on the Lord’s Prayer. This prayer is how Jesus taught His followers to pray. It is contained in a longer teaching now called, “The Sermon on the Mount” (**Matthew 5-7**).² In the “Sermon on the Mount” Jesus covered a range of topics that explained God’s Kingdom and what it looks like to be a part of bringing His Kingdom here on earth. “Jesus taught his followers that when we love God and our neighbor, when we treat others with God’s generosity and justice, we are entering God’s Kingdom. And so this is a prayer for the reunion of Heaven and Earth, and we’re invited to participate.” (**Matthew 5:3-12**)³

¹ Staton, Tyler. *Praying like Monks, Living like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*. Zondervan Books, 2022. 3

² A shorter version of this prayer can be found in **Luke 11:1-4** in response to the disciples’ request of Jesus to teach them to pray.

³ “The Meaning of the Lord’s Prayer Explained (Verse by Verse).” bibleproject.com/videos/lords-prayer/. Accessed 8 Aug. 2025.

“Our Father in Heaven”

The Foundation of Prayer (Adoration)

Lesson 1



“Jesus consistently taught His followers that the key to powerful praying was to simply understand that the one to whom they were praying was their Father in heaven. He told the crowds that God loves to give good gifts to them because they are His children (**Matthew 7:9-11**). Jesus taught that the aim of prayer is the Father’s glory (**John 14:13**) and that the power of prayer is rooted in the Father’s love. Ultimately, He addressed the most desperate prayers of His life to the One He knew as Abba.”¹



Opening Questions

If you were to describe God as Father to someone who has never prayed before, what three characteristics would you emphasize and why?

And/or discuss the quote above with your Life Group.

¹Greig, Pete. *God on Mute - Engaging the Silence of Unanswered Prayer*. Kingsway Publications, 2011.



Main Text: Matthew 6:5-13 (The Lord's Prayer)

This passage comes in the middle of Jesus' teaching on the side of a mountain in Galilee. It is now commonly referred to as the "Sermon on the Mount" (**Matthew 5-7**). In these verses, Jesus focused His teaching on prayer.

⁵ *"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.*

⁶ *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.*

⁷ *"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. ⁸ Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! 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.*



Reflection

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He began with a revolutionary concept: addressing the Creator of the universe as “Father.” In first-century Jewish culture, this intimate form of address was startling. While the Old Testament occasionally referred to God as Father, Jesus made it the primary way we relate to God.

“Calling God ‘Father’ [doesn’t feel like a big deal] today. It rolls off the tongue as unconsciously as the lyrics of ‘Happy Birthday’ as you carry a candlelit cake to the dinner table. ... Worse yet, for some its use is grouped in with a centuries-long patriarchal history of male superiority and female oppression. But the disciples likely gasped when Jesus said it. The temple that served as the training ground for their prayers had taught them to pray with supreme reverence. ... These disciples knew a God of cleansing rituals and animal sacrifices, a God of ten plagues and blood on the doorpost, a God who parts seas and floods the earth, a God with a heavy hand of deliverance and a heavy hand of judgment—awesome in power but hard to get to know. Jesus did nothing to diminish the reverence, nothing to minimize the power of God. [But,] Jesus made that powerful God knowable.”²

The ability to address God as “Our Father” reveals several profound truths:

- Prayer is relational, not transactional
- We can approach God with the confidence of beloved children
- Prayer is communal (“our” not just “my”)

The phrase “in heaven” balances this intimacy with appropriate awe. Our Father is not just any father—He is the sovereign ruler of all

²Staton, Tyler. *Praying like Monks, Living like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*.

creation, perfect in power, wisdom, and love. This tension between intimacy and reverence creates the perfect posture for prayer.

When we understand who we're praying to—a perfect Father who loves us completely yet possesses all power and authority—it transforms how we pray. We can come with both confidence and humility, trust, and reverence.



Supporting Verses

Spend some time reading and reflecting on the following passages of Scripture. Underline what stands out to you.

Psalm 103:13-14

*¹³ The Lord is like a father to his children,
tender and compassionate to those who fear him.*

*¹⁴ For he knows how weak we are;
he remembers we are only dust.*

Romans 8:15-16

¹⁵ 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."¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.

Galatians 4:6-7

⁶ And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father."⁷ Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

Questions

Take a moment to answer the following questions about both **Matthew 6:5-13** and the supporting verses.

 1 What did Jesus teach about the proper approach to prayer in the verses immediately preceding the Lord's Prayer (**Matthew 6:5-8**)?

 1.1 How does this context help us understand the Lord's Prayer better?

 2 Why do you think Jesus began the prayer with "Our Father" rather than "My Father"?

 2.1 What implications might this have for how we pray—both individually and in community?



In what ways does addressing God as both “Father” and as one who is “in heaven” create a balanced approach to prayer? (See footnote three as you answer.)³



When you are talking to God, do you tend to lean one way or the other? Why do you tend to do that?



Take a moment to write out a prayer that reflects the balance between intimacy and holiness.



In **Psalm 103:13-14**, what aspects of God’s fatherhood are emphasized?

³ “The word *hallowed* [Holy] means ‘to make holy,’ or ‘to set apart, sanctify, consecrate, dedicate.’ The closest commonly used English word is probably honor. ‘Our Father’ is a reminder of God’s intimacy, ‘hallowed’ is a reminder of his separateness, his majesty, his incomprehensible greatness. The pendulum of popular thought has swung between Jesus’ time and our own. We are comforted by the sentimentality of ‘our Father,’ a title that scandalized the ancient world, but we are equally scandalized by the devoted deference of ‘hallowed be your name,’ words that would’ve comforted the ancients. And it is for this precise reason that we need the second line of the Lord’s Prayer every bit as much as the ancients needed the first.” Staton, Tyler. *Praying like Monks, Living like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*. Zondervan Books, 2022. 61-62



How does God's understanding of our human frailty ("He remembers we are only dust") affect how you approach Him?



In **Romans 8:15-16** and **Galatians 4:6-7** we are invited to call God "Abba." "The word 'abba' is an Aramaic word that is the equivalent of our English word 'papa.'"⁴ And it was the name Jesus often used in His own prayers to God.⁵ What does it mean to you to be able to call God "Abba, Father"?



Looking at all of the passages together, what consistent themes do you notice about God's fatherhood and prayer?



How has this study changed or added to your understanding of prayer?

⁴ NKJV, *Wiersbe Study Bible: Be Transformed by the Power of God's Word*. Thomas Nelson, 2019. Bible Gateway Plus

⁵ See **Matthew 11:25; Mark 14:36; John 11:41; 17:1, 5, 21, 24-25**



Prayer Practices⁶

Below are a few ways to engage with God, our Father, in prayer this week. Try one or all of them as you spend time with Abba, Father. While these practices are meaningful when done individually, we encourage you to set aside time to engage with one of these prayer practices together in your Life Group.⁷

The Adoration Alphabet

This week, practice beginning your prayer time with adoration using the “Adoration Alphabet.” Each day, choose a letter of the alphabet and spend time praising God for His attributes that begin with that letter.

For example:

A: Almighty, Awesome, Abiding

B: Beautiful, Boundless, Benevolent

C: Compassionate, Creator, Constant

Spend 5-10 minutes reflecting on these attributes before moving to other aspects of prayer. Write these attributes in a prayer journal, along with any insights God gives you about His character.

Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)⁸

Take 15 minutes to practice this ancient prayer method with

Matthew 6:9:

⁹ *Pray like this:*

*Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.*

1. Read the verse slowly three times.

⁶For additional spiritual practices, see the Discipleship Pathway resources at www.salemalliance.org/discipleship-pathway/

⁷When we pray together, we experience the truth that “where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them” (**Matthew 18:20**). Each person brings their unique perspective and relationship with God, creating a richer, fuller picture of our Father.

⁸For more information on the practice of Lectio Divina, see the Discipleship Pathway resource “Learning and Belonging” page 12.

2. Meditate on what "Our Father in heaven" reveals about God.
3. Respond in prayer, expressing your feelings about God as Father.
4. Rest in silent contemplation of being God's beloved child.

Meditation on God's Father Heart

Find a quiet place and spend time reflecting on these questions:

- What qualities make a good father?⁹
- How does God perfectly embody these qualities?
- Ask God to reveal Himself as the perfect Father to you in a fresh way

Here are some questions to help you reflect on your experience(s) with the prayer practices:

- What surprised you?
- How did God meet you?
- What will you carry forward?



Upper Room

Each week you will have the opportunity to visit the Upper Room at Salem Alliance to engage with what God is teaching you. The Upper Room is on the 4th Floor of Broadway Commons and is open:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 10:00am-4:00pm

Wednesday: 6:00am-8:00pm

Sunday: 8:30am-12:30pm

This week, visit the Upper Room and write one attribute of God on the provided prayer wall. Take time to read what others have written about God's character.

⁹You may have some wounds or misconceptions from life with earthly fathers that could be affecting your view of God. If so, feel free to express those to God and ask Him to continue to show Himself in new and beautiful ways. You may also want to speak with a trusted friend or engage with the Healing

¹¹ Prayer team here at Salem Alliance Church by emailing: healingprayer@salemalliance.org.

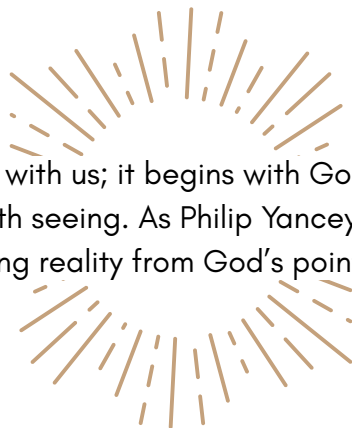
Prayer Requests

Sermon Notes

“May Your Kingdom Come”

God’s Purposes for Prayer

Lesson 2



“Prayer doesn’t begin with us; it begins with God. It doesn’t start with speaking; it starts with seeing. As Philip Yancey writes, ‘Prayer is the act of seeing reality from God’s point of view.’”¹



Opening Questions

If you could change one thing about our present world to make it more like heaven, what would it be and why?

And/or discuss the quote above.



Prayer Follow-Up

Before you begin this week’s lesson, take time to share with your Life Group your reflections on your experience with the prayer practice you engaged with this past week. You may find it helpful to use the following questions to guide your conversation:

- How would you describe your experience of this prayer practice?
- In what ways did God meet you through it?
- What insights or experiences from this practice will continue to shape your prayer life moving forward?

¹ Staton, Tyler. *Praying like Monks, Living like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*. Zondervan Books, 2022. 35



The Lord's Prayer

For the next three weeks we will provide the Lord's Prayer in different translations/paraphrases² for you to engage with together in your Life Group. As you begin your group time together, pray the Lord's Prayer from the Message paraphrase:

*Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what's best—
as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You're in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You're ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes.*



Main Texts: Matthew 6:10 & 6:33

¹⁰ *May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.*

³³ *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and
he will give you everything you need.*

² Scripture translations aim to accurately represent the original biblical languages with varying degrees of literal fidelity, while paraphrases prioritize conveying the meaning in contemporary, accessible language with greater interpretive freedom.



Reflection

After acknowledging who God is, Jesus teaches us to align ourselves with God's purposes: "May your kingdom come soon, may your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

God's Kingdom represents His rule and reign—where things operate according to His perfect will. It is manifest on earth when people submit to God's authority and live according to His values: love, justice, mercy, truth, and righteousness, etc.

Bible Project puts it this way: "Jesus taught his followers that when we love God and our neighbor, when we treat others with God's generosity and justice, we are entering God's Kingdom. And so this is a prayer for the reunion of Heaven and Earth, and we're invited to participate."³

This petition is not passive—it's an active commitment to participate in God's redemptive work in the world.

God's Kingdom is:

- Already here but not yet fully realized
- Both personal (in our hearts) and communal (in our relationships)
- Both present (breaking into our world now) and future (to be fully established at Christ's return)

While we often spend time "doing Kingdom stuff," it can be easy to miss the boat when we don't also ask God to bring His Kingdom—our actions would be woefully inadequate on their own. When we pray "Your Kingdom come," we're asking God to rule in our own hearts and lives. To transform our communities and relationships and ultimately redeem and restore all creation.

³ "The Meaning of the Lord's Prayer Explained (Verse by Verse)." bibleproject.com/videos/lords-prayer/. Accessed 8 Aug. 2025.

This part of the Lord's Prayer reorients our priorities. Instead of asking God to bless our agenda, we ask how we can participate in His agenda and plan. It moves us from self-centered prayers to God-centered vision.



Supporting Verses

Spend some time reading and reflecting on the following passages of Scripture. Underline what stands out to you.

Isaiah 61:1-4

¹The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.

²He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies.

³To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the Lord has planted for his own glory.

⁴They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities destroyed long ago. They will revive them, though they have been deserted for many generations.

Revelation 21:1-5

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

³I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. ⁴He will wipe every tear from

their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."

⁵And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true."

Questions

Take a moment to answer the following questions about both **Matthew 6:10 & 33** and the supporting verses.

 1 What do you think Jesus meant by "May your Kingdom come"?

 1.1 What evidence of God's Kingdom do you see in the world today?

 2 **Matthew 6:33** says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"(NIV). How can we seek God's Kingdom first?⁴

⁴ " ...the way that [Jesus] described God's reign, it surprised everybody. A powerful, successful kingdom, it needs to be strong, able to impose its will, able to defeat its enemies. But Jesus said the greatest person in God's Kingdom was the weakest, the one who loves and who serves the poor. And he said you live under God's reign when you respond to evil by loving your enemies, and forgiving them, and seeking peace. This is an upside-down Kingdom." "The Beatitudes Meaning in the Bible."
bibleproject.com/videos/the-beatitudes/. Accessed 9 Aug. 2025.



What is the relationship between “Your Kingdom come” and “Your will be done”?



Sometimes our prayers are more driven by our own agenda than by God’s will—His Kingdom agenda. Take some time to talk with God about where that has been true in your life and how you want to adjust moving forward.



In **Isaiah 61:1-4** (which Jesus applied to Himself in **Luke 4**),⁵ what specific aspects of God’s Kingdom work are highlighted?



Which of these aspects most resonates with you and why?

⁵ This declaration from Jesus comes on the heels of His time being tempted in the desert. The devil offered Jesus both comfort and power, but Jesus refused. Jesus knew that the kingdom He was preaching was not one of power and might, but of freedom and love.



Revelation 21:1-5 gives us a picture of God's Kingdom fully realized. How does this future hope influence how we pray for God's Kingdom to come today?



"Prayer is the pathway God has made to get us back to his original plan. ... Prayer is the repair of the communication breach that paralyzes us. ... Prayer is the means by which we push back the curse that's infected the world and infected us."⁶

With the above quote in mind, what tensions exist between the "already" and "not yet" aspects of God's Kingdom?



How do you see prayer easing those tensions?



How has this study changed or added to your understanding of prayer?

⁶ Staton, Tyler. *Praying like Monks, Living like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*. Zondervan Books, 2022. 104, 106

Prayer Practices ⁷

Below are a few ways to engage with God, our Father, in prayer this week. Try one or all of them as you spend time with Abba, Father. While these practices are meaningful when done individually, we encourage you to set aside time to engage with one of these prayer practices together in your Life Group.⁸

“Holy Here” Prayer Walk

This week, download the “Holy Here” app and commit to a 30-minute prayer walk in your neighborhood or workplace. As you walk, pray specifically for God’s Kingdom to come in that place.

Prayer prompts for your walk:

- “Lord, show me this neighborhood through Your eyes.”
- “Father, what are the needs here that break Your heart?”
- “Holy Spirit, how might You be inviting me to be part of Your Kingdom work here?”
- For homes: “May Your peace rest on this home. May Your Kingdom come here.”
- For businesses: “May this place operate with integrity and serve the community well.”
- For schools: “May truth, wisdom, and compassion flourish here.”

Take notes on your phone or in a journal about what God shows you during this walk. In the app, consider making your walk public so others can see where we are bringing purposeful prayer in our valley.



The “Holy Here” App is available on Google Play or your Apple App store. Find the App with the logo seen to the left.

⁷ For additional spiritual practices, see the Discipleship Pathway resources at www.salemalliance.org/discipleship-pathway/

⁸ When we pray together, we experience the truth that “where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them” (**Matthew 18:20**). Each person brings their unique perspective and relationship with God, creating a richer, fuller picture of our Father.

Examen⁹

Examen is a practice that helps us to notice where and how God shows up in our day. This form of prayer acknowledges both the difficult and the beautiful, the monumental and the mundane. Typically, Examen is meant to be practiced at the end of a day, but it can also be used at the end of a week or a particular season. Examen is simply two questions that help us to prayerfully look back over our day with God.

Find a quiet moment and place at the end of your day. Use the following two questions to help you review your day in light of God's Kingdom.

- Where did I see/participate in bringing God's Kingdom today?
- Where did I bring my own agenda today instead of God's?

Bring each moment before God with both honesty and gratitude. Notice any themes that may emerge. Don't try to fix them, just notice.

Kingdom Imagination Exercise

Spend 20 minutes imagining what your family, workplace, or community would look like if God's Kingdom fully came there:

What relationships would be healed?

What injustices would be made right?

What beauty would emerge?

What role might God be inviting you to play in this transformation?

How is God asking you to pray in light of these observations? Write down your reflections and share them with your Life Group. You may find it easier to write or draw what you imagine to help you stay focused.

⁹ Taken from the Salem Alliance Church Discipleship Pathway resource "Unsettled and Questioning" page 12.

Here are some questions to help you reflect on your experience(s) with the prayer practices:

- What surprised you?
- How did God meet you?
- What will you carry forward?



Upper Room

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Wednesday: 6:00am-8:00pm
Sunday: 8:30am-12:30pm

This week, visit the Upper Room where you'll find a map of our city. Place a pin or sticky note on areas you've prayer walked or where God has called you to intercede, with a brief note about what God showed you.

Prayer Requests

Sermon Notes

“Give Us Today the Food We Need...”

The Practicality of Prayer

Lesson 3



Relationship is God’s end game, but empowerment is His plan for getting there. Jesus did not merely come to redeem the world but to invite the likes of us, fallen men and women, to participate in that redemption. There is perhaps no greater means of empowerment than petition.¹



Opening Questions

What is your biggest need right now—physical, emotional, or spiritual? How comfortable are you bringing that need to God in prayer? Why?

And/or discuss the quote above.



Prayer Follow-Up

Before you begin this week’s lesson, take time to share with your Life Group your reflections on your experience with the prayer practice you engaged with this past week. You may find it helpful to use the following questions to guide your conversation:

- How would you describe your experience of this prayer practice?
- In what ways did God meet you through it?
- What insights or experiences from this practice will continue to shape your prayer life moving forward?

¹ Staton, Tyler. *Praying like Monks, Living like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*. Zondervan Books, 2022. 124



The Lord's Prayer

As you begin your group time together, pray the Lord's Prayer from the New International Version (NIV):

⁹ *"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.
¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.*



Main Texts: Matthew 6:11

¹¹ Give us today the food we need...
(NIV) ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.



Reflection

After focusing on God's character and Kingdom, Jesus teaches us to bring our everyday needs before God. This petition acknowledges our dependence on God for everything—from basic sustenance to all that sustains our lives.

The request for "daily bread" teaches us several important principles:

- God cares about our practical, everyday needs
- We are invited to live in daily dependence, not anxious stockpiling
- Prayer connects our spiritual life with our physical reality

- Again, we pray communally (“give us”), recognizing our shared humanity

This petition echoes God’s provision of manna for the Israelites in the wilderness—they were only given enough for each day, which required ongoing trust (**Exodus 16**). It challenges both a poverty mindset and our own self-sufficiency: we neither worry about tomorrow nor hoard for ourselves, but trust God’s ongoing care.

Jesus invites us to bring all our needs before God—physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual. Nothing is too small or mundane for prayer. This daily practice builds a lifestyle of dependence rather than self-sufficiency.

“In God’s kingdom, happiness is not marked out primarily by popularity, fat bank accounts or clean bills of health but rather by proximity to the Father.”²



Supporting Verses

Spend some time reading and reflecting on the following passages of Scripture. Underline what stands out to you.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:7

⁷Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

² Greig, Pete. *God on Mute—Engaging the Silence of Unanswered Prayer*. Kingsway Publications, 2011.



Questions

Take a moment to answer the following questions about **Matthew 6:11** and the supporting verses.

 1 Why do you think Jesus teaches us to pray for the food we need each day or “daily bread” rather than for abundance or long-term security?

 2 This part of the Lord’s Prayer, “Give us today our daily bread,” invites us to trust God with our needs each day. But it also challenges our modern habits of storing and saving for the future. While Scripture affirms wise planning (like storing grain), it also emphasizes dependence on God today. This tension can highlight the experiences of those living paycheck to paycheck versus those with financial margin—and how both are called to trust, generosity, and humility.

How does your financial situation shape the way you relate to this prayer—are you challenged more to trust God daily, or to see your resources as part of His provision for others?



When have you experienced God's provision in a tangible way?



How did that experience affect your trust in Him?



In what ways has our consumer culture affected your understanding of "daily bread" and your dependence on God?



In **Philippians 4:6-7**, what is the relationship between prayer, thanksgiving, and peace?



Prayer isn't a formula for getting what we want. God is our true source of peace, and a perfect life isn't promised this side of heaven. God invites us to bring our anxiety to Him, not just to fix it, but to draw near to His heart. Maybe the goal isn't changing the situation, but gaining His perspective and trusting what He's doing in the midst of it. What if prayer's power lies not in perfectly chosen words, but in connecting with God's heart—seeking His perspective and discovering what He wants for us and what He is doing in our situation?

How have you experienced this connection to God's heart in your own life?



God invites you to give your worries and cares to Him (**1 Peter 5:7**)—to come to Him with your whole heart, to give Him the things we worry, care, and think about. How can you incorporate this practice into your everyday life?



How might this practice help lift your burdens and worry?



How has this study changed or added to your understanding of prayer?



Prayer Practices³

Below are a few ways to engage with God, our Father, in prayer this week. Try one or all of them as you spend time with Abba, Father. While these practices are meaningful when done individually, we encourage you to set aside time to engage with one of these prayer practices together as a Life Group.⁴

Faith Building Journal

Consider starting a journal to record the prayers and needs that you have brought or are bringing to Jesus. Review regularly and also record answers to those prayers or ways that God has met you in the hard or worry. Also record things you are thankful for. Remember that God answers in a variety of ways: sometimes yes, no, not now, maybe, and in ways that are completely different than what you might expect.

As you begin to see the ways God is working, answering, and loving you, faith will grow. Consider sharing these observations with your Life Group.

Additionally, practice praying for others' needs with the same confidence you pray for your own. In your Life Group, exchange prayer requests and commit to praying for each other.

³For additional spiritual practices, see the Discipleship Pathway resources at www.salemalliance.org/discipleship-pathway/

⁴When we pray together, we experience the truth that "where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them" (**Matthew 18:20**). Each person brings their unique perspective and relationship with God, creating a richer, fuller picture of our Father.

Breath Prayer for Trust⁵

Breath prayer is a way to use the simple act of breathing to commune and communicate with God. They are short, one-sentence prayers, rooted in Scripture that are aligned with our breath—the first half is prayed while inhaling, the second half is prayed while exhaling. They remind us that each breath we are given is God's gift and that God's Spirit is nearer to us than our own breath. These prayers can be easily repeated throughout our day as a way of meditating on God's Word and reminding ourselves of His presence with us.

Throughout the day, practice this simple breath prayer to cultivate trust:

Inhale: "All I need today..."

Exhale: "...comes from Your hand."

Repeat this prayer during moments of anxiety or when facing uncertainty about provision.

Gratitude Practice

Set three alarms on your phone throughout the day (For example: morning, noon, and night). When each alarm sounds:

Pause what you're doing

Notice one way God has provided for you in that moment

Offer a brief prayer of thanks

Write it down if possible

This practice trains us to recognize God's ongoing provision throughout our day.

Here are some questions to help you reflect on your experience(s) with the prayer practices:

- What surprised you?
- How did God meet you?
- What will you carry forward?



Upper Room

Each week you will have the opportunity to visit the Upper Room at Salem Alliance to engage with what God is teaching you. The Upper Room is on the 4th Floor of Broadway Commons and is open:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 10:00am-4:00pm

Wednesday: 6:00am-8:00pm

Sunday: 8:30am-12:30pm

This week, visit the Upper Room where prayer request cards are available. Write your need on a card and place it in the prayer box. Take another person’s card and commit to pray for their need(s) throughout the week.

Prayer Requests

Sermon Notes

“As We Forgive“

The Power of Intercessory Prayer

Lesson 4



“The Lord’s Prayer is a cry for reconciliation at every level—in our broken relationship with God (‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your Name’), in our broken relationships with one another (‘forgive us ... as we forgive’), and in our broken relationship with the world (‘your kingdom come’). In fact, this line about forgiving those who sin against us can be applied to every other line of the prayer. Our Father’s name is hallowed as we forgive. His Kingdom comes as we forgive. We are forgiven as we forgive.”¹



Opening Questions

Who is someone you find difficult to forgive, and why? (No need to share names.) What makes forgiveness so challenging in some situations?

And/or discuss the quote above.

¹ Greig, Pete. *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People*. NavPress, 2019. 180



Prayer Follow-Up

Before you begin this week's lesson, take time to share with your Life Group your reflections on your experience with the prayer practice you engaged with this past week. You may find it helpful to use the following questions to guide your conversation:

- How would you describe your experience of this prayer practice?
- In what ways did God meet you through it?
- What insights or experiences from this practice will continue to shape your prayer life moving forward?



The Lord's Prayer

As you begin your group time together, pray the Lord's Prayer from the English Standard Version (ESV):

⁹ *"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.*

¹⁰ *Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread,*

¹² *and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*



Main Texts: Matthew 6:12-13

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.*



Reflection

The next petition in the Lord's Prayer addresses our need for reconciliation—both with God and with others. This is the only petition with a condition attached: we ask to be forgiven as we forgive others.

This connection between receiving and extending forgiveness reveals several profound truths:

- Our vertical relationship with God affects our horizontal relationships with others
- Unforgiveness hinders our ability to fully experience God's grace
- Forgiveness is not optional for followers of Jesus but essential
- Our willingness to forgive others reflects our understanding of God's forgiveness toward us

Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending the offense didn't happen or excusing harmful behavior. Nor does it mean trusting someone who has hurt you. It also may not mean reconciling the relationship.

Rather, forgiveness means releasing the right to revenge or surrendering the debt owed to you. It is choosing to see the offender through God's eyes. It is a process that often begins with a decision and continues as emotional healing follows. (You may also want to speak with a trusted friend or engage with the Healing Prayer team here at Salem Alliance Church by emailing: healingprayer@salemalliance.org.)

"Jesus made forgiveness central to his movement. He announced that God was forgiving Israel and all humanity for its long history of violence and greed. And so He calls His followers to do the same—to forgive those who hurt us. ... He taught that forgiveness begins with naming the wrongdoing but then not seeking vengeance. So that doesn't mean becoming best friends with the person who wronged

you. But it does mean releasing my right to get totally even with them, and even learning to pray for their well-being instead. That kind of forgiveness requires radical trust in God. Jesus invites us to see that forgiveness is like breathing. In order to truly receive and take in God's forgiveness, you have to be in the habit of giving it out. The two work together as one."²



Supporting Verses

Spend some time reading and reflecting on the following passages of Scripture. Underline what stands out to you.

Colossians 3:12-15

¹² Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

¹ I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. ² Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.

1 John 1:9

⁹ But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

² "The Meaning of the Lord's Prayer Explained (Verse by Verse)." bibleproject.com/videos/lords-prayer/. Accessed 8 Aug. 2025.

Questions

Take a moment to answer the following questions about **Matthew 6:12-13** and the supporting verses.

 1 Why do you think forgiveness is the only part of the Lord's Prayer with a condition attached ("as we forgive those who sin against us")?

 1.1 What does this suggest about the importance of forgiveness?³

 2 How does your understanding of God's forgiveness and grace toward you affect your ability to forgive others?

³"Jesus gives a startling warning about forgiveness: if we refuse to forgive others, God will also refuse to forgive us. Why? Because when we don't forgive others, we are denying our common ground as sinners in need of God's forgiveness. God's forgiveness of sin is not the direct result of our forgiving others, but it is based on our realizing what forgiveness means (See **Ephesians 4:32**)."

3

The final line of the prayer asks for protection from temptation and deliverance from evil. How does this relate to forgiveness and why might these concepts be connected?

4

According to **Colossians 3:12-15**, what can forgiveness accomplish in community?

4.1

Take some time to pray for those in your community, asking God to help bring His peace in each and every relationship.

5

In **1 Timothy 2:1-4**, what categories of people are we called to pray for?



What is God's desire for all people according to this passage, and how should that shape our intercession?



1 John 1:9 addresses confession. In what ways does confession play a part in your journey with Jesus?



How is He calling you to engage in confession currently?



Looking at the main text and supporting verses together, how would you describe the importance of forgiveness?



How has this study changed or added to your understanding of prayer?



Prayer Practices⁴

Below are a few ways to engage with God, our Father, in prayer this week. Try one or all of them as you spend time with Abba, Father. While these practices are meaningful when done individually, we encourage you to set aside time to engage with one of these prayer practices together as a Life Group.⁵

The Forgiveness Prayer⁶

This week, practice this guided forgiveness prayer exercise:

1. Begin by receiving God's forgiveness:
 - Spend 5 minutes in silent confession, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal areas where you need forgiveness.
 - Read **1 John 1:9** aloud and receive God's forgiveness.
2. Extend forgiveness to others:
 - Write down names of people (or groups, institutions, etc.) you need to forgive.
 - For each person, pray: "Lord, I choose to forgive [name] for [specific offense]. I release them from the debt they owe me. I ask You to bless them and work in their life."
 - If emotions are still raw, add: "I'm still hurting, Lord. Help my feelings catch up with my decision to forgive."
3. Intercede for others:
 - Create a personal intercession list with 5-7 names.
 - Commit to praying for these people daily.
 - Include someone who has hurt you on this list.

⁴For additional spiritual practices, see the Discipleship Pathway resources at www.salemalliance.org/discipleship-pathway/

⁵When we pray together, we experience the truth that "where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them" (**Matthew 18:20**). Each person brings their unique perspective and relationship with God, creating a richer, fuller picture of our Father.

⁶For another forgiveness practice see the Discipleship Pathway resource "Surrender and Healing" page 11.

Intercessory Prayer Partners

Find a prayer partner and commit to:

- Meet weekly (in person or virtually) for 30 minutes
- Share 2-3 specific prayer needs
- Pray for each other during your time together
- Check in midweek to share updates and continue praying

Here are some questions to help you reflect on your experience(s) with the prayer practices:

- What surprised you?
- How did God meet you?
- What will you carry forward?



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Sunday: 8:30am-12:30pm

This week, visit the Upper Room where you'll find stones and a cross. Write on a stone the name of someone you're struggling to forgive, then place it at the foot of the cross as a symbol of releasing that burden to Christ.

Prayer Requests

Sermon Notes

For Further Study

While not an exhaustive list, for additional study and resources on prayer, here are some suggestions:

- *Praying like Monks, Living like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer* by Tyler Stanton
- *God on Mute* by Pete Greig
- *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* by Pete Greig
- *Lead with Prayer: The Spiritual Habits of World-Changing Leaders* by Ryan Scoog, Peter Greer, & Cameron Doolittle
- *Seeking the Favor of God: Volume 2: The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* by Mark J Boda (editor) and others (Highly Academic)
- *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer* by David G. Benner
- *Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers* by Anne Lamott
- *Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day* by Macrina Wiederkehr and Paula D'Arcy
- *Toward God: The Ancient Wisdom of Western Prayer* by Michael Casey
- *Why We Pray: Understanding Prayer in the Context of Cosmic Conflict* by John C. Peckham
- *Teach Us to Pray* by Gordon T. Smith
- *When God Is Silent: Let the Bible Teach You to Pray* by John Koessler
- *Every Moment Holy Vols. 1-3* by Douglas Kaine McKelvey and Ned Bustard
- *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* by Richard J. Foster
- *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals* by Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, et al.