

HOW TO PRAY... HOW TO LIVE...

“This then is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is on heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” (Matthew 6:9-13)

There is a famous saying, “If you want to feed a person everyday, teach him how to hunt.” It is better that you teach him how to hunt and to live on what he hunts better than to give him food everyday because when you have no more food he will also starve. But if he knows how to hunt he will continue to live even you are away.

Jesus wants to teach his children how to live. In the above passage He was teaching His disciples how to pray. A prayer is simply speaking to God or in a precise meaning, prayer is a conversation between God and man; man speaks and God listens, as well as God speaks and man obeys.

The above prayer or what is called the Lord’s Prayer; its purpose is not only to utter words to God, but to understand the will of God for us. Its meaning and value is to be applied into our lives. Besides, when we understand it well our personal prayers will be worth like the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ. This, then how we should pray:

1. **“Our Father in heaven:”** Jesus teaches us to call God our Father. The gap between man and God is very wide – God is Holy, man is sinful. God is perfect and man is imperfect. This is reality, yet the Lord Jesus teaches us to call God, “Our Father.” Because He has bridged that big and wide gap between men and God when He died on the cross and paid the price for our sins. If we believe and accept His sacrifice we are given the right to call God, ‘our Father.’ ***“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)*** What a confidence we have when we pray and address God as “Our Father.” We are not speaking to God who is far from us but we are speaking to our Heavenly Father who is ‘Omnipresent’ or present everywhere.
2. **“Hallowed be your name:”** The name of God is holy. ***“You shall not misuse the name of God, for the Lord will not hold any-one guiltless who misuses His name.” (Deuteronomy 5:11)*** The name of the Lord should not be blasphemed or mentioned in vain rather, we must give thanks and revere His Holy name at all times. Jesus is Lord; He is the image of the invisible God. Before He came as a man, an angel appeared to Joseph and said, ***“And you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21b)***
3. **“Your kingdom come:”** When we believe in Jesus we have eternal life and we belong to His kingdom. We ought to pray for other people around us to be with us in the kingdom of God. We pray continually for our families, our relatives, our friends and other people around us to receive Jesus as personal Lord and Saviour, and become part of His kingdom.

4. **“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven:”** We pray to God that we can fully obey His will; that our own will, plans and desires be submitted to His will. We pray for His kingdom to be revealed on earth through the lives of every believer. We desire to follow Jesus and live for Him and with Him on this earth and in the new heaven and earth to come.
5. **“Give us today our daily bread:”** God is our Father. He is the Creator and Giver of life. We have assurance that every day God will meet all our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. ***“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)*** Moreover, our daily bread is not only the delicious food that we eat: ***“Man does not live in bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)*** Our daily bread is the word of God that gives us comfort, contentment and clear direction to how we manage our daily living.
6. **“Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors:”** We ought to live like Christ. We must maintain a holy life living away from sin because Jesus has already cleansed us and forgiven our transgressions. Sin separates us from God and God will not hear our prayers if we keep sin in our hearts. ***“¹⁸ If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; ¹⁹ but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer.” (Psalms 66:18,19)*** When we pray, we confess our sins to God to be forgiven. ***“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)*** Prayer teaches us and disciplines us to repent from our sins, and to forgive other. Jesus said, ***“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” (Mark 11:25)***
7. **“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one:”** In our prayers we put in the hand of God our Father our difficulties, our troubles and the temptation around us. We ask Him to protect us from the evil one. In our prayers we ask God to help us not to go through unsafe ways and to guide us by His word and by His Holy Spirit so that we will not sin against Him. Jesus said. ***“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace, in this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)***

My dear and beloved: To pray is to live properly as God our Father wants us to be. It is a great blessing for us to sit down daily with the Lord; to give Him our praise, our burden or problems, and to receive from Him the peace that He promised us and the assurance of victory in life. Finally, ***“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6, 7)***

“Father God in heaven, I come to You in the name of Jesus who died for me on the cross to give me eternal life. O lord, put in my heart to pray daily; increase my faith in You, and help me to do your good and perfect will; mold me to follow You and to serve You the rest of my life. This is my prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.”