



PRAYER

SECTIONS:

Introduction to Prayer

Prayer Hexagon

Action Steps

EXPECTED OUTCOME:

Disciples will know how to regularly talk to God.

INTRODUCTION TO PRAYER

As a Father, God longs for His Children to come to Him. He intends for you to live with Him and desires for us to be near Him. Prayer—which literally means talking with God—draws us into that relationship. When you asked Him to search your heart, you prayed. You asked God to show you how He sees people: this was a prayer as well. It is through prayer that we communicate with God. Prayer takes many forms, it can be a word of thanks or a time of worship, a cry of desperation or a request for guidance.

Like any conversation, prayer requires both talking and listening. Sometimes, it looks like you pouring out your heart to your Father; other times, it might entail quieting your heart and listening for His voice. Whatever form we choose, **prayer is the main means by which we come to God.**

The book of Hebrews paints a picture of what prayer looks like:

“Since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...let us...then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

When we pray, it is as if we are entering into the throne room of a great King. As mere peasants, we have no right to come before Him on our own and yet, we are beckoned to come. Our access into this throne room is through Jesus. Because Christ justified us through His death, God now sees us based on Christ’s righteousness and not based on our own sin or merit. As a result, we are **given free access to the throne room as a child of the King.**

READ Luke 11:1-4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” 2 He said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

Key Principles:

- **Prayer is not for the experts.** In these passages, we find Jesus teaching His disciples about prayer. At first, prayer seems mysterious and intimidating. How do you approach a Being who is both your Father and your Creator, your Friend and your King? In our uncertainty, we

sometimes avoid prayer, leaving it to the “experts,” or think that we somehow need to be better before we come to God.

- **He is a good Father and wants his kids to talk to Him.** Jesus made it clear, prayer is not a show or a way to get people’s attention. When asked how to pray, Jesus started by using the word “Father.” By starting here, Christ establishes the attitude with which we should approach God—like an unassuming child going before a loving dad. A child doesn’t worry about whether his dad wants him there or if he is asking too much or too little. A child goes to his dad assuming that his father loves him and wants to be near to him. Christ beckons us to come as we are and to pour out our hearts.
- **He is also holy and deserves to be seen as such.** After establishing Him as Father, Christ reminds us of who our Father is: “who is in Heaven, hallowed be your name.” While He is our Father, we have to remember that He is also God. Hallowed means to honor as holy. He is not like us. We are on earth; He is in heaven. Sometimes we will ask Him for things we think are necessary for our livelihood. As our Father and Creator, He might disagree. This doesn’t negate His desire for us to ask Him anyway.
- **As we pray, we should be seeking to align our lives with God’s plans.** When we recognize Him as God, we realize He is ultimate and we are not. This then shapes what we ask for and enables us to ask the next part of this prayer: “your kingdom come.” At the end of the day, we are here to further His kingdom. As we pray, we should be seeking to align our lives with God’s plans. This includes events in our own personal lives, and our mission as His disciples. Worshipping God for who He is orients our hearts toward His purposes and changes our perspective on what we want for ourselves.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do you feel intimidated to pray to God? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Jesus told us to pray like this?

Read Luke 11:5-13

5 Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; 6 a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ 7 And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity[e] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. 9 “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the

door will be opened. 11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for [f] a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Key Principles:

- **Approach prayer with confidence, even to the point of being annoying.** Jesus affirms this picture in the book of Hebrews. Jesus demonstrates to us how to approach God in prayer with confidence and even audacity. He seems to say that we should keep asking almost to the point of being annoying. God wants us to ask Him for anything. He tells us to ask, seek, and knock. He wants us to make requests of Him. He wants us to go to Him when we have needs. He wants us to ask Him to take care of us.
- **Prayer should be seen as worship.** In a relationship with Him, our asking can be a form of worship for it shows that we need Him, that we are incapable of functioning without Him and that we trust in His provision. Sometimes we might be tempted to shift our focus from having a relationship to getting what we want. Understand that He wants to give us good things, but He also wants us to seek Him and not the gifts He might give. He might not give us exactly what we ask, but when God is our focus we can trust that He knows what is best.
- **The more we talk to God, the more He aligns our hearts with His.** As we journey with Him in prayer, He transforms us and aligns our desires with His own. He teaches us how to pray and guides us on what to ask Him for. The more we pray, the more we will trust our Father. The more we trust Him, the closer we come to Him, and the more we will start to look like Him.
- **Prayer is a central part of walking with God.** You can't expect to have a good relationship with someone if you do not spend time with them, talk with them, or listen to what they have to say. A relationship cannot survive without communication. The same principles apply to your relationship with God. Pour your heart out to Him, but also learn to listen for His quiet voice. In John 10, Jesus likens us to sheep who know and listen to their shepherd's voice: "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me." You must actively talk to Him and you must actively listen to Him.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What do you notice about prayer from this passage?
- Do you regularly pray? Why or why not?
- Do you think prayer is effective? Why or why not?

THE PRAYER HEXAGON

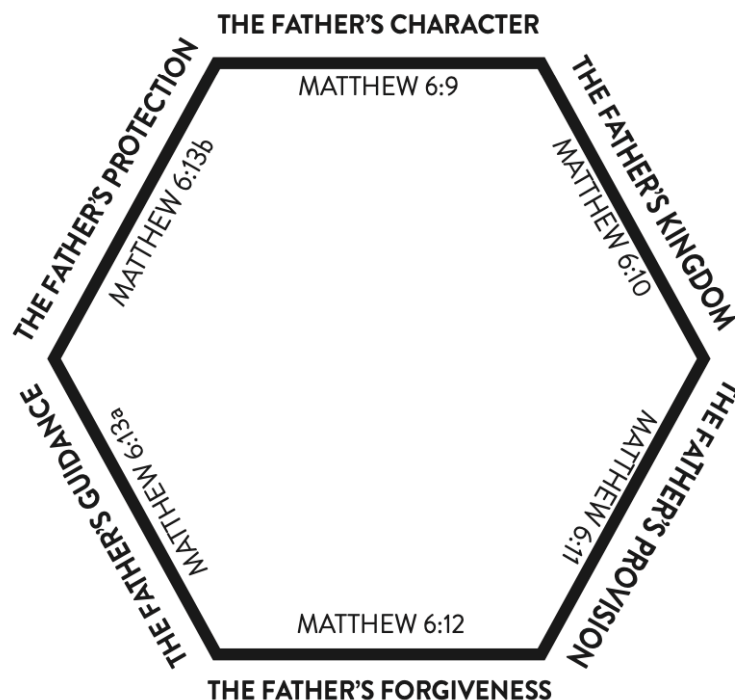
Brief description: God desires for us to have an intimate and powerful relationship with him via prayer. This tool provides some of the categories to consider when talking with God, based on the example provided by Jesus.

READ: Matthew 6:5-13

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“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 in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’*



Explanation:

When Jesus gave us an example of how to pray, it wasn't wordy or extensive. It certainly wasn't a set form of words to use every time. It was simple, profound, multi-dimensional and rich; a framework that guides us beyond our habitual prayers into prayers of adoration, confession, intercession, petition, guidance and warfare, all declaring our utter dependence on God. As a result, we can have confidence in our prayer, because it illuminates the character of God, our Father.

- **The Father's Character** - Jesus shows us that we can interact with God in an intimate manner. He is our Father, our "Abba" (Daddy). But there is an element of respect as well. He is in heaven and deserves to be hallowed, (honored as holy, respected, we are in awe of him). He is approachable and close to us yet he is also set apart and worthy of all worship.
- **The Father's Kingdom** - When you surrender to God as Rescuer of your life, you recognize that He is Lord and you want His Kingdom to advance on earth. Where do you want to see the advance of His Kingdom on earth?
- **The Father's Provision**- Jesus shows us that we can admit our needs to God and request His provision. We have physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. We can trust that He will provide for our needs.
- **The Father's Forgiveness** - When we trespass (rebel/sin) against God, we're basically telling God that He and His provision are not enough to satisfy us. We must confess our sins against God and others, as well as follow God's example by forgiving others. We must remember that we were once forgiven, yet we did not deserve it.
- **The Father's Guidance** - God wants us to go into the world to share His kingdom. But we should not be of the world and succumb to its temptations. We should pray for God to lead us in our interactions with the world as we seek to join in His mission. We follow God as we trust in Him, and His guidance, for this life and into eternity.
- **The Father's Protection** - We are in a spiritual battle, and the enemy wants to lead us astray from what God wants us to do. We can pray that God would protect us from temptation and spiritual warfare as we are doing His mission here on earth.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do you commonly communicate with God regarding all of these topics above or do you tend to focus on a portion of them?
- How do you relate to God as both Father and King? Do your prayers always focus on your needs and never focus on the advancement of God's kingdom?
- How can you be praying for the Father's guidance and protection for your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?

ACTION STEPS

- **Pray** everyday using the Prayer Hexagon as a guide.
- **Listen** to this [podcast on the Lord's Prayer](#) by Tim Mackie.
- **Listen** to [The Role of Desperate Prayer in Relenting Wrath](#) by David Platt.

RECOMMENDED READING

- [Prayer](#) by Tim Keller

-

Note of reference:

Thank you to the following for providing the information that is shared in this document.

- Resonate Church (Pullman, Washington) <http://resonate.net/>
- The Timothy Initiative <https://www.ttionline.org>