

# HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

## MATTHEW 6:9-13

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.  
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our  
debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one."

## LUKE 11:2-4

He said to them,  
When you pray, say:  
"Father, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who  
sins against us.  
And lead us not into temptation."

## JESUS' PRAYER EXAMPLE

Jesus gave us a prayer example to teach us HOW to pray. He did not give it to us so that we could merely repeat it, but so that we could use it as a pattern or guide for our own prayers.

Jesus referred to this pattern on various occasions. He sometimes used different wording. But in each instance, several common themes were present. They are as follows:

1) **Worship, praise, adoration towards God himself.** He is worthy of these, because he is the true God, and not a man-made false god. As God's children, we want him to be exalted and revered.

2) **Prayer that God's will shall be done - both now and forevermore.** Those who belong to God (his children) want God's desires to be put ahead of anything else - even their own desires. They want what their Father in heaven wants. And they want God to be honored in all of life.

3) **Mentioning one's concerns about physical needs (including the needs of others).** As we pray this, we entrust all our needs to God, knowing that he understands our true needs better than we do - not just for the present, but for eternity. God's answers will always be perfect and complete, even if he would for some reason say "No" to some of our requests.

4) **Prayer about our spiritual needs.** We are a needy people; we are debtors to God for all he has done for us. Although we have sinned greatly against him, he has offered us his forgiveness. And he expects us to be like him and forgive others. A forgiving spirit within us is proof that we are truly his children.

5) **Prayer for protection through the trials of life.** We cannot make it through trials on our own; we need God's help. We should try to avoid entering temptation, but when it comes (and it will), we must rely on God to bring us through it.

NOTE: Some translations end this model prayer with a closing similar to this: "Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." This reminds us of the first theme of the prayer, which included worship, praise and adoration of God. You may wish to include worship and praise not only at the beginning and end of your prayer, but also scattered throughout. After all, God is the primary focus of prayer!

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT PRAYER

Many people emphasize the immediate, physical needs of people, in their prayers. This is not a primary emphasis in Scripture. Look at a few examples: a) Jesus' prayer in John 17. b) Paul's prayers in Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:16-21; 6:18-20; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12; 4:2-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 and others. c) John's prayer in 3 John 2. John prays for his friend's health and circumstances, but he adds: "even as your soul is getting along well." To John, one's soul is more important than one's health and circumstances. He doesn't ignore them. He simply has the proper priorities.