



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 002: The Lord's Prayer

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Read Matthew 6:9-13.

Jesus told His disciples this prayer when they asked him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). It has been suggested it should more accurately be called "The Disciples' Prayer," for it is intended for disciples of Jesus to pray. It may be thought of as a guide by which to structure our prayers.

v9 Hallowed Father. We are reminded of three important things in the way we are to address our prayers:

- (1) We bring our petitions to *Our Father*, not an uncaring, impersonal force.
- (2) He is *in heaven*, overseeing all things on earth and therefore able to notice us and hear us pray.
- (3) His name is *Hallowed*, meaning His character is holy - so we can be sure His dealings with us will be righteous and perfect.

v10 Sovereign King. Before we ask for what we want we are to come into agreement with what *God* wants. His *Kingdom* is His rule, which is already operating in heaven but he would like to see functioning on earth. *Your will be done on earth* is, in effect, a description of God's Kingdom on earth. Ask yourself, "Are my prayers focused on what God wants or what *I* want?"

vv 11-13a Our needs. There are three categories of requests in this prayer:

- (1) For *our daily bread*, meaning life's necessities. God gives us these whether we ask him or not (see Psalm 37:25), but this reminds us of our dependence on him (and perhaps His dependence on us to help feed the hungry?).
- (2) For forgiveness (*debts* = sins), for ultimately all sin is rebellion against God's will and puts us in debt to God's mercy (as King David recognised - Read Psalm 51:4). Notice we dare not presume on God's forgiveness if we willingly harbour unforgiveness to others (*as we forgive ...* see also verses 14-15).
- (3) To keep us from *temptation* and *evil* (or *the evil one*). God Himself tempts no one (James 1:13), but he may allow Satan to put us through testing times. These twin petitions are like asking our Father to go easy on us and to deliver us from Satan's wiles and evil designs.

v13b Sovereign King. The prayer ends back where it began, with turning our thoughts to God, in his sovereignty, power and glory.

To think about: Can you see the value in surrounding our requests with reminders of how great is the One to whom we bring them?

To dig deeper: Read about the Kingdom of Heaven (or Kingdom of God) in a Bible dictionary or encyclopaedia.