

THE Way



Jesus-centred, *Spirit-led*
hope revealed



**PRAYER
BIBLE STUDY GUIDE**

*In this series, we focus on **The Way of Jesus**. In this week's Scripture passage, Jesus gives us some detailed instructions on how not to pray and how to pray.*



Share

In what situations do you find yourself praying unprompted? e.g. times of trouble or times of praise?

Who is someone you consider to be a prayerful person?

What do you notice about how they live, speak and behave?



Pray

Before we read the Scripture, let's pray together.

*Lord, as we open your Word now, please speak to us.
May your Holy Spirit reveal your truth to us. We pray
that our prayer lives would grow richer and stronger.*

In Jesus' name, Amen.



Read

Read Matthew 6:5-13. You might like to read it in a couple of different translations.

⁵ “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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray:

“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.’

(New International Version)

⁵ When you pray, don't be like those show-offs who love to stand up and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners. They do this just to look good. I can assure you that they already have their reward. ⁶ When you pray, go into a room alone and close the door. Pray to your Father in private. He knows what is done in private and will reward you. ⁷ When you pray, don't talk on and on as people do who don't know God. They think God likes to hear long prayers. ⁸ Don't be like them. Your Father knows what you need even before you ask.

⁹ You should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,
help us to honor
your name.

¹⁰ Come and set up
your kingdom,
so that everyone on earth
will obey you,
as you are obeyed
in heaven.

¹¹ Give us our food for today.

¹² Forgive us for doing wrong,
as we forgive others.

¹³ Keep us from being tempted
and protect us from evil.

(Contemporary English Version)



- In Verses 5-6, Jesus draws a contrast between praying to impress others and praying privately. What do you think motivates us to try to impress others with our prayers?
- Read Verse 6 again. Why do you think Jesus encourages us to pray on our own? Do you have a private place of prayer or a special time of the day that works for you? What do you find helpful or challenging about praying on your own?
- In Verse 7 Jesus says, “When you pray, don’t talk on and on as people do who don’t know God.” One translation of the Bible puts it: “do not use vain repetitions”.¹ Jesus isn’t saying that long prayers are bad, but he is teaching us to focus more on the heart and meaning of our prayers than on the words we use.² What do you think this looks like?
- Verse 8 says, “Your Father knows what you need even before you ask.” If God already knows our needs, why do you think he wants us to bring them to him in prayer?
- Jesus is reminding us that prayer is a way for us to draw close to our Father and strengthen our relationship with him. How have you experienced this in your life?
- What are some things that have helped you deepen your intimacy with God, or spend quality time with him?

1 New King James Version (NKJV)

2 Enduring Word Bible Commentary Matthew Chapter 6

- After telling us how not to pray, Jesus gives us a model for prayer. Many of us will know these words as ‘The Lord’s Prayer’. The Lord’s Prayer shows us how to pray in a way that fosters a deep, strong relationship with our Father. Let’s read that prayer (vs 9-13) out loud again now.

What is one thing that jumps out to you from these words?

- Verse 9 begins with the words, “Our Father in heaven.” Jesus is teaching us to begin prayer by acknowledging and focusing on who God is – the all-powerful, heavenly creator and ruler who is also our Father. Why do you think Jesus tells us to begin in this way?
- The next words say, “Hallowed be your name”. Or some translations say, “May your name be kept holy”. What do you think this means? Why do you think it is a helpful way to start our prayers?
- Jesus continues: ‘Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’ Here, Jesus is teaching us to pray that God’s agenda would be fulfilled. How often do you pray this kind of prayer? What kind of prayers would fall into this category?
- Verse 11 says, “Give us today our daily bread” or “Give us the food we need for the coming day.” When we have needs, Jesus encourages us to bring them to him and trust him to provide. How naturally does this part of prayer come for you?
- Verse 12 says, “Forgive us for doing wrong, as we forgive others”. Does it surprise you that forgiveness is an essential ingredient in prayer? Why/why not?

- Verse 13 says, “Keep us from being tempted and protect us from evil”, or you may be more familiar with the translation that says, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Jesus encourages us to pray that God would keep us from situations where we would be vulnerable to sin. Why do you think Jesus wants us to pray this kind of prayer regularly? What happens in our hearts and minds when we pray like this?
- Looking at the overall framework Jesus provides for prayer, is there anything that surprises or stands out to you?
- What is one aspect of Jesus’ teaching here that you would like to apply in your life?



Spend some time encouraging and praying for each other about the things you shared.

