

HOW TO PRAY

In Matthew 6:5-8, Jesus emphasized how NOT to pray; now in 6:9-15, He teaches us how TO pray. This is commonly called “The Lord’s Prayer,” but in truth, this is a prayer Christ could never have prayed because it includes asking forgiveness for sin, and Jesus never sinned. More properly, this should be called “***The Disciples’ Prayer***”. This is Jesus teaching the disciples how THEY should pray.

Matthew 6:9 (NKJV)

9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

There is no indication that Jesus ever intended this to be prayed in the form of a mindless mantra – simply quoting it by rote as if that somehow has significance. In fact, such a practice is contrary to what Jesus just said in verse 7 where He said in praying “do not use vain repetitions”. It is okay to repeat – just don’t do so in a mindless vain manner.

When Jesus says, “***In this manner***” pray it indicates He is giving us a sample way of praying and not a ritualistic formula. As taught by Christ we should keep these themes and emphases in view as we pray. And certainly it is fine to literally pray through this model prayer as long as we do so sincerely and thoughtfully.

Footnote: A very similar prayer to that seen here, Matthew 6:9-13, is found in Luke 11:1-4. They are similar and yet also have a few differences. Evidently, Christ emphasized this model prayer on more than one occasion. There are a few differences, but with much overlap.

Prayer as taught by Jesus begins with an emphasis on God as our Father. Only believers can really pray because only they have God as their Father.

Prayer begins with recognition of God as our Father. On a few select occasions, God was recognized as “Father” in the OT, and then mostly in connection with the nation of Israel. Personally, recognizing God as “Father” was essentially introduced by Jesus.

“Father” (Gk. pater) corresponds to “Abba” in Aramaic, the common language spoken by Jesus. It is a very tender word in nuance, sort of like the affectionate “Papa” in today’s world (cf. Mk. 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).

The term “Father” speaks of a relationship of sovereign care. As “Father,” God provides, protects, and disciplines. He is the ultimate authority figure.

He is our “**Father**” and yet note the emphasis here on Him being “**in heaven**”. God is omnipresent, but the emphasis on Him being in heaven emphasizes His transcendence. He is exalted over all. He is our Father (relational), but He is also HIGH and EXALTED in heaven (transcendent).

After recognizing God as “Father,” the first emphasis is for God’s name to be hallowed. This expresses a “**worshipful desire**”. The desire is for God to be properly honored – and of course, that starts with SELF.

The term “**name**” represents God for WHO He is. His name is His person and all that He is. It represents His very being and character. Hallowed is the idea of holy, so the prayerful desire is that God be treated as holy.

Prior to the time of the kingdom, God’s name has often been profaned and not hallowed. This prayer that God’s name be hallowed (honored as holy) has application for now, but will really only see proper fulfillment in the kingdom.

Ezekiel 36:23 (NKJV)

23 And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord,” says the Lord God, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.

Because of Israel’s sinfulness, God’s name (Person) was profaned among the nations. The Second Coming is going to change all that.

Malachi 1:11 (NKJV)

11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations,” Says the Lord of hosts.

This is what “Hallowed be Your name” is praying for – that God’s name would be honored and revered as GREAT among the nations.

By the way, it’s not enough just to mouth these words. An honest, earnest prayer for God’s name to be hallowed seeks to live accordingly.