

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Sermon on the Mount

Week 20

Lord, Teach Us to Pray

Matthew 6:7 - 14

Opening Prayer:

Our Father

A Reflection

Our Father Who Art In Heaven – O Creator, You made all things in love. All of creation is a blessing emanating from You.

Hallowed Be Thy Name – Help us to let go, to clear the space inside of busy forgetfulness so that You can come and reside within us.

Thy Kingdom Come – Let Your counsel rule our lives; unite our “I can” to Yours so that, together, we can bring forth a new world of peace.

Thy Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven – As we find Your love in ours, let Your heart’s fervent desire move us beyond ourselves to help bring about a new way of being.

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread – Grant what we need each day in bread and insight; sustenance for the call of growing life.

And Forgive Us Our Trespasses As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us – Loose the cords of mistakes that bind us, as we release the strands we hold of other’s guilt.

And Lead Us Not Into Temptation But Deliver Us From Evil – Don’t let surface things distract us; free us from the things that hold us back from our true purpose.

AMEN

Reflection

In a previous reflection, Jesus invited us to keep our focus on God and not let our prayer get stale or become an end in and of itself. This week, Jesus instructs us how to pray and what to pray for:

When you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do...do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray, then, like this: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:7 - 14

Jesus begins the prayer with *Father*, showing us right from the start that our relationship with God is one of awe, of love. A Father who is personal and loving, who wants what is best for His children. Yet God is a Father *Who art in heaven*, Who is powerful and almighty. As our Creator, He knows our every need, desires our happiness, and is much more anxious to bless us than we are to be blessed. In coming before our Father, Jesus asks us to pause, collect ourselves and our thoughts and remember, with reverence, to open our hearts. Like Moses coming upon the burning bush, entering into prayer is bringing our attention and intention into sacred space. "Come no further! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5)

In short, the Lord's Prayer is an inclusive, all-encompassing prayer which summarizes and presents all of our needs to God. The first three petitions focus our intention on God and His desire for all of Creation: *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*. In one sense the kingdom has already come - it came in the man of Jesus. Yet, to a certain extent, God's kingdom is here today, alive in the hearts and lives of all who love Him. We also believe that someday God's kingdom will be fully established here on earth as it is in heaven. Our petition in the Lord's Prayer expresses our desire that God's kingdom, or presence, grow in our own hearts and lives, which ultimately brings about God's will or desire for all of creation.

The remaining petitions shift our focus to ourselves and our needs. We speak in the plural, as "we," (not "I"), to remind ourselves that we are part of a community of believers and cannot be disciples apart from our brothers and sisters. We ask for what we most desperately need so that we may live as disciples - our daily bread. Acknowledging our dependence on God, we express our trust that God will provide all that we need. We then ask that we be forgiven for our mistakes, and that we be given the grace to forgive others for their mistakes. We ask that God protect us from temptations and trials and keep us close to God, forever and ever. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus gives us seven simple statements of petition to *align* our prayers, and our heart behind them, with the eternal and effective will of God.

Reflection: As you pray this prayer, pause to consider not just the words spoken, but what you speak from your heart.

Closing Prayer

Speak to Jesus about what is on your heart, then rest in silence for a few moments listening for His response.