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The Lord's Prayer

Talking to Our Father



✔ 7-Session Bible Study

The Lord's Prayer: Talking to Our Father
A Good Book Guide
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Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God’s word as “a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we’ve discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They’re perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let’s take a look at what is included in each session.

Talkabout: Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

Investigate: These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

Apply: These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

Explore More: These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

Getting Personal: These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

Pray: Here, you’re invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you’ve seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven’t got time to do the whole thing in one go.

In the back of the book, you’ll find a **Leader’s Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God’s light-giving word.

Why Study the Lord's Prayer?

"Lord, teach us to pray."

That's the question the disciples once asked Jesus (Luke 11:1). Perhaps it's a question you ask. *How should I pray? What should I say? How can I pray better?*

Jesus' answer to the question posed by his disciples was the prayer we call "the Lord's Prayer". In Luke's Gospel Jesus introduces it with the words, "When you pray, say..." It suggests a form of words we can repeat. Perhaps you say it in your church each Sunday. In Matthew's Gospel Jesus introduces it with the words, "This, then, is how you should pray". This suggests a pattern or framework we can use to shape our own prayers. One great way of praying is to go through the Lord's Prayer line by line, expanding on each phrase in turn with your own specific words of praise, confession or request. It's something you can do on your own or with a group.

This study guide is designed to help you to do this. We'll study the Lord's Prayer—along with other passages from Matthew's Gospel that shed light on it—so that we can repeat it more intelligently and so we can allow it to shape our own prayers.

But prayer is also a great window onto who God is and what he's done for us. This works in both directions. A better understanding of God helps us to pray. But prayer can also be like the training ground where we discover more about God and his purposes. Prayer embeds the knowledge of God deep into our souls.

The Lord's Prayer is a *short* prayer. It takes less than 30 seconds to say and that's without rushing. We've all got time to do that each day! But the Lord's Prayer is not a *small* prayer. If you say it with meaning, then this prayer will enlarge your vision, expand your horizons and transform your life.

The Lord's Prayer

MATTHEW 6:9-13

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

COMMON WORSHIP*

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

** This is the version used in many churches. From Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England (Church House, 2000), page 36.*

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Our Father in Heaven

Matthew 6:5-9 and 7:7-11

Talkabout

1. What words do you associate with the word “prayer”?

- What attitudes are revealed by those words?

Investigate

 Read Matthew 6:5-8

DICTIONARY

Hypocrite (v 5): someone who says one thing and does another.

Synagogue (v 5): a Jewish temple.

Pagans (v 7): a believer in Greek and Roman gods.

2. Twice in these verses Jesus says, "When you pray, do not..." What wrong ways to pray does Jesus identify?

3. Why do the people Jesus describes pray this way?

4. How does the way that Jesus describes God serve to correct those wrong ways of praying?

Apply

5. When you pray as a group, how might you be tempted to pray...

- like the hypocrites Jesus describes in verse 5?

- like the babbling pagans of verse 7?

6. How can you avoid doing so?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

God the Father delights to hear us pray. Do you delight in praying? What do your prayers suggest about the way you view God? Does the way you pray in private reflect the way you pray in public?

Investigate

7. If God already knows what we need (as 6:8 says), why do you think Jesus encourages us to pray?

Read Matthew 7:7-11

8. What is the promise in verses 7-8?

9. What is Jesus' argument in verses 9-11?

Many of us have prayed prayers which God has not answered in the way we wanted. Often these prayers are prayed in times of turmoil and grief.

We need to remember that God is a loving and wise Father who is committed to our ultimate good and that he has displayed this commitment in the gift of his Son on the cross.

So, although God does not always give us what we want, he does always give us what is good. We must not let these qualifications blunt this big invitation to bring our requests and questions to God.

10. How does this relationship with God as Father differ from the expectations of the hypocrites and babblers in Matthew 6:5-8?

Explore More | OPTIONAL

 **Read Galatians 4:4-7**

- How does God the Son change our relationship with God?
 - How does God the Spirit change our relationship with God?
 - How does this affect our praying?
-

Apply

 **Read Matthew 6:9**

11. How will our prayers be shaped by knowing that God reigns from heaven?

12. How will our prayers be shaped by knowing that God is our Father?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

Pause to pray now. Start by hearing the words of Matthew 7:7 as an invitation to you from your heavenly Father: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

Pray

Praise God that he reigns from heaven and so he can answer our prayers.

Praise God that he is our Father and so he will answer our prayers.

Share the needs for which you would like prayer and then let these truths shape your requests.

