

P.R.A.Y

LIFE with Jesus in Worship

INTRODUCTION

P.R.A.Y. (The Lord's Prayer)

We know that prayer is talking to and drawing near to God. But how do we begin?

If we were to have business with the Queen of England, or the President of the United States, someone would brief us on the protocol: You'll stand here, they might say, and he or she will enter here; please address him like this and expect her to respond in this way.

In similar fashion, Jesus gives us the protocol for relating to God, a complete model for prayer, in what we call "The Lord's Prayer."

He's in heaven, Jesus says, and He's your Father. His name is Holy and must be taken on your lips with reverence and awe; you may enter His courts only with thanksgiving and praise. He's a king, says Jesus, with a powerful kingdom, but He is also a gentleman who waits for you to invite His rule into your spheres of life and influence. He longs to give you everything you need, but He waits to be asked. You steadily require His forgiveness; ask Him and He will forgive you. And you must also forgive others. You have an enemy: you must ask your Father to rescue you from your enemy's evil plans against you. And the only way to stay close to such a loving, holy, powerful Father/King is to surrender to His rule; disobedience and hard-headedness push you from His presence, like water repelling oil.

In His words, Jesus says, pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day 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 evil.

We can remember these building blocks of prayer with this acronym: P.R.A.Y.

P – Praise and Thanksgiving

R – Repentance and Forgiveness

A – Ask

Y – Yield

THE PRACTICE: P.R.A.Y.

Set aside some time each day if possible, or at least several times a week. Then use this P.R.A.Y. acronym to guide you through praying according to the Lord's Prayer model.



Praise and Thanksgiving: *"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."*

Jesus tells us to begin our prayers by hallowing God's name, expressing to God the reverence and love He is due. Praise and thanksgiving help us to become present to God, to align ourselves with His goodness and glory, to remember to whom we are praying. This is really good for our souls.

You can thank and praise God for gifts you are grateful to have received, for what you see of Him in nature or in His word, or for the assurance and hope of His good news in Jesus. You can also use scriptures to help you praise God. Psalm 100 is a good one:

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!
Serve the Lord with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing!
Know that the Lord, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!

For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Try to make it your practice to begin your times of prayer with praise and thanksgiving.



Repentance and Forgiveness: *"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*

Jesus tells us to make a regular habit of confessing our sins to ask God for forgiveness. Receiving God's mercy is a healing balm to our souls. And receiving forgiveness ourselves must grow in us a heart that will forgive others.

Allow God to take you back over the last twenty-four hours. Where do you see your sin? Now is the time to confess, repent, and receive forgiveness. Is there anyone you need to forgive? Take time to do so. If you cannot forgive, ask a friend or pastor to pray with you to help you to enter the journey of forgiveness.



Ask: *“Give us this day our daily bread,”* and *“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”*

Jesus teaches that God wants to hear about our needs and longings every day, even though He already knows what we need before we ask (Matthew 6:8).

What do you need today? Think through different facets of your life: emotional needs, spiritual needs, financial or relational needs, physical needs? Ask God for what you require.

And where do you see the enemy tempting you or those you love? Ask your Father for rescue from every form of temptation.



Yield: *“Your kingdom come; your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

Jesus teaches us to pray like He did, *“Not my will, but yours be done.”* Yielding is another way of saying that we entrust everything to our good Father and surrender ourselves to Him and to His ways. Trusting surrender is a good way to think about this last form of praying.

Take a few moments to surrender to the Lordship of God your Father and Jesus His Son. You have a good Father and a loving Savior. Intentionally trust yourself and your concerns to Him, saying, *“Your kingdom come; your will be done.”* This may also be the most loving prayer you can pray for others.

HELPFUL VERSES

Ephesians 6:18

“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests.”

Philippians 4:6-7

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Psalms 4:3

“The Lord hears when I call to him.”

Jeremiah 29:13-14

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord.

INTERESTING QUOTES

“Prayer is intimacy with God that brings about God’s purposes.” – Anonymous

“Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?” – Corrie ten Boom

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.” – Martin Luther

“Simple Prayer involves ordinary people bringing ordinary concerns to a loving and compassionate Father. There is no pretense in Simple Prayer. We do not pretend to be more holy, more pure, or more saintly than we actually are. We do not try to conceal our conflicting and contradictory motives from God—or ourselves. And in this posture, we pour out our heart to the God who is greater than our heart and who knows all things.” – Richard Foster

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before you try this practice:

1. When do you like to pray?
2. What helps you make space for prayer?
3. What keeps you from prayer?
4. How do you feel about giving this practice a try?
5. Someone in your group pray for you all as you head out to adopt this practice

After you have tried this practice:

1. Talk about your experiences with this practice.
2. What did you find helpful or good about this practice?
3. Was any part of this practice challenging?
4. How do you think you will engage with this practice going forward?