

ATHENS *Prayer Network* USA

The Lord's Prayer as a starting point

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, Jesus did just that. Somehow, over time we have made it into a prayer we recite. But that was never what Jesus meant it to be. The Lord's Prayer has six sections. Each section represents a whole area that can be prayed down and focused on. Many years ago, praying the Lord's Prayer helped me break past the one hour boundary and enabled me to pray hours at a time. If you spent ten minutes in each one you could pray for one hour! If you don't have an hour, then break it up however you want. Hopefully this is as helpful for you as it was for me!

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name (Worship)

Begin your prayer time by focusing on God as both "daddy" and King. Tell Him you love Him. Speak out His attributes or names that reflect where you are at the moment. Start by making His name holy in your own life. Re-establish His Lordship over your life. Take time to lovingly adore Him as daddy and sovereign King of kings and Lord of lords. And by the way, speaking it out loud electrifies the spiritual atmosphere around you.

Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Intercession)

Our prayer is all about seeing God's kingdom released in our world. God's kingdom coming and His will being done is directly in correlation with our asking for it! Where His kingdom is, His will is done! Where God's Kingdom is there is peace, hope, provision, purpose, healing, freedom, salvation, light, breakthrough, reconciliation, growth... Ask for these things as you intercede. Here are areas you can intercede for. Don't rush through them. Ask Jesus to help you intercede, after all, "He always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25 - NIV). Also invite the Holy Spirit to assist you because you really don't know what to pray for. The Holy Spirit will join you and lead you to pray according to the Father's heart (Romans 8:26-27). You are asking God to bring His kingdom into these areas. Start with yourself and work your way out to the nations.

Yourself - Ask for His will to be done in your life

Your family & friends - Pray specifically for them by name

Your church - Pray for the leadership, ministries and mission

Your city & other churches in your city - Name them out loud

Your nation - Pray for our government, for our freedom for revival

The nations - Ask God to give you a nation and begin praying for it daily

Give us today our daily bread (Petition)

Acknowledge that God wants to bless you and provide for your needs. Be specific in your requests - whether it is financial, physical, emotional and/or social. It can be little or big. If it is a need, ask for it! Determine in your heart that you will pray instead of worry (Philippians 4:6). Include others needs as you pray.

Forgive us our sins (Confession)

Asking and extending forgiveness is absolutely vital for the victorious follower of Jesus Christ. Yet it is interesting that confession is the fourth item in the Lord's Prayer. So often we make it first. God knows our heart and wants us to get centered on Him before we start doing some heart surgery stuff. This is so important that Jesus says that if we don't forgive others, the Father won't forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15). Jesus warned that if we don't forgive from the heart, we would be handed over to the torturers (Matthew 18:21-35).

Start by inviting God to search your heart and reveal any sin, whether hidden, secret or stuff you may not even consider sin. Ask God to forgive you, and be specific. Pray as David prayed in Psalm 139:23-24... *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* Respond as the Lord reveals things to you.

Then forgive anybody else that you know you have something against. Ask God to show you if you have any hidden resentment, bitterness, anger or unforgiveness toward anyone. Make a willful choice to respond today in love and forgiveness, to be an intercessor instead of an accuser! Choose to stand with Jesus, our intercessor, and not with the devil, "the accuser of our brothers" (Revelation 12:10).

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Prayer of protection)

In this section you are asking God to protect you from the attacks of the enemy. You can pray on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:13-17). Visualize each piece as you put it on. Ask God to guide you throughout the day, to be your hedge of protection. Ask God for discernment and sensitivity to the schemes of the enemy against you, your family and your sphere of influence. Ask Him to alert other intercessory people to forthcoming attacks. Meditate on Psalm 91 where we are invited to dwell in the shelter of the Most High. The key to protection is our abiding relationship with Jesus. James 4:7-8 says as we come near to God He will come near to us and then as we resist the devil, he will flee (my wording).

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

(Worship)

This last section is coming back to worship Him. This phrase is not in some translations. Don't worry about that. It was in later manuscripts, and it is good! Ending in praise and worship takes the focus off of you and puts it back on Him. Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith (Hebrews 12:2). Ask Him to help you have a worshipful attitude all day!

Praying the Lord's Prayer is a great tool. It is not the only way, but it is definitely a fantastic means to breaking through into some longer prayer sessions.

*May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands,
7 to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples,
8 to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron,
9 to carry out the sentence written against them— this is the glory of all his faithful people.
Praise the LORD.*

Psalm 149:6-9 NIV