



Transformative
PRAYER

A LITTLE ABOUT PRAYER

Talking to God is a simple practice that can feel difficult and complicated. Many people see prayer as a “Break in Case of Emergency” box - they only pray in those moments when nothing else is working. Others see it as a shopping list for life, only talking with God when they need something. For others it is a therapeutic habit, processing their life with an external Presence. These are just a few of the many ways people see prayer.

In Matthew 6 the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. They are not asking what words to say or what the correct structure should be. They are good Jewish boys who know ‘what’ to pray. They are asking Jesus to teach them to pray like he does, from an intimate and powerful relationship with the Father. They want to experience transformative prayer.

So do we. We want to build a foundational prayer life, emulating Jesus’ continuous dialogue with his Father.



SMALL GROUPS

TREKING TOGETHER

Prayer is often an individual practice, but there is power in exploring prayer together. This month find some people to pray with. As you pray, you might like to light a candle as a reminder that the Holy Spirit is with you and working in your prayers.

Week 1 - "Thank you, you're amazing!"

Read and reflect on Matthew 6:5-13, Psalm 100, Romans 11:33-36, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

- *Are you more likely to pray when life is good, or bad?*
- *What types of things did Jesus pray in the Lord's Prayer?*
- *How does your prayer life differ from Jesus' prayer life?*
- *List some things that you can express gratitude and praise to God for.*
- *Personal challenge: Before you begin praying, ask God to help you pray.*

Week 2 - "I'm sorry, forgive me."

Read and reflect on Matthew 6:9-13, 1 John 1:9, Acts 3:19, 2 Corinthians 7:10

- *We spent 4 weeks talking about repentance in April. What do you remember from that series, or what stands out in your mind when you think about repentance?*
- *What do these verses tell you about repentance?*
- *What do you like and dislike about the practice of repentance?*
- *When is it appropriate to confess and repent to other people, and when should it just be between us and God?*
- *Personal challenge: Make time this week to reflect and repent before God.*



SMALL GROUPS

TREKING TOGETHER

Week 3 - "Would you, please?"

Read and reflect on Matthew 6:9-13, Hebrews 7:25, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 John 5:14-15

- *What things do you ask God for?*
- *Can you recall a time in your life, or a story you've heard, of someone receiving what they've asked God for?*
- *Looking at the Lord's Prayer, what things did Jesus ask for?*
- *How often do you pray for others' best interests?*
- *Personal challenge: Pray for someone else every day this week.*

Week 4 - "Here I am, send me."

Read and reflect on Matthew 6:9-13, Isaiah 6:8, Acts 9:17-19, Matthew 26:39

- *What have you learnt about how Jesus prayed in these verses?*
- *What do you think it means to pray 'Your will be done'?*
- *What is scary or uncomfortable about praying for God's will?*
- *When was the last time you surrendered yourself before God, willing to do whatever he wants?*
- *What do you do when God's will isn't clear?*
- *Personal challenge: Pray that God's will would be done in your life, as it is in heaven.*

Gratitude Focused Prayers

Start each morning with a prayer of gratitude. Don't ask for anything, just thank God for all he has blessed you with and the opportunity of a new day.

Journal or reflect on how this transforms your day

On Friday night, finish the week by thanking God for all he has done. If you have a meal together as a family, include everyone with each person listing one thing they're thankful for.

Journal or reflect on how this transforms your week

The next time you face an issue or problem, instead of turning to Google, a friend or family first, speak to God. Ask him for help and hand the issue over to him. Google all you want after this, but practice giving it to God first.

Journal or reflect on how this transforms your month

Try what is called a "Daily Office Practice". Set an alarm 3 times a day to stop & acknowledge God's presence and pray.

Listening Prayer

Listening prayer helps us to deepen the ability to hear God and see him at work in our lives.

- **Set time in your day to stop in the quiet with God.**
 - Set your morning alarm 5 minutes earlier and, before you touch your phone, stop with God.
 - Try to quiet down the external noise around you.
- **Take a few deep breaths to be present and calm your mind.**
- **Say a simple prayer asking God to be with you in the quiet and to speak to you.**
 - Start with 3 minutes of quiet, and each time you do it try to spend a little longer.
 - You could think about a verse or phrase you might meditate on e.g. "Be still and know I am God" (Psalm 46:10)
- **When your mind wanders, gently acknowledge the distraction and return your attention to the verse or to something simple, like your breathing.**
 - If you feel God say or lead your thoughts somewhere, write it down.
 - Slowly transition back into your day with a prayer of gratitude.

The Lords Prayer

(Praying & seeing the world like Jesus)

Make this prayer a practice each day for a week.

"Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy."

Pray in a way today that reminds you of God's goodness, his holiness and all that he has done and is doing.

"May your kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

Reflect & pray on all you do during the week. Whose will is being done? Whose kingdom is being built? Are there areas that God wants to burst through in? Are there people that God has sent you to?

"Give us today the food we need..."

Pray a prayer of thankfulness for everything God provides that we need. This is also an opportunity to bring your requests before him, in trust that he always provides for our needs.

"...and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us."

Pray a prayer of thankfulness for God's redemption. This is a reminder that we are not perfect, that we are broken. We can repent & remember God's desire to restore and redeem us. Ask God to move your heart towards others in the same way, that you may forgive & restore them.

"And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one."

A prayer of protection, acknowledging the spiritual warfare at work behind the scenes. Ask God to keep you on the Transformation Trek you have started, in him & with him.

Family Practice

Prayer together as a family can help establish lifelong rhythms of connecting with God throughout the day. A great way to ensure we are praying with our families is to set daily 'checkpoints' of prayer together. These could include:

- **Mornings** - Before going to work or school, the family meets for prayer to thank the Lord for the day ahead, and ask for his protection, presence and leading.
- **Food** - Praying together each time you gather for food is a simple way to encourage our families to express gratitude toward God. Thanking God during family meals for our blessings is a great way to model gratitude in prayer.
- **Bedtime** - Praying with our children and as a family each night is a great opportunity to thank God for the day, and turn the events of each day over to God. Bedtime is an opportunity to open conversations with our children about what was good or bad about their day, and bring both to God in prayer, leaving what we cannot control in his hands.

These don't need to be the only times we pray as families, but setting up times where we schedule prayer together can help set up a lifestyle of prayer that brings us closer together with God.