

Praying the Lord's Prayer

(adapted from *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* by Timothy Keller)

The Lord's prayer does not bind us to a particular form of words but rather to its content and basic pattern.

The points below are given to help you personalise and paraphrase the Lord's Prayer, so you can move into free-form praise and petition. You might spend 10 seconds or 10 minutes on any given phrase as you enjoy conversation with God based on the Lord's Prayer.

"Our Father Who Art in Heaven"

- To call God "Father" is a great joy and privilege. It is to pray in Jesus' name.
- Give thanks and praise that Almighty God is our Abba, Father, and pray that you will grow in trust of his fatherly love.

"Hallowed Be Thy Name"

- All Christians bear God's name and are called to represent his good and holy character.
- Pray that God will keep us from dishonouring his name, that we'll display Christlikeness and holiness, and that more and more would honour God and call on his name.
- To "hallow" God's name includes having a heart of grateful joy toward God - and even more, a wondrous sense of his beauty.

"Thy Kingdom Come"

- God's kingdom comes on earth through the Spirit and the Word of God, transforming our love, desire, thinking and behaviour.
- This is a "Lordship" petition, asking God to extend his royal power over every area of our lives, asking God to rule us so that we *want* to joyfully obey him.
- The reign of God on earth is only partial now, but the fullness of the future kingdom is unimaginable. To pray "thy kingdom come" is to yearn for that future life.

"Thy Will Be Done"

- While we mightn't always understand God's will, we can trust Him because he is a loving and gracious father.
- Ask for grace to bear sickness, disgrace, suffering or any other trouble with patience and trust.
- We know God is trustworthy and can pray "thy will be done" because the Lord Jesus himself prayed this prayer under circumstances far more crushing than any of us will ever face. He submitted to his Father's will rather than following his own desires, and it saved us. That's why we can trust him.
- Saying "thy will be done" from the bottom of our hearts helps us receive his peace.

“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”

- Knowing that God is our true food, wealth, and happiness, Jesus charges us to bring our “prayer list” of needs before Him.
- We come with our needs expectant of a positive response, but we do so changed by our satisfaction in him and our trust of him.
- This petition has been likened to Proverbs 30:8, “Give me neither poverty (lest I resent you) or riches (lest I forget you).”

“Forgive Us Our Sins as We Forgive Those Who Sin against Us”

- Jesus tightly links our relationship with God to our relationship with others. If we have not seen our sin and sought radical forgiveness from God, we will be unable to forgive and to seek the good of those who have wronged us.
- This petition is not only a challenge to our pride but a test of spiritual reality. This petition examines our own heart because, in effect, if we retain feelings of hatred by this prayer, we entreat God not to forgive our sins.
- Ask God for help and grace so that you can forgive others based on God’s forgiveness in Christ.
- Confess your own sins before God and give thanks for salvation by grace.

“Lead Us Not Into Temptation”

- Augustine wrote, “This prayer is not that we should not be tempted, but that we should not be brought [or led] *into* temptation.” Temptation in the sense of being tried and tested is not only inevitable but desirable. However, to “*enter into* temptation,” as Jesus termed it (Matt 26:41), is to entertain and consider the prospect of giving in to sin.
- Pray that you will never be enticed away from trusting God and that your current challenges will serve to centre your life on God.

“Deliver Us from Evil”

- This is a petition for protection from evil outside us, from malignant forces in the world, especially our enemies who is to do us harm.

“For Thine Is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory Forever”

- After descending into our needs, troubles, and limitations, we return to the truth of God’s complete sufficiency.
- Here our hearts can end with “tranquil repose” in the remembrance that nothing can snatch away the kingdom, power, and glory from our heavenly, loving Father.