

Time with God: Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 “Pray then 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.’”

Prayer is an incredibly important part of the Christian life. Thankfully, Jesus gave his followers a model for how to pray. There are four main elements we can see in this prayer:

Praising God for who he is and what he’s done. “*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*” Hallowed means “holy and honored”. We are to praise God for who he is, this means aspects of his character. We can praise him for his grace, mercy, kindness, and love toward us. We can also praise him for things like his goodness, hatred of evil, his Trinitarian nature, his sovereignty, and his closeness to us. What aspect of God’s character makes you want to praise him right now?

Yielding to his good will and acknowledging his ultimate victory. “*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*” This is an acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty. We can trust God to hear our prayer and that he will accomplish his purpose in the world, whether it’s something in our lives, the lives of those we are praying for, or the world at large. We can also use this time to sit quietly and fill our minds with Scripture as we yield to God. In Luke 22:42, Jesus prays, “*Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.*” We don’t always have our prayers answered the way we want, but we know that God’s plan is the best. Is there anything you find it difficult to trust God for?

Asking him to provide in order to depend on him. “*Give us this day our daily bread...*” Just like a father wants to hear from his children and give them good things, God wants to hear from his children and give them good things too. In Matthew 7:11 Jesus says, “*If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*” Even though God already knows what you need before you ask him, coming to him in prayer shows your humility and dependence on him for all your needs. It also draws your heart nearer to his. We can also ask on behalf of other people. Praying for others is something God wants us to do and it helps us love those for whom we are praying.

Repenting of our sins and being moved by his grace. “*And forgive us our debts...*” Repentance is turning away from your way of doing things (sin) and turning towards God’s way of living. Even though we have already been forgiven in Christ, we should still constantly confess our sins to God and turn away from them. We do this because our sin puts static on the line between us and God so that our communication is not as clear. It is also a good reminder that we are in fact forgiven. We don’t want to

forget that our sins are truly done away with by the blood of Christ. 1 John 1:9 says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* What an incredible promise!

The four words underlined, when arranged, spell out the word PRAY. This acrostic is a practical tool to use as a guide as you begin to pray regularly. Here it is again in brief:

Praise	God for who he is and what he's done
Repent	of your sins and see his grace
Ask	God to provide for you to depend on him
Yield	to God's will and acknowledge his ultimate victory

Remember, this acrostic isn't a magical formula. It's a model to help you pray in a biblical way. When you pray, you may not do all four of these things every time, but these are four good ways to talk to our heavenly Father.

Even though it's just talking with God, prayer isn't easy. It's important to value your prayer time by putting away distractions. It's also very important to remember that we have an enemy, the Satan, who does not want us to nourish ourselves this way. You will need to fight for your set prayer time.