

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**MATTHEW 6****Matthew 6**

IF READING GOD'S WORD is like eating, prayer is like breathing. For our bodies, breathing is the purest instinct; we do it without thinking, without effort. In our spiritual lives, prayer is a practice that quickly becomes as instinctive as taking a breath. One of the marks of a mature Christian is a natural impulse to communicate with God. The Bible commands us to "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17), and to turn to God in every circumstance and with every concern. Jesus prayed about everything.

For a believer unaccustomed to prayer, it can be very difficult to get started. "What should I say? How should I pray?" Do not be embarrassed by such difficulties. Even Jesus' twelve disciples were confused about prayer. To help them, Jesus provided a model prayer.

"In this manner, therefore pray; 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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." (Matthew 6:9-13)

You have probably heard the Lord's Prayer before or even recited it without grasping its significance. This model prayer was intended to teach the disciples how to pray properly and effectively.

"Our Father in heaven"

Pray to your heavenly Father, acknowledging His authority and your relationship to Him. This suggests that our prayers should be directed humbly and reverently to God alone.

"Hallowed be Your name"

Hallowed means holy. Acknowledge God's holiness, praise His sinless character, and pray that His name will be glorified in all things. At the same time, recognizing the Father's holiness and your own sinfulness, thank Him

that you can freely talk with Him (praying) – because of Jesus Christ.

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done . . ."

Pray that God's purposes will be accomplished always and everywhere, especially in your life. Ask for strength and commit yourself to doing His will.

"Give us this day our daily bread. . ."

Pray that God will provide for all your needs and thank Him for His constant provision.

"Forgive us our sins . . ."

Pray for forgiveness, confessing all sins, great and small. Ask God to help you forgive others. (I John 1:9)

"Deliver us from the evil one"

Acknowledge your weakness and God's strength, pray for mercy and help in times of temptation, and for protection and deliverance when faced with evil (I Peter 5:8-9).

"Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."

Express your confidence in God's eternal authority and almighty power.

The Lord's Prayer is not a rigid pattern like dance steps that must be followed exactly. Nor is it a chant to be recited mindlessly. Jesus intended it to illustrate some of the essential elements of God's pleasing prayer. You can pray about anything! Pour out your heart to God; share all your hurts, concerns, and joys. He will listen because He loves you! Remember, you can talk to Him as your compassionate, loving Father. He delights in our expression of love, trust, and reliance.

As God's beloved child, you can pray to Him anywhere at any time for any reason. Just as we set aside time for reading the Bible, so we must make prayer a regular discipline in our daily lives.

Prayer completes the circle of communication. God speaks to us through His Word, and we speak to Him through prayer. A heart quieted by prayer is filled with peace and contentment, and the praying child is open to his Father's leading and is receptive to His plan.

Prayer and Action Steps

Take a moment to thank God for the gift of prayer and for making you a part of His family. Remember, pray constantly.

(Taken from the book, "Seven Basic Steps Toward Maturity" by Dr Tony Crisp)