

the
**LORD'S
PRAYER**
STUDY GUIDE

The Basis for Prayer: “Our Father”

Matthew 6.5-15

WELCOME & SHARING

Share any announcements...

- Intro to New City Saturday, January 31st 8am-noon
- Discuss upcoming plans/meeting dates for your Community Group

Opener Question: What was one gift you GOT for Christmas this year? Or if you'd rather, what was one gift you GAVE?

Intro: We're starting the year with a series on The Lord's Prayer. Perhaps no words have been repeated more in the history of the entire world. And yet the familiarity can serve to disconnect us from the meaning. For six weeks we are going to study the Lord's Prayer piece by piece.

STUDY/DISCUSSION

1. What are the biggest hindrances to prayer? In other words, what keeps you from praying more?
2. What excites you most about prayer? What confuses you about prayer?

Read: Matthew 6.5-15

3. In verses 5-6, what wrong view of prayer is Jesus combating? Do you find yourself succumbing to this kind of practice?

NOTE: Jesus often prayed publicly, as did the apostles after him. So it cannot be that Jesus is banning all public prayer. Rather, Jesus is condemning people who MAINLY pray in public MAINLY to be seen. As Archbishop William Temple once said, "Your religion is what you do with your quiet time." Any public prayer should flow out of our own private prayer lives.

4. What is Jesus critiquing in verses 7-8? In what ways are you tempted to impress or control God in your prayers?

5. Tim Keller writes: *"The fatherhood of God fuels the fire of coming into God's presence. It changes the throne of the universe into the throne of grace."* How should knowing God as our Father affect the way we pray?

NOTE: On Sunday Josh spent some time talking about the doctrine of adoption. You may want to bring this up here. John 1:12 and Ephesians 1 are good places to start. In terms of how this gospel doctrine affects our prayer lives, Josh mentioned that it should make our prayers BOLD, CONSTANT, and full of WONDER.

6. How would you counsel someone who says, "I can't bring myself to pray to God as my Father because I had a cruel and abusive earthly father"?
7. For those of you with children: How are you teaching your kids to pray? What has worked? What hasn't? How can you use the Lord's Prayer with them?
8. Josh suggested three applications for this series: (i) Pray the Lord's Prayer daily (and learn it, if you haven't already), (ii) Use the Lord's Prayer as a framework for your prayers (we have a tool to help you do this), and (iii) Pray together with other people (Jesus says "Our Father" not "My Father"). How can you implement these into your life as we kick off the new year?

PRAYER

Take some time to pray together as a group. This series is a great chance to be a little more quick with your discussions in order to leave more time for concentrated prayer at the end. We encourage you to use the Bookmarks we handed out on Sunday to help guide your prayer time. Close your time by praying The Lord's Prayer together.