

30 Days of Prayer: Week 1 The Lord's Prayer

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KBF Sermon

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Good Morning KBF,

Welcome to church. It is great to have you here worshipping with us this morning. To those who come regularly and to those who are visiting for the first time, or even after a long time, I hope that your spirit feels encouraged as you are here worshipping. At KBF we are striving to be a church that is connected to our community, grounded in the Bible, and offering transformative fellowship. I hope that you find that as you worship with us.

It is November already. Where did the year go! I feel like it was just yesterday that I was going to the hospital expecting the arrival of our daughter. That was February! Blink twice and here we are in November!

November is going to be a special month here at the church, and the reason I say that is because we are going to be focusing on prayer. This month's theme is 30 Days of Prayer. My hope and prayer is that through this theme, each one of us will be challenged to deepen our prayer life and as a church we will find more time to pray together as a community.

Let me pray and then let us dive into the word.

Part 1: The Lord's Prayer

We start in Matthew Chapter 6 and we join the text in verse 9.

Verse 9 - Adoration

"This, then, is how you should pray:

For this series, we are going to begin by looking at the Lord's prayer. Here Jesus is teaching us how we should pray. Let us break the Lord's prayer down and have a look at what is going on. This is how Jesus begins.

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,*

How often do you begin your prayers by recognising and honouring God for who He is? Our father but not just any father, our Father who is in heaven. As Jesus begins this example of prayer, he is beginning with an orientation and a recognition of who God is and thus this prayer begins with the acknowledgement that the father that we are speaking too through prayer is not

just any old person, it is our Father who is in heaven. Notice the personal and intimate nature of acknowledging God as 'Father' and also notice the mysterious, powerful and grand imagery of acknowledging this Father as being 'in Heaven'.

In this first section Jesus continues, with 'hallowed be thy name'.

Not only is this prayer beginning with the recognition of who God is, but it also begins with the appropriate reaction or response to who God is. Hallowed means to 'regard as Holy, to venerate, and to consider sacred.' To add this to the acknowledgment of who God is Jesus encourages us to respond with praises. Holy and Sacred is this father that we are praying too!

How often do you begin your prayers with adoration? As I was preparing for this series, I began to reflect on how I prayed but also how other people pray too. Often I would hear myself or others begin a prayer with something like, 'Dear God, thank you for this day, thank you for this beautiful weather, etc..'

I promise that I am not picking on anyone, this is not a personal reflection, but as I have been reading and re-reading and reflecting on prayer for this month, it has got me thinking.

By thanking God for this day, the weather, or our friends, we are starting our prayer by praising God for what we can see around us. I think there is great wisdom in this example shared here by Jesus because it establishes our prayers on God whom we cannot see in the same way that we look at the weather.

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Praying like this calls to faith.

Verse 10 - Alignment

In verse 10 Jesus continues;

10
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.

This is my favourite part of this prayer. There is so much imagery about 'Kingdom' in the Bible, and as we explored through our 'upside down kingdom' series, the Kingdom of God is a place of inclusion, grace and transformation. If we think about the imagery of Heaven, last week Lee called our attention to the fact that Heaven is a place where every tear will be wiped from our faces. Heaven is a beautiful place, a place that we should be waiting for with anticipation and hope.

As Jesus teaches us to pray he encourages us to begin with adoration and then here he encourages us to remember that our faith, our hope, our life in Christ, is for something today.

Your Kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

After acknowledging God in prayer after hallowing his name, the next part of prayer is to connect faith to the everyday, to remember that what we are encouraged to see is the coming of God's kingdom and his will here on earth.

How might that change our attitude in prayer. How might that align us to praying with God's kingdom in mind.

Lord thank you for today, thank you for this weather, thank you for my friends, I just want to ask and pray that you would...

God, you are in heaven, what a miracle that you would even speak with me, I give you my praise, honour and respect, as I pray please show me how I can contribute to building your kingdom and partner with your will.

Do you hear the difference? This has really humbled me in the past months as I think about prayer. In particular, how have I been showing respect, love and faith in my prayers and how do I make sure that my prayers about aligning myself to God, rather than trying to simply align God to me.

Verse 11 - Petition

11

Give us today our daily bread.

Notice how it is not, give us this day our daily portion 'My Bakery'. It is not, give us this day our daily bread, but please make it croissants and baguettes because I prefer that more.

Along with adoration and alignment, we see 'petition' or 'asking' as a key part of prayer. Lord, give us this day our daily bread. It strikes me is that Jesus does not say here, 'God please can you provide us some food'. The petition is to the point. It asks for something that is a daily provision.

The provision of daily bread makes me think of the Israelites wandering in the desert. Consider this passage from Exodus 16:3-4

The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions.

Wandering in the desert, enduring suffering, they complained. If only we had died! And God's response, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you'. What powerful imagery! But, let us not get distracted and let our minds ponder about bread raining from heaven. God goes on to say, this will be my test to see whether they will follow my instructions.

I think this is a great way to think about this line of prayer. Our petitions, those things that we ask of God are tools to help us walk out our faith in obedience to God. Give us this day our daily bread, reminds us of the faithfulness that God has had in the past to the Israelites as they left Egypt, we can think about communion, Jesus being the 'bread of life' and then let us make sure we do not disconnect it from our obligation as believers to be obedient to the Lord.

Give us this day our daily bread is not simply an encouragement to petition or ask God for whatever we might want but to acknowledge that as we strive to obey God, through faith in Christ we have the freedom to ask for everything that we need.

Verse 12 - Confession

12

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Another important role of prayer is confession. We have covered; adoration, alignment, petition and now we look at confession. I think confession is such an important and liberating feature of prayer. God, forgive us our debts. This has past and present connotations. We must always remember how much God has already forgiven us. The fact that we can even pray is due to the grace given to us by Jesus Christ. When our prayer is established in this forgiveness, we don't take for granted that which we have already been given, AND, we remind ourselves that we will not be perfect as we work out our salvation. We will continue to need the forgiveness of God.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors! Notice the past tense in the second part of this verse.

It is not, Oh God, forgive me and help me to forgive this person. It is not, God please do a work in so and so in order that I might forgive them. It is **forgive** others not **for-receive** from others! We are encouraged to forgive others first, and then come to God and seek his forgiveness for our debts.

This part of the prayer is so important that it comes with a disclaimer. In verses 14 and 15 after Jesus shares the prayer, this is the only part of the Lord's prayer that he clarifies.

14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Jesus uses some very direct and abrasive language here and I think we need to take this warning seriously. It can be easy to hold on to offences and grudges. It can be easy to be

grumbly with people who continue to ridicule or offend you but Jesus is clear here. Part of your prayer should be about confession, asking God for forgiveness and that should come after you do the work of forgiving others! All this, you are encouraged to do when prayer takes the form of confession.

Verse 13 - Petition

13

And lead us not into temptation,[a]
but deliver us from the evil one.[b]

And some translations will include:

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen

These last lines make are again about petition and supplication but rather than the needs of the day, they direct attention to the needs required to walk out our faith.

God, lead us. Lead us not into temptation. Just like we asked for forgiveness for that which we have already done, Lord lead us into the future where we can go beyond temptation. Deliver us from the evil one who would want to steal, kill, and destroy. The evil one who would want us to doubt the word of God and fall to temptation.

In these lines there is incredible hope. Hope that God, our Father in Heaven, would lead our very person, and would protect us as we are lead.

And all of this, for Yours, God, is the Kingdom, and the power, and the Glory forever.

Part 2: More Than Just a Conversation?

In the most simplistic sense, prayer means to talk and communicate with God. But to just leave it there would undermine how deep and significant prayer really is.

As we move through the Lord's prayer we are taught to see the significance of what prayer contains; adoration, alignment, petition, and confession.

These are core elements that are expressed all throughout the Bible and the other category that is often highlighted is thanksgiving, which is indirectly expressed here in the Lord's prayer.

So as Jesus teaches prayer is expressions of; Adoration, Alignment, Petition, Confession and Thanksgiving. Each one of these components forms an important part of the life of a believer. I came across a helpful line in an old journal from the 'Christian Scholar' and it stated that:

'To pray is to be surrendered, obedient and ready to do His will (Langford, 1961).'

I like this because it helped me think about prayer more deeply. Not only is prayer simply about communication with God, it is intentional in encouraging surrender, obedience and action.

Part 3: Prayer is not a Performance

As I have moved through the Lord's prayer, I have omitted some key information. The Lord's prayer and Jesus' teaching does not magically appear for no reason. It is not written just because it is a good idea. It is part of a section of teaching on humility. From verse 5 we read:

5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

There can be a temptation to turn faith into a performance. It feels good to be recognised as someone with talent. If you pray and someone comes to you and says, 'Wow, you are a great prayer' that can be affirming. It can be tempting to crave the affirmation of others and especially in the realm of faith.

Being a 'good prayer' might be considered a demonstration of your capability and even authority. While the imagery used here of standing on the street corners and in the synagogues might seem a little confusing the meaning is clear when Jesus refers to 'being seen by others'.

Jesus raises an important issue here. When you pray, do you love to be seen by others? Do you like the feeling of being recognized by others, and because of that, does this mean that the only time you pray is when others are watching?

Again, some humbling words from Jesus and He raises an important point. If prayer is only a show, then being seen by others is the extend of your reward. Prayer is not supposed to be a show to impress anyone. Instead, we are encouraged to think about prayer in a more personal and intimate way. When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your unseen father.

This in itself is a step of faith. **Go into your room, where no one else is and communicate in adoration, to align, petition and confess to your unseen Father. To do this, you really do have to believe and as you are alone speaking to the unseen Father that is when your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.** It is always nice when an instruction comes with the promise of reward.

Private, powerful, prayer expressing adoration, petition and confession so as to praise and align with our Heavenly father!

Part 4: The 30 Days Challenge

I hope that this has encouraged you to think about prayer more deeply. I want to encourage you to firstly think about when and where you pray. How often do you put down the book, put down the phone the laptop or whatever other distraction and go and pray in secret?

Then when you pray, how often are you beginning your prayers with adoration? How often do you thank God for the unseen things that he is and the unseen things that he has done and is doing?

As you pray, are you making sure you spend time aligning your will with his?

Do you petition? Asking for your needs and remembering the faithfulness of His provision?

How often do you confess your sins and ask for forgiveness, and, how often do you do that before you have forgiven others?

And finally, how often are you asking for God to equip you to move through your circumstances rather than simply having him modify those circumstances.

This month. This month of November, I want to challenge you to 30 days of prayer. For the month of November I want to challenge you to do two things;

1. Enter into your room once a day to pray. Hopefully you are doing this already, but if not, go for it!
2. Secondly, I want to challenge you to try and incorporate each of these elements of praying into your prayers. Think through your adoration, think about what you are aligning to, what you are petitioning for, if you need to confess and what guidance you will need.

I look forward to hearing your reflections as you try and walk this out. 30 Days of Prayer. Church, let's do it!

Let me pray.

Benediction

Philipians 4:6-7

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Langford, T.A. (1961). Theology and Prayer. *Christian Scholar*.
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