

A person wearing a colorful, patterned shawl is blowing a large, curved horn. The background is a sunset with a bright sun and a long, horizontal light streak across the sky. The scene is set against a backdrop of distant, hazy mountains.

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN: THE RELATIONSHIP OF PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer (1)

While Scripture gives us examples and principles of prayer, there is no other place where God, through His Son, so clearly and explicitly teaches us how to pray as He does in the Lord's Prayer. Should we not, then, give our full attention to the one place where Jesus Himself says, **'Pray then like this'?**"

9. Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.
10. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
11. Give us this day our daily bread,
12. and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:9 -13

Why We Sometimes Struggle With Prayer:

- what words do we use?
- do I need a better technique?
- does it feel awkward, strained or ineffective?
- do we not feel worthy to have our prayers heard?

Why We Sometimes Struggle With Prayer:

- do I not pray enough?
- I get bored and am easily distracted
- I feel unsure what to say
- my prayers “bounce off the ceiling.”

Very often the problem is **not technique** at all . . .
the problem may actually be **how we see God**.

The disciples asked:

[Luke 11:1](#) ... "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."

Something about **Jesus' prayer life** was different.
He didn't pray out of duty, He prayed out of **relationship**.

Jesus answers His disciples not with words to memorise,
but a **revolutionary way of approaching God**.

Our Father: Prayer begins with relationship.

Jesus teaches us Who we are speaking to. He starts with Father.
This is not sentimental or casual, this is deeply theological.

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Romans 8:15

"Abba" is intimate, not flippant, it is the word used by a child for a trusted father.

We are not praying:

- to earn acceptance
- to convince God to listen
- to prove our worth

God is a **willing Father**

Psalm 103:13

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him.

Our: Prayer is communal, not isolated.
Jesus said Our Father not My Father.
Jesus teaches us to pray as part of a family.

Prayer reminds us:

- we are not alone in faith
- we are not self-sufficient
- we belong to the people of God

We think, suffer and rejoice **together**.

In Heaven: Intimacy without familiarity.
Heaven in Scripture is not merely a location, it speaks of authority, transcendence and sovereignty.

Prayer reminds us:

- rules over creation
- sees all things clearly
- lacks no wisdom or power

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

Grace does not cancel out reverence.
Reverence does not cancel intimacy.
Prayer holds both.

Many struggles in prayer come from imbalance:

- some approach God with fear but no closeness
- others approach God with closeness but no awe

Jesus teaches us to do both.

Healing distorted views of the Father:

Earthly fathers can be: non-comforting,
absent, harsh, inconsistent, disappointing.

Jesus reveals perfect fatherhood.

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!

Matthew 7:11

God is not a better version of your earthly father. He is the **source** of fatherhood. He is the source of all that is good. Prayer begins to transform us when we allow Scripture, not experience, to define who God is.

Knowing God as Father, changes how we pray:

- we can be honest - not polished
- we can be persistent - not anxious
- we can be bold - not fearful
- we can be still - not frantic

Prayer becomes relational conversation,
not religious ceremony.

We don't need better words, just a clear
view of God!

Practical Application: Learning to Pray “Our Father”

- slow down when we pray
- begin with “Our Father”
- pause and consciously remind ourselves: **I belong**
- let that shape the rest of our prayer

Prayer as our place of abiding - not a performance:

- prayer is not a stage
- it is not an exam
- it is not a duty checklist

Prayer is coming home:

Jesus begins the Lord's Prayer with **Our Father**, because everything else flows from this truth.

If we miss this, prayer becomes religious effort.
If we grasp this, prayer becomes relational joy.

Let it draw you, again and again, into the confidence of being His child.