

-WEEK2

ALIVE WESLEYAN CHURCH | 2023



"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. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not let them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This, then, is how you should 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 today 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 the evil one'."

- Matthew 6:6-18 -

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SEVEN PARTS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRESENCE OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

PRAISE | HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

PURPOSE YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL

BE DONE

PROVISION | GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

PARDON | AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS

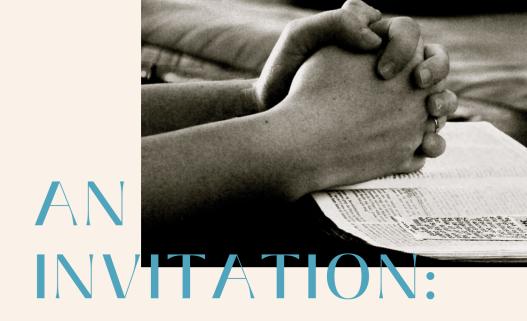
WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

PROTECTION | AND LEAD US NOT INTO

TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM

THE EVIL ONE

PRACTICE | LIVE IT OUT



Many of us have mixed emotions when it comes to prayer. Maybe we had to memorize prayers when we were kids or maybe we have never been around someone who prays. Maybe we sat through long boring prayer meetings, or maybe we overheard a grandparent praying sincere, and moving prayers.

Maybe we love to pray, or maybe we don't know where or how to start a payer. Prayer can be confusing. It can seem both mysterious and boring all at once.

Jesus confronted the religious leaders of His day because prayer had become overcomplicated. He taught that pray doesn't have to be difficult. It doesn't have to be long. When Jesus taught his disciples about prayer He explained that God isn't looking for an eloquent speech or a public performance. And God doesn't even need us to give him a list. He knows what we need before we even ask.

So how can we experience prayer like that?

What if prayer could be simple and meaningful, creative and fun? What if prayer could help us know the Creator of the Universe?

Join us as we journey through prayer over the next 21 days. We'll take a look at the prayer Jesus taught to his disciples. And from Jesus' prayer we'll look at 7 themes that can guide us to connect with God in creative and fresh ways. And maybe by the end of it, we'll each know God a little bit more!

How to use these readings:

Each day includes a section of scripture, a short explanation of the day's prayer theme, and a prayer step to help you pray that day. The prayer steps are designed to be simple and practical. Feel free to adapt or add your own ideas to the prayer time.

Consider reading these and then discussing with a friend, roommate, family member, or small group.



HOW TO BEGIN YOUR FAST

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these five basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

STEP 1: SET YOUR OBJECTIVE

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

STEP 2: MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Consider the following:

- Soul Fast: this is a break from things such as social media, TV, secular music, spending, etc.
- Selective Fast: removing certain foods from your diet such as sweets, caffeine, or only eating certain things such as fruits and vegetables.
- Partial Fast: this is fasting during certain times of the day such as morning, noon, or evening, giving up one meal a day.
- Complete Fast: giving up food for the entire 21 days, having only water and/or juice.

Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15). For him, it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Making these commitments ahead of time will help sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

STEP 3: PREPARE YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit reminds you of and accept God's forgiveness. Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you. Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others

Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6) and do not underestimate spiritual opposition.

STEP 4: PREPARE YOURSELF PHYSICALLY

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision. Do not rush into your fast. Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods. Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.

STEP 5: PUT YOURSELF ON A SCHEDULE

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

DAY EIGHT PRESENCE

- READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today 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 the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all."

– Psalm 103:19 *–*

"The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."

- Psalm 103:8 -



"Our Father..."

These two words set the table for Christ's patterned prayer lesson. How does God teach us to pray? First, he helps us understand who he is, and who we are. Read Psalm103:19 and 103:8

God is...our Father. He is the originator, creator, in charge. He rules and reigns over everything. And, He is ours! He is not mine only, or yours only. He is accessible. God is...in Heaven. This doesn't mean He is ONLY in Heaven, but it points to the authority and power of God. God is not bound to earth like we are. He is on the Throne of the Universe. Yet, He is also full of compassion, grace, patience, and overflowing with love! And, if the Father of the Universe is OUR Father, then who are we?

We are all sons and daughters of God! We are...a family. We are equally loved by our Father. We can approach our God in Heaven through simple, heartfelt words. The most powerful being anywhere, ever, is waiting to hear from us. We are loved, cared for, loved, shown grace, loved, watched over, and loved.

Whether you pray alone, or with a huge crowd, this prayer is corporate because God is ours...but He is also your Father.

Before you woke up today, God – Our Father – was wide awake, ruling all things, unshaken, in charge. And...He is compassionate, gracious, patient, and overflowing with love for us - for you!

- PRAY -

As you pray, praise Him for who He is. What is it about God you are most in awe of today? Tell Him!

Acknowledge that you are not responsible for holding the universe together. Ask Him if He would allow you to see each part of your life from His perspective. Thank Him for being as good as He is big, as kind as He is powerful, as patient as He is steady. Thank Him for being Father to all people.



DAY NINE PRAISE

-READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today 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 the evil one.

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.
Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.

- Psalm 145:1-3 -

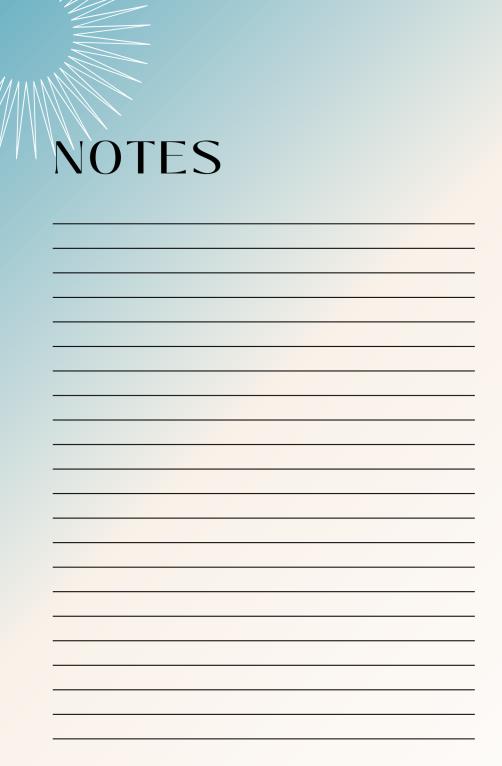
If you've ever thought of prayer as making a long list of needs and reciting those to God, you're not alone. Many of us learned prayer this way, and this is still a common way for Christians to pray.

But prayer is more than making a list. Prayer can be a chance for us to stop thinking about all the things we are facing, and to look with wonder on the incredible God we serve. During Deepen Class at ALIVE, Mark Wilson often says it this way, "Don't tell God how big your problems are. Tell your problems how big your God is."

Praise is built into Jesus' prayer as he praises God, saying "hallowed (or holy and honored) is your name." Before Jesus asks for anything, he considers who God is and gives Him praise.

- PRAY -

Go outside, and find a quiet spot to sit. If you can't get outside, look out the nearest window. Look at what surrounds you (grass, trees, the sky, any little creatures). Praise God for all the things He has created. Then make a list of words that describe God. The verses in Psalm 145 are a good place to start. Talk to God telling Him the things that you admire or appreciate about who He is and what He has made.



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DAY TEN PURPOSE

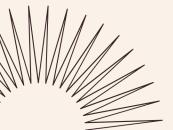
- READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today 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 the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

- Ephesians 2:10 -



"The two most important days in your life are the day you were born, and the day you find out why." Anonymous

Most of us spend significant time, effort, and thought trying to find and live with a purpose. We may base our purpose on pleasure, on principles, or on people we care about. And what we see as our purpose shapes all of our other actions.

Jesus understood the incredible value of living with a purpose, and includes one simple phrase in the Lord's Prayer that can shape and reshape how we view and live our lives. Jesus prays, "your will be done." Not our will, but God's will. God has laid out a purpose for us. He has a plan for this world, and we can find purpose when we align ourselves with that plan and that purpose.

In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul, further explains our purpose saying that we are created for good works. God made us on purpose and with a purpose. And He has prepared work for us to do. How awesome is it to know that when God made His plans, we were a part of it! We get to be a part of God's work in the world!

- PRAY -

Go into this prayer time asking God to speak to you, and then sit in silence. After some quiet time, ask God what His purpose for your life looks like. Communicate with Him some things you may think your purpose involves, and write down any thoughts that pop into your mind. These may be nudges from the Holy Spirit.

Now say out loud, "God, I trust that you have a purpose and a plan for me. Help me to do your will."

Take a few minutes to imagine what God might want to do in your life and through you in the years ahead, and thank Him for His plans and His purposes.



DAY ELEVEN PROVISION

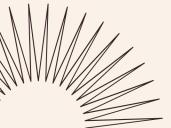
- READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today 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 the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

- Matthew 7:11 -

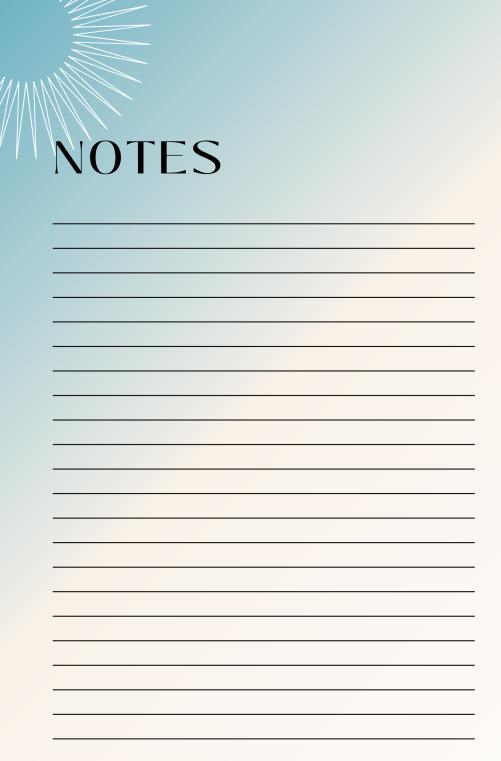


Think back to the best gift that you ever got when you were a kid. Maybe it was a bike, a puppy, or an American Girl Doll. Whoever gave it to you probably cared deeply for you and loved you a lot to give you such a great gift. What's crazy is that God loves us more perfectly than that person does!

Now, God may or may not give us physical gifts like a car or house, then again He could! But we can trust that God provides for our needs because He is a loving Father that gives good gifts.

-PRAY-

A good practice that you can do is write down all the things that you have. It can be as detailed or vague as you like. When looking at that list, it's an easy temptation to think, "I have worked for all of this; it's all mine." Instead, try thinking, "God has given these to me," and pray over each one thanking God for His provision. If you do this, your perspective on God's involvement in your life will change dramatically! When we attribute what we have to God instead of chance or our own work, it broadens our understanding of His provision in our lives.



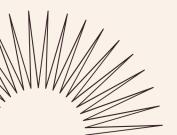
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DAY TWELVE PARDON

-READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today 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 the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -



Nobody is perfect. We mess up. We need forgiveness. If relationships worked like banks, we would be in deep debt. We all overspend when it comes to the needs, rights, desires, patience, grace, and feelings of others. Our debts take the form of people we hurt, step on, cut with our words. We create debts with others when we betray their trust, take things out on them, overreact in anger, or ignore their needs. We do this to people, and we do this with God. How many days have passed in our lives without even an acknowledgment of God, His will, His desires, and His opinion? When we live like this, we rack up debt – with God and the people in our lives.

Jesus tells us we should talk to God about our sins, and ask for forgiveness. But, it shouldn't stop there.

Forgiveness is like a stream of fresh water. It pours into our lives from God, and is intended to pour out of our lives into the lives of others. If we are able to live as debt-free people, we are able to cancel the debts of other people!

-PRAY-

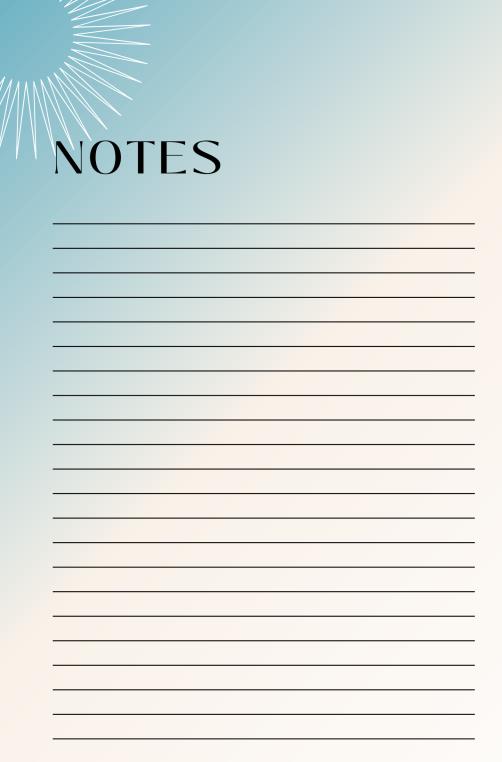
Pray this prayer that David prayed:

"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." — Psalm 139:23-24 —

Take a moment to reflect. Is there any outstanding debt you feel you have with God? Ask Him to cancel that debt.

Is there anyone in your life that owes you? That has a debt with you? Ask God to help you to see that debt in perspective with your own and to help you forgive this debt.

Choose to forgive. Maybe it would help if you actually envisioned God ripping up a check you think you owe Him, and saying, "Don't worry, it's already covered." Can you envision yourself ripping up the check someone "owes" you?



DAY THIRTEEN PROTECTION

-READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today 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 the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea."

- Psalm 46:1-2 -

Jesus anticipated that trials would come. He knew that he would face temptations, and his disciples would, too. So when he taught them to pray, he showed them how to ask for his Father's help. He prayed, "God, don't lead me into situations where I am tempted to do the wrong thing." He asked God to rescue him.

This is amazing to think about. Jesus, who had all the power and knowledge of God, still asked for God's help. He needed and wanted God's protection, and that gives us permission to need and want God's protection, too. In Jesus' prayer he shows us that, "God is our refuge and strength, an everpresent help in trouble."

- PRAY -

In your mind, picture a place where you feel safe. It may be your home or with a friend, or out in nature. If you like to draw, consider sketching out that place of safety.

Now read Psalm 46. Imagine God is sitting with you in the place where you feel safe. Or consider going to that place of safety. Pray thanking God that He is a refuge and strength. Thank Him for helping you in times of trouble. If you are in the middle of a challenge, ask God to help you remember that He is a refuge, and ask Him for His protection no matter what is happening all around you.



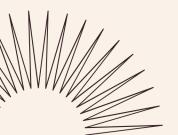
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DAY FOURTEEN PRACTICE

-READ -

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today 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 the evil one."

- Matthew 6:9-13 -



The second greatest commandment is this: "you shall love your neighbor as yourself," (Mark 12:31). Jesus calls us to love our neighbors in a tangible way when he prays that we would forgive our debtors.

If we've ever been wronged, we know that this commandment is much easier said than done. Maybe that's why Jesus added forgiveness to his prayer. He knew how tough it is to forgive, and he knew we would need a lot of practice. When he taught his disciples to pray, he taught them to regularly seek forgiveness and regularly offer forgiveness. Jesus knew that this receive and give pattern over time would result in more love flowing out of us and onto the people around us.

By asking for forgiveness and offering it to others, we open ourselves up to become channels where God's love can flow. He can show us love and we can practice that love by passing it on to those around us.

- PRAY -

Open prayer up by thanking the Father for the example of love that He has made so clearly evident to us in Jesus. Pray for the heart of the Lord to enter into your heart. Ask for God to reveal to you where you can be practicing the way of Jesus better in your life.

Ask God to show you the names of people in your life right now who might need to know His love. Now pray for one opportunity to show someone Jesus' love today. And pay attention – God may open doors for you to offer help to someone in need, to leave a large tip, to smile at someone who looks tired, or to serve someone in your own home.





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