

# HOW TO AND HOW NOT TO PRAY

---

MATTHEW 6

## MAIN TAKEAWAY

Jesus teaches us how to pray and how not to pray. The Lord's Prayer shows us how to pray Jesus' way: first focus on the glory of God and then ask for your personal needs.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What has been your experience in praying The Lord's Prayer? How does this prayer serve as a model for all prayer? In what way is prayer learned, and how have you looked to Jesus to be your teacher (Luke 11:1)?**

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:5-8

**What negative examples of prayer does Jesus teach against? Why is it possible to pray with no thought of God Himself? How can you keep the focus of prayer on God?**

**Pastor Greg said, "Prayer is not to *inform* God, but to *invite* God." If God already knows your heart and needs, why should you pray? How is prayer an invitation to draw near to God (Hebrews 4:16)?**

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:9-10

**We pray to our Father in Heaven who loves us. How does calling upon God as "Father" or "Abba" compel you to pray? Why is it a privilege to pray and address God in this way (Romans 8:15; John 1:12)?**

**Why should you begin prayer with reverence and praise for who God is? How does praying “Hallowed be Your name” impact your interests and ambitions?**

**Pastor Greg said, “Prayer is not getting my will in Heaven, but God’s will on Earth. Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.” In what ways have you learned to pray for God’s will, and that His will for your life is better than your own? How does this help you focus your desires on the coming of God’s Kingdom and the salvation of non-believers?**

## **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:11–13**

**We need to bring our personal needs before God. Why is God personally committed to providing for your needs (Matthew 7:7–11)? How does the request for “daily bread” reveal that everything we have ultimately comes from God (James 1:17)?**

**We need to pray for personal forgiveness, and we need to forgive others. How does regular confession of sin remind you of your need for God? Why should *forgiven* people also be *forgiving* people?**

**We need to pray to not fall into temptation—to not be tempted beyond our capacity to resist (1 Corinthians 10:13). In what ways are we prone to rationalize temptation? How does prayer help us resist temptation?**

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Read Luke 18:9–14. How does this parable illustrate Jesus’ teaching on prayer in Matthew 6:5–13? How can we be sure that God hears our prayers and answers them?**

**How has this message encouraged you to pray and to learn from Jesus Himself? How does first focusing on God’s glory and then on your needs impact the way you pray? How will you start praying “Jesus’ way”—both how and how not to pray?**

## **PRAYER**

Give thanks to your Father in Heaven. Ask Jesus to continue to teach you how to pray, and how not to pray. Pray for God’s glory and then bring your personal needs to Him. Pray The Lord’s Prayer together as a group, and then use it as a model for additional praise reports and prayer requests.