

How to Pray

Scripture Reading — Matthew 6:5-15

“This, then, is how you should pray ...”
—Matthew 6:9—

Prayer, like giving, can be a discipline we engage in for the wrong reasons. Prayer can become an empty ritual or a mere formality. Sometimes we may be tempted to pray only when we need a favor from God, or because we need help getting out of a jam. Jesus warns us that prayer can lend itself to hypocrisy. Jesus wants our prayer to be an expression of intimacy with God. In prayer, we enjoy the beauty and the majesty of God’s presence.

Do you enjoy this communication with your heavenly Father? Or is prayer more like an awkward formality? Jesus invites us into rich fellowship with God and helps us to express ourselves to God. Jesus teaches us the Lord’s Prayer to help us speak to God. If you are uncertain about how to pray, use the Lord’s Prayer. Think about the meaning of each line, and perhaps use your own words, and you will find yourself growing in relationship with God.

Ironically, even the Lord’s Prayer can become a ritual. How can we prevent that? Jesus shows us that a sure sign that we are engaged in genuine prayer is that we grow closer to God’s heart and forgive those who have wronged us. When we enter God’s presence in prayer, we see that we are there only because God forgave us at great cost to himself. In turn, we are led to show God’s gracious love to others. Do you enjoy a prayer life that leads you to love others?

Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen.

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