

H O P E ALL PRAYING
TOGETHER

7TH - 9TH SEPTEMBER 2012



***Our Father, in Heaven -
An individual reflection on The Lord's Prayer
by Margaret Wooding Jones of the World Prayer Centre***

H O P E

in our villages, towns & cities

All Praying Together

The Lord's Prayer for individual reflection

With thanks to Margaret Wooding Jones of The World Prayer Centre

What we know as the Lord's Prayer was given to Jesus' disciples in response to their request "Lord teach us to pray" after they had watched Him, many times, go off by Himself to pray.

I believe that they looked at Jesus and realized that whatever "happened" when He prayed affected not just Him but the lives of those around Him, which is why they asked Him to teach them.

Interestingly, the disciples would all have been men of prayer, men who attended the synagogue since childhood and who would have known the many prayers and scriptures in accordance with their teaching. I don't believe that Jesus intended for this to be just another prayer but that it was the basis from which they would learn individually and personally to relate to their Father in heaven. So don't be limited by just repeating His words but talk to God about what they mean.

Let's take a closer look. If your time is limited, don't feel you must work your way through it all in one sitting. Take the time you need on each section. The Bible verses may help with taking these themes further.

Our Father:

Jesus was including Himself in this prayer - what an amazing thoughts that God is not only Jesus' Father but He is ours too and together with all of mankind, we can call Him 'ours' Take some moments to think about what a unifying effect that one word can have.

In a Jewish culture where the Name of God was so revered, it must have been utterly mind-blowing for these first disciples to be told they could address God as their Father. Perhaps we have lost some of the wonder of that but take time just to tell God in your own words how amazing it is that He is our Father and we can come to Him as His *children!*

(Some people may really struggle with that connotation because they never knew their own father or because of pain and hurt caused in that relationship but that is not what God wants for you. Maybe find a picture of a father and child. Look at the picture and ask God to help you see your relationship with Him like that. God's plan for fathers is that they protect and provide security for their children in a joyful loving environment. Tell God that you long for Him to truly be your Daddy and tell Him exactly how you feel.)

Pray for those you know who feel isolated and alone, who need to know the Father's love for them.
John 1:12-13

In Heaven

Jesus' desire was for us to connect by relationship but also to fully worship God for all that He is. By reminding us that He is 'in Heaven' it helps us to get the perspective of His awesome wonder. Let that thought lead you into worship.

Psalm 8: 1-4

Holy is Your Name

Continue to use your own words in worship as you consider what it means to be Holy and maybe even write a list of words that come to mind as you think of the word 'Holy'. This is the God, the Loving Father that we can come to as children.

Pray for those who only use the Name(s) of God as a swear word or an expression of surprise

1 Peter 1:15-16

Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven

A Kingdom is a place where a King reigns and rules. Like Jesus, our desire is to see the Kingdom coming, more and more but take time to start with yourself. Examine your heart and ask God to show you if there is any place in your life where He is not King, where you (or someone else) is ruling and reigning. If you are able and mean it, say sorry for that and ask Him to show you what He, the King, wants you to do about it.

Pray for those in your neighborhood who do not yet know the Father's kingship in their lives. Pray for opportunities for them to see the Kingdom in action through Hope.

Give us today our daily bread

Jesus was reminding the disciples of their dependence on God for everything, not just literally the bread they ate. We are reminded that we must depend on God for everything. In quoting Scripture, Jesus said "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Father". He also said "I am the Bread of Life". We must feed on and be nourished by the Word that the Father speaks to us, day by day. Make sure you are feeding daily.

Ask God if there is a Word or a Scripture that He wants you to speak to someone today. He may want to use you today to feed someone else. Pray for those who do not know how to cope, who are struggling with debt and for those who think that their own hard work is all they need to survive, that through Hope and acts of kindness, they will see a Father who lovingly provides for them.

Deut 8:1-4

Forgive us our sins

Confess in your own words, anything that you know is wrong in your life and then take time to thank God for his grace and mercy and cleansing love.

Take time to ask God to show you if there are any sins within your area of influence (school/work place/neighborhood) that he is laying on your heart to confess to Him.

1 John 1:8-9 Isaiah 6:3-7

As we forgive those who sin against us

So here is a tough bit! Ask God if there is anyone that you have not forgiven, anyone you are holding a grudge against. Remember how much God has already forgiven you and determine that you will not withhold that from another. Ask God to help you release them from your judgement.

Pray for any relationships or issues locally where there is a need for reconciliation. Ask God if through the work and fellowship of Hope, there is more that you could do.

Matt 18:23-34

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

Consider any areas of weakness that you know that you have. Ask God to give you a new Scripture to help you stand on the Truth when you are next tempted to fall short of His plan for you.

If you are not already aware, ask God to show you specific areas of weakness and temptation amongst people you are in contact with through Hope. Again, ask for Scriptures to speak into these situations and pray for God to breakthrough in these areas.

Eph 6: 10-18

This resource was written by Margaret Wooding Jones of the World Prayer Centre, as part of HOPE's All Praying Together resources. Please see www.hopetogether.org.uk for further ideas.



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