

## Lord's Prayer : Part 1

### 1. How not to pray

*Mathew 6 : 5 - 8*

- The Greek word for “hypocrite” means a theatrical actor – we should not pray insincerely as they did.
- They would pray publicly in places where they would be seen and heard by men to look good and righteous.
- They have received their reward in full - in other words, recognition by their peers is the best they will get. God will not reward them.
- Jesus is not saying we should never pray in public – it was common for the Jews to pray publicly, and Jesus did this too. Rather, he is addressing the motive of praying publicly. If our motive is to impress people, then those are empty prayers.
- We should also not pray like pagans who babbled on, focusing on really long prayers as if they needed to try really hard to get God's attention.
- Jesus is not saying we should pray only for short periods of time – Jesus himself spent whole nights in prayer. Rather, Jesus is referring to the attitude of faith that should underlie and inspire our prayers.
- Praying like hypocrites is praying insincerely, praying like pagans is praying without faith.

### 2. How to pray

The account of the Lord's prayer in Luke starts with a request by the disciples for Jesus to teach them how to pray. They had seen him in prayer and the effectiveness of his prayers and wanted that for themselves.

*Mathew 6 : 9 – 13*

### 3. Our father ...

Will focus on “Our father ...” in this lesson.

*Jeremiah 3 : 18 – 20, Jeremiah 31 : 1 – 9, Isaiah 64 : 8 – 9 and Exodus 4 : 22.*

- The Israelites knew God as their father. They even prayed to God as their father but this was not very common and was reserved for special occasions.
- They would more commonly refer to God as the King of the Universe, the Most High God, the Name above all Names, and similar terms.

In teaching his disciples to address God as “Our father”, Jesus is saying that we too can have the level of closeness and intimacy that he enjoyed with God.

### 3.1 How we become children of God so we can call on Him as "Our Father"

#### Background

*Redemption from slavery was a vital part of the culture in ancient times, and clear guidelines were provided by God on how slaves and property were to be redeemed. There were three important elements in the process of redemption that the Israelites were very familiar with:*

- *It involved freedom from bondage of some kind*
- *A ransom or payment was required*
- *The redeemed person became the property of the one who redeemed him*

#### *1 Peter 1 : 18 – 19*

- Slaves were redeemed through payments of perishable things like gold or silver
- Those who are in Christ have been redeemed from the bondage / slavery of sin by the most valuable ransom (payment) of all – the blood / life of Christ.

#### *Ephesians 1 : 3 - 7*

- Good summary of the redemption process – we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, have our sins forgiven in the process and are adopted into God's family as His sons and daughters.

*The main cultural elements associated with redemption were fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross:*

- *It brought about freedom from slavery (of sin)*
- *It involved payment of a ransom to secure that freedom (the life of Christ)*
- *It heralded in a change of ownership (being adopted into God's family as His sons and daughters)*

To call on God as our Father, as His children, requires us to be redeemed through the blood of Christ – there is no other way ...

### 3.2 God loves and cares for His children far more than we can imagine or deserve

#### *Mathew 6 : 31 – 32 and Mathew 7 : 9 - 11*

- These scriptures speak of God our provider. Note that bread and fish are quite basic needs – He does not promise us fancy houses or cool cars (although He may decide to bless us in those ways too ...).
- He is not a distant, cold uninterested God. He is not too busy working or watching TV to take care of our needs. He is interested in our lives.
- We pray to a loving Father, a protective father who wants to take care of us.

How much love is God our father capable of ?

*Exodus 34 : 4 – 6*

- These are some of the most important words in the Bible about God !
- God here is speaking about himself – that He is abounding in love and faithfulness.

*1 John 3 : 1*

- God has lavished His love on us as His children – has not held back any of His abounding love.

*Ephesians 3 : 14 – 19*

- Paul prayed that the church (read God's children...) would know the fullness of God's love, but then quickly added that this extent of love is too great to understand fully
- With the limitations of our worldly bodies and minds, we are simply not able to fully grasp the extent of the love that God has for His children. That's how great His love for us is.

**Challenge**

**The first century church prayed the Lord's Prayer three times a day.  
Let us pray this prayer at least once every day this week, thinking carefully about  
the words as we pray.**