

PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Considering the different ways that God speaks to us, what steps can you take this week to improve your communication with Him?
- What is one thing you can do this week to help you grow in your relating to God as father?
- Identify the community that you feel called to pray with. What are some ways you can grow in praying with that community this week?
This is a great opportunity to emphasize the importance and impact of praying together. You could draw attention to the prayers you do as a group at the beginning and ending of your meetings. You could also encourage prayer connections during the week maybe even establishing prayer partnerships or prayer times.
- What can you do this week to honor God in your life? Are there elements in your life that are dishonoring to God? What can you do this week to eliminate those from your life?

PRAYER

- Ask God to unify you with the 'prayer community' that he has placed you in.
- Ask God to help you grow in your Father/Child relationship with him.
- Ask God to show you how you can better honor his name.

NOTES



The Lord's Prayer: Week 1

The focus of this guide is learning some fundamentals of effective prayer. They are very similar to the fundamentals of effective communication in any relationship.

CONNECT

- What role did prayer play in your family when you were growing up?
- How would you describe your father's role in your life?
- In your opinion, who has the most respected name in the world today?

WORD

¹⁵And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁶But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ⁷And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. ⁹In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. ¹³And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Matthew 6:5–13 (NKJV)

THOUGHT

"No other words of the Bible are spoken more often than the 65 words which we call the Lord's Prayer. Countless times every day, in the worship of the church and in the personal devotion of many Christians, these words spring to life—"Our Father, who art in heaven." The prayer is sung, recited in unison, mumbled mindlessly at times and, at other times, choked out through sobs of pain or remorse. For two thousand years Christians on every continent, and in every language, have lifted this prayer to God. When you take these words on your lips, you stand on sacred ground. But what exactly was Jesus trying to communicate to us when he spoke this prayer? Did he intend that his followers would simply repeat the prayer, or was he giving us a pattern to follow in our own pursuit of prayer—or both? We call it the Lord's Prayer, but really it is the Disciples' Prayer. Jesus was showing his followers (including us) how to pray."

— Excerpted from *'The Lord's Prayer'* by Douglas Connelly

1. PRAYER IS COMMUNICATION

¹⁵"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full...⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words." **Matthew 6:5,7 (NIV)**

We often say that Christianity is about relationship, not religion. Fundamental to every relationship is communication and prayer is our primary means of communication with God. In the two verses quoted above, Jesus emphasizes that the focus of prayer is neither the impressiveness nor the quantity of our words. What are some of the characteristics of good communication between two people? How might these characteristics apply to prayer between you and God?

Answers might be things like clarity, sincerity, grace, humility, empathy, respect. Asking good questions, sharing your heart. Listening. These are all elements of good communication and good prayer. You might think of personal examples/experiences of both good and bad communication.

2. RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

⁹In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. **Matthew 6:9 (NKJV)**

¹²Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—" **John 1:12 (NIV)**

There are two key thoughts about the relational nature of Christianity communicated through these first two words of the Lord's Prayer. First of all, Jesus prayed 'Our Father' rather than 'My Father'. Jesus emphasizes the importance of the family community in our relationship with God. When you pray this prayer, what community does your 'Our' refer to? How can you strengthen the relationships with that community? Secondly, Jesus pictured God as father. Why do you think Jesus emphasized the child/father relationship as the relationship we are to have with God in prayer? How do we become children of God?

This is the 'Gospel' moment – the time you might be able to share salvation if there is a non-christian present.

3. RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

¹⁹"This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name," **Matthew 6:9 (NIV)**

Hallow is not a word we use in common conversation these days. According to Wikipedia, **Hallow** means "to make holy or sacred, to sanctify or consecrate, to venerate." With this in mind, what does it mean to 'hallow' God's name and what are some practical ways that we can do this? Why do you think it is important to honor God's name when we pray? What do you think it means to honor God's name in prayer?

The primary thought here is to ask in ways that honor God and to ask for things in line with His will, His values, and His character.
