

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP
MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY**

Topic: Understanding the Lord's Prayer
Text: Matt 6:9-13

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Introduction Prayer is an important part of the Christian life. It is a means of communicating with the Lord and grow in our relationship with him. The Lord's Prayer is a *model prayer* and it has essentially 7 phrases excluding the first line (Our father who art in heaven) and the doxology found in some of the earlier Bible translations.

Our father (*Element 1: Relationship*)

Our Father is a language of affection, and *our* is not an insignificant little pronoun. There is no place for individualism in prayer. Jesus is not just my father, he is the father of all, by creation, or adoption/regeneration. Being born into a human family doesn't automatically make us members of God's family. We are adopted into God's household by being born again through faith. (**Mal 2:10a, Acts 17:28; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:5; Ro 8:14-17**)

Who is in heaven (*Element 2: Position & Authority*)

Your earthly father has an earthly address, but our father in heaven resides in a more awesome place. (**Ps 103:19**) He sits on the throne of grace. (**Isa 66:1; Acts: 7:49**) Because he is our *father*, we can approach him with *boldness*, because he is our *father in heaven*, we must approach him in *reverence*. We are able to worship and pray because we know his name. Whatever God does for his people, he does for the glory of his name.

- *The first 3 phrases relate to God and his honor*

1. Hallowed be your name (*Element 3: Adoration & Worship*)

The phrase *hallowed be your name* implies not only that we *know* God but that we also *reverence* his name. *Hallowed* comes from the same word as holy (sacred). The name of God represents God, verbalizing the phrase means to recognize and treat it as holy. Our desire should be for the world to recognize the holiness of the name.

In the New Testament, *hallow* is a translation of the Greek word *hagiazō*, used in **John 10:36** and **John 17:19**. To hallow God's name is an act of worship. As such, this first line makes it clear that prayer and worship go together. (**Ps 141:2**) What we do for God and *how* we do it are important but *why* we do it is also important. The *why* is the motive.

2. Your kingdom come (*Element 4: Anticipation; Element 5: Citizenship*)

We are affirming that God is King. (**Ps 47:2, Ps 97:1, 99:1, Rev 1:5**) And this makes us children of the king. The doctrine of the kingdom of God was preached by John the Baptist and Jesus, and which Jesus also sent his apostles to preach. (**Mat 10:7**) Our hope is not that the governments of this world will transform into the kingdom of God but that the kingdom of God will come from heaven to earth with power and glory. No government on earth represents God's kingdom, instead, we are citizens of a kingdom that will one day arrive in consummate glory.

3. Your will be done in earth as it is in heaven 'Your will' (*Element 6: Submission*) 'On earth' (*Element 7: Universality*), 'as it is in heaven' (*Element 8: Conformity; Element 9: Partnership*)

When God's rule is completely established in this world, all things will be ordered according to his perfect design. The will of God is infinitely good, wise, and holy; to have it fulfilled in and among men, is to have infinite goodness, wisdom, and holiness throughout the universe; and earth made the counterpart of heaven.

- *The next 4 phrases relate to our needs, spiritual and temporal*

4. Give us this day our daily bread 'Give us' (*Element 10: Supplication*) 'This day' (*Element 11: Specificity*) 'Daily bread' (*Element 12: Necessity*)

After the things of God glory, kingdom and will, we now ask for our comforts in life; things necessary to sustain life. We need our natural wellbeing to be in good order for our spiritual well-being to also be in order.

5. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors 'Forgive' (*Element 13: Penitence*) 'our sins or debts' (*Element 14: Obligation*) 'as we forgive our debtors' (*Element 15: Love & Mercy*)

In the ancient world, debt is punishable by prison sentence. In the Roman empire, prisons were not filled with criminals, but debtors. Debtors were executed or made to serve some form of punishment. People would be in jail until they could pay their debts. Debt meant severe pain and tragedy for the individual and family.

The use of the word *debt* is meant to invoke in our minds both a serious offence and a corresponding serious punishment. To be forgiven a debt is an act of extravagant mercy. How is debt sin? We owe God a *debt of obedience* which we have failed to pay, which we can't afford to pay, and we are deserving his wrath, but he offers us his forgiveness.

6. Lead us not into temptation *'Lead us' (Element 16: **Guidance**) 'not into temptation' (Element 17: **Protection**)*

These words express a heart of dependence not self-sufficiency. *Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. (Ps19: 13)*

7. Deliver us from evil *'Deliver' (Element 18: **Salvation**) 'from evil' (Element 19: **Righteousness**)*

This speaks to our desperation, and powerlessness. We can't resist the devil by our own power. Will power doesn't work for the devil. The devil will exploit our weaknesses. This is expressed negatively and positively: having prayed that the guilt of sin be removed, next we pray that we may not go back to it through temptation.

Doxology *(For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen)* This doesn't appear in most modern translations such as NIV and ESV. *Doxologia* in Greek, is from *doxologos* which means "praising, glorifying," from *doxa* "glory, praise."