

Matthew 6:5-15 (New International Version)

⁵"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 men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹"This, then, is how you should 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 today our daily bread.

¹²Forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.^[a]

¹⁴For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Footnotes:

- a. [Matthew 6:13](#) Or from evil; some late manuscripts one, / for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

OASIS: Prayer—Old Problems; New Approach, Mt. 6: 5-15

Special Leader note: *This is the first of two LC studies involving the Lord's Prayer. This study focuses more about practices and principles of prayer—and contrasts Jesus' teaching about misguided approaches and better approaches to God. In two weeks the study will focus on the specifics of the Lord's Prayer.*

Possible Starter questions: **Can you remember any of your first experiences of prayer that you wouldn't mind sharing? How did you learn to pray?**

Transitional comment: **In today's passage Jesus begins teaching his followers to pray.**

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's leading (if you haven't already prayed)
- Now read the text first silently and then listen as someone reads it aloud.

Overview question: **Any ideas about how these 2 paragraphs relate with one another?**

First paragraph—verses 5-8:

- O (v. 5-8) What are the prominent, repeated words and ideas in this paragraph?
- O (v. 5) What is the first “bad practice” about prayer that Jesus raises?
 - I What does Jesus imply about some people's motivation? Their reward?
 - A In what ways can Christians/we sometimes slip into this problem?
- O (v. 6) In contrast, how does Jesus want his followers to pray?
 - I Practically, what does that look like or mean for us as we pray?
- O (v. 6) What do we learn about the Father's character and role?
 - I Any ideas about how God rewards this kind of prayer?
(n.b. This is not explicitly answered in the text—but people are going to be wonderings. Therefore, it is wise to discuss it for several minutes (but not for too long). Suggestions: answers prayer, forgives sin (v. 14), is “hallowed” meaning that God receives the respect we are offering, etc.)
- O (v. 7) What is the second “bad practice” about prayer that Jesus mentions?
 - I What is the probable underlying fallacy?
 - A In what ways can well-meaning Christians fall prey to this problem or or similar ones? (i.e. use of “impressive words” or excessive theological terminology).
 - A Which of these can creep into your prayer life?

O (v. 8) In response, what truth about God's character does Jesus highlight?

I What does this mean for our prayer life or approach to God?

A How can Jesus' teaching change the way you and I pray?

A How do the truths about the Father's character and role deepen and liberate our approach to God?

Second paragraph—verses 9-15:

O In what ways do you see the prayer that Jesus teaches his followers to be a refreshing alternative to the problems that Jesus was addressing?

What are some more insights? *(Take time to let people discover the many ways that Jesus is providing a whole new, refreshing pattern and approach).*

I Which phrases most intrigue you? Or mean the most to you?

A In what practical ways would you like our LC to deepen or develop our prayer life together?

Summary/conclusion:

A Since Jesus taught this to a group of followers, let's pray this prayer together, slowly and thoughtfully.

Text is on other page or www.Biblegateway.com

- a. BIG idea: Learning to pray, Jesus' way.
- b. Key verse/idea: don't be like them...but when you pray...
- c. Today's text is about talking with God—both teaching and modeling.
- d. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge).

Advice to study leaders:

- a. Complement your OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? What do others of you see/think?)
- b. Always reword questions in language/word choice that is comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn't make sense to you, then drop it.)
- c. When you ask questions, how quickly do people answer or respond? How long do you wait? (Take your time; don't rush people but encourage people's participation; and avoid answering your own questions!)
- d. Pace the study—move on—conclude with "difference making" application.
- e. Timing: allocate your time and move forward gently but steadily.
- f. Determine the core questions you will ask (and which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- g. Secondary texts—be very sparing in your usage of other texts, even though they may be relevant. That tends to push you more into the "teaching" role, rather than the role of facilitator. It can cause some people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- h. If you are utilizing this "on-line" study and not part of OASIS, I recommend that you get the IVP one volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary (21st Century Edition). It is well worth the \$40.