

Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. A teacher will teach from the Bible that a disciple of Jesus prays. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme.

Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7). Paul says, "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). And James says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). The Bible teaches much about prayer.

The first series of 4 teachings is about "The teachings of Jesus on prayer". The topics are "the Lord's Prayer" in two parts and "The other teachings of Jesus on prayer" in two parts.

Today's teaching is: A DISCIPLE PRAYS THE LORD'S PRAYER - PART 1. If you don't know what to pray or how to pray, then learn to pray the Lord's Prayer.

POINT 1. THE PARTS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

In Luke 11:1 and Matthew 6:9-13 we read, "One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' Jesus then said, 'This is how you should pray:

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

First. The Lord's Prayer is the model for all prayers.

The Lord Jesus Christ says, "In this way you should pray." The emphasis is on "In this way". He intends to say that this is a *pattern* for our prayers. The Lord's Prayer is given to be a model prayer.

Second. The Lord's Prayer contains the really important things to pray.

Why is this prayer so short? It is a fact that most prayers in the Bible are short. For example, a tax collector's prayer, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13). Or a dying thief's prayer, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). The Lord's Prayer is short, because Jesus wants to teach us what is really important when we pray.

Third. The Lord's Prayer consists of six prayers.

What is really important when we pray? The Lord's Prayer consists of six prayers. The first three prayers are directed upward to God. They are directed to God's name, God's kingdom and God's will. Thus Jesus is teaching us that God himself is the most important in our prayers. The next three prayers are directed inward to my needs. They are directed to my present need, which is my daily bread; my past needs, which are my debts or sins; and my future needs, which are my enemies. Of these three prayers, the last two are also directed outward to other people and to the enemy. Thus, Jesus is teaching us that our personal needs as well as our relationship to other people are important in our prayers. Moreover, we begin the prayer with "our Father", not "my Father". The model prayer thus has three directions: upward to God, inward to our needs and outward to other people's needs.

POINT 2. THE INVOCATION (the calling on God's Name): "Our Father in heaven"

Why do we address God as "our Father in heaven"?

God is not a Father in any physical sense. He is only a Father in a spiritual sense!

First. Christians may call God "our Father", because Christians have become God's children.

However, not everyone in the world is privileged to call God his Father. A person only becomes a child of God when he receives Jesus Christ into his heart and life. John 8:42-44 teaches that the people who have God as their Father will love Jesus. But the people, who are unable to hear what Jesus says, have the devil as their father. The apostle John says, "This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:10). Therefore, the Lord's Prayer is a prayer only for Christians.

Second. Christians may call God “our Father”, because they belong to the Father’s family.

The apostle Paul says, “I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name” (Ephesians 3:14-15). The Father’s family consists of the Christians in the Church who are still on the earth as well as the Christians who are already in heaven. The Father’s family is one big family spread all over the world and in heaven. God adopts all new believers in Jesus Christ as his sons and daughters (Ephesians 1:5). Jesus Christ is not ashamed to recognise these new Christians as his brothers and sisters (Hebrews 2:11). Therefore, all Christians may call God “our Father in heaven”, because they belong to the Father’s one family, the Church.

Third. Christians call God “our Father in heaven”, because he is near to each of them.

“Heaven” is not a place far away, but the name for the dwelling place of God. God and heaven are very near to every human being. Christians may approach God, their Father, with confidence when they pray. They may tell their Father all their pain and sorrow and make known to him all their needs and wishes. However, they may not regard God as an earthly father and talk to him with the familiarity of an earthly chum. God is “our Father in heaven”! This is not an earthly relationship, but a spiritual relationship. That means that Christians should approach God with deep respect and humble dedication. And because God is in heaven, he has the power and the right to answer our prayers as *he* decides or not to answer our prayers at all. And finally, because God is in heaven, Christians know they are only pilgrims passing through this earth on their way to heaven. They want to be where their Father is and the Father also wants them to be where he is.

Summary: Because Christians call God “our Father in heaven”, they regard God with humble respect, surrender to his absolute sovereignty and look forward to be with him in heaven in the future.

POINT 3. THE FIRST PRAYER: “hallowed be your name”.

What does it mean?

In the Bible **God’s name** is an expression for God himself as he has revealed himself. God revealed himself by the name “Elohim”, which means “God” and expresses God in the fullness of his power, especially as Creator (Genesis 1:1). He revealed himself by the name “El Shaddai”, which means “Almighty God” and expresses God as the source of salvation for his people (Genesis 17:1). He revealed himself by the name “Yahwe” (or Jehovah), which means, “I am that I am” or “I shall be what I am” and emphasises God’s unchangeable faithfulness to his covenant people (Exodus 3:14). His name “Adonai” means, “my Master” and refers to God’s Lordship.

“To hallow God’s name” means, “to hold God’s name in reference”, “to honour and glorify God”. When Christians pray, “let your name be hallowed”, they ask God to work in such a way in their own lives that they will show deep reference to God and bring glory to God through their lives. But they also ask God to work in such a way in the lives of the people of the world that they too will begin to show a deep reference to God and begin to bring glory to God.

How could you practically “hallow” God’s name?

First. You can look at God’s creation, the mighty mountains, fast flowing rivers, the great variety of trees, the beautiful flowers, but also at how wonderful God has created man, and then begin to thank God for all his beautiful art in creation.

Second. You could study what the Bible says about who God is: a mighty, wise, holy and loving person and then praise him for who he is.

Third. Because you belong to God the Father’s family, you do not want to bring dishonour to this family. You say “no” to corruption, immorality, slander, swearing and every kind of evil. You live, as God the Father would like you to live, in holiness, righteousness and love.

Fourth. You preach the Gospel and you witness for Jesus Christ in order that more and more people will begin to know God and glorify God.

POINT 4. THE SECOND PRAYER: “your kingdom come”.

What is the kingdom of God?

The kingdom of God is the kingship, sovereign rule and complete power of God over all people and all things. In particular it is the kingship and rule of God through Jesus Christ that is recognized in the hearts and operative in the lives of God’s people. It is based on the work of salvation of Jesus Christ for his people and the application of that work by the Holy Spirit in his people. It results

first: in the complete salvation of believers from beginning to end

second: in their constitution as a Church on earth

third: in their influence on every aspect of human society

fourth: in a redeemed universe, the new heaven and new earth, at the second coming of Jesus Christ

The first aspect of God's kingdom is his sovereign rule.

In Luke 17:21 Jesus says, "The kingdom of God is within you". The rightful place of Jesus, the King of kings, is on the throne of the heart. When he sits on the throne of your heart, then he controls every aspect of your life. He wants to control how you spend your time and money, with whom you should relate and what goals and plans you should give yourself to. When you pray, "let your kingdom come", you recognise that he is the sovereign ruler and you ask him to sovereignly rule in your heart.

The second aspect of God's kingdom is salvation.

According to Mark 10:25-26, "to enter the kingdom" is the same as "to be saved". And in John 3:5 Jesus says that in order to enter the kingdom of God you must be born again. Thus the result of God's sovereign rule is your initial salvation. When you pray, "let your kingdom come", then you pray that God may continue to work out his salvation in your life until you are completely saved. God's continued salvation is called 'sanctification'. You will also pray for the salvation of other people.

The third aspect of God's kingdom is the Church.

In Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus said that he built his Church on the rock, on the apostle Peter and the other apostles. He said that he gave them the keys of the kingdom with which they would "bind and loose" people. These are rabbinical terms for "forbidding and permitting", that is, for "excluding or including" people into the Christian Church for the first time and for "disciplining sinners or restoring repentant sinners" in the Christian Church afterwards. Jesus especially used Peter and the other apostles to establish the first Christian churches among the Jews, the half-Jews (Samaritans) and the non-Jews (Gentiles).

The Christian Church is thus the community of people in whose hearts and lives God is recognised as king. In Matthew 13:37-39 Jesus describes the kingdom of God in its present earthly form. He says, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels." The visible Church on earth and the Kingdom of God in its present earthly form both consist of true Christians and nominal Christians. But in its final form at the second coming of Christ the Church and the kingdom of God will only consist of true Christians! So when you pray, "your kingdom come", then you pray that God may plant more churches in places on earth where there are no churches yet.

The fourth aspect of God's kingdom is the redeemed universe.

In Matthew 13:41 Jesus says that at his second coming, his angels will root out of his kingdom in its present earthly form everything that causes sin and all who do evil. And in Matthew 25:34 after the last judgement, king Jesus will say to those at his right hand, "Come ... and take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world." The kingdom of God in its final glorious form will be the new heaven on the new earth! So, when you pray, "let your kingdom come", then you also pray that Jesus Christ may soon return to judge all evil and establish his everlasting kingdom of the new heaven on the new earth.

How can you practically pray for God's kingdom?

First. Your own heart often wants to establish its own kingdom and control its own affairs. You pray for the coming of *God's* kingdom and *not your own* kingdom. You pray that God may control the way you spend your time and your money. You pray that God may decide what the goals of your life should be and with which people you should associate.

Second. You pray for other people, that God would open their hearts to respond to the gospel. Start a prayer group and pray regularly for your non-Christian neighbours, friends, family, and also for people in other parts of the world.

Third. Pray for the extension of God's kingdom on earth. In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Pray that the preaching of the gospel may make progress and that every year new groups of people, who have never heard the gospel, may hear it and believe.

POINT 5. THE THIRD PRAYER: "your will be done".

What does it mean?

Jesus is speaking about God's "revealed will", not about God's "eternal plan". In Deuteronomy 29:29 the Bible says, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may follow all the words of the Law". God's revealed will consists of all the commands and teachings in the Bible. His will is already done perfectly in heaven, but not yet on earth. Therefore Jesus teaches us to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is already done in heaven.

How can you practically pray that God's will expressed in his commands and teachings will be done?

First. You pray this prayer for yourself every day. Every day you make several choices and decisions. Which choice will please God most? Which decision will be in accordance with his revealed will in the Bible? Pray that you may obey his will completely, immediately and wholeheartedly.

Second. You pray this prayer for your children every day. They too must make choices and decisions. Some of the big choices every child must make are: "Who will be my God? Jesus Christ or myself?" "Who will I marry? A devoted Christian or a non-Christian?" "What will I give my life to? To do God's will or to do my own will?" Parents must often pray for their children. Pray that they will know and obey God's will completely, immediately and wholeheartedly.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Pray the Lord's Prayer regularly.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".