

Spiritual Foundations Bible study

Participant's version: Prayer. Study 2

The average weight of a residential home is approximately 200 tones including furniture. If the foundations of the house were not completed carefully and professionally there could be serious and expensive problems in the future. Correspondingly, unless Christians build solid spiritual foundations into their life, there can be negative consequences. In uncertain times we need those robust foundations more than ever!

Prayer

We could not overestimate the importance of regular prayer as a foundation in the healthy Christian life. The Lord's prayer is memorised and prayed in church services all over the world by hundreds of millions of people. It is no doubt the most famous prayer in history. The Following study is based on that prayer.

Openers

When you think of the practice of prayer, what are some of your initial responses? Tick the phrases that come to mind.

- The powerhouse of God
- How boring
- Such a privilege
- I just don't have the time
- Very challenging
- I often don't know what to say
- I love to meet with the Holy Spirit

Share some of your answers with your group

How would you define prayer?

Pray the prayer of Matthew 6:9-13 as a group together aloud.

*Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ ‘This, then, is how you should pray:

**“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.
¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”**

R.T. France was Vice-Principle and Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies, London Bible College. Writing in the Tyndale commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew he states that the prayer is similar to some Jewish liturgical prayers. So, Jesus probably expected the prayer to be spoken word for word as a memorised prayer for private and corporate occasions.

However, many theologians including France believe Jesus is also suggesting that this is a pattern for prayer revealing a few key principles. This study will examine these principles dividing the prayer into five topics.

Matthew 6:9 states “Our Father in heaven.” The common language that Jesus would have used to teach the crowds was Aramaic. This means Jesus used the term “Abba” to address his Father. It is the term a little Jewish child would use to address their father. The closest we have in our English language to this is “Daddy”.

Tyndale New Testament Commentaries Matthew.

R.T. France 1984, Inter-Varsity Press. Page 133-134

1: The Pharisee tended to pray quite formal prayers. With Jesus starting his prayer with the phrase “Our Father” or in Aramaic, “Our Daddy” what do we learn from this?

2: The Apostle Paul also suggested that the intimate Abba title be prayed to God. Explore Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15. What do we learn about how we are to relate to God from these verses?

3: Read Matthew 6:9c-10.

The word “hallowed” is one we rarely use today. It is translated from the Greek word Hagiazo. R.T. France from the Tyndale commentaries states Hallowed means literally, “make holy” or “treat as holy” meaning have “reverence” for.

Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Matthew.

R.T. France Copyright 1984, Inter-Varsity Press England. Page 134

3b: The opening phrase in the Lord’s prayer, “Our Father in heaven” encourages intimacy. What does the next phrase “Hallowed be your name” encourage?

4: If we have a respect or reverence for our Father in heaven, should it affect the way we live? How? (2 Corinthians 7:1).

5: The Lord’s prayer includes the statement, “Your will be done.” How does God’s will relate to our prayer life? (1 John 5:14-16).

6: Read Matthew 6:11. What does this short verse encourage us to include in our topics of prayer?

7: Examine Matthew 7:7-11. What does this passage tell us about the Father's character?

7b: Do you think that your perception of God's character influences the way you pray and your expectations of receiving answers?

7c: Do you find it easy to ask God for all manner of blessings?

8: Read Matthew 6:12

Possibly the best internationally known of Australian Theologians is the late Leon Morris. He explains that the words in the Lord's prayer "debts" and "debtors", "refers not to financial transaction but to sin, here seen as a debt."

Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Luke

Leon Morris, Copyright 1988. Inter-Varsity Press England Page 212

8b: Why do you think it is important to seek the Father's forgiveness for your sins and forgive other people who have sinned against you?

9: Consider Matthew 6:14-15. Immediately after teaching the Lord's prayer Jesus further emphasises just one aspect of the prayer, what is it and why do you think is this so important?

10: Reflect upon 1 John 1:8-9. Before receiving God's forgiveness what must we do and what are we promised because of that response?

10b: Sometimes people, even Christians can be extremely hurtful because of negative and sinful things they have repeatedly said and done. It is very difficult to forgive such people. But we know the Father wants us too. It can be helpful to share such challenges and ask your group to pray for you. Take the opportunity to do this now.

11: Read Matthew 6:13. Do you consider that the evil one, Satan or the devil is a real spiritual being or more of an analogy of evil on the world? Explain how you have arrived at that conclusion.

12: The Lord's Prayer links temptation and the evil one. The Bible has many Scriptures that help us understand how we can find deliverance. Consider James 4:7-8a and 1 Peter 5:8-9a. List what God expects us to do.

12b: If you do the above things, what are we promised will be the devil's response?

Conclusion

Read through the summary of what we have learnt from the Lord's prayer.

***Matthew 6:9-13**

⁹ *'This, then, is how you should pray:*

"Our Father in heaven,"

1: Talk to God like you would a loving father

"Hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,

your will be done,"

2: Like a father, God desires our respect

¹¹ *"Give us today our daily bread."*

3: Like a father, God wants you to provide for your daily needs

¹² *"And forgive us our debts,*

as we also have forgiven our debtors."

4: Like a father, God wants you to have healthy relationships

¹³ *"And lead us not into temptation,*

but deliver us from the evil one."

5: Like a father, God wants to protect you from evil

Ask people what their prayer needs are this week.

Pray for one another using elements from the five topics within the Lord's prayer. For those who are comfortable, consider using "Daddy" in addressing God.