

Pray Like Jesus, The Pattern of Prayer, Matthew 6:9-13, 1/11/26

We have a common saying, “All we can do now is pray.” I’m sure I’ve said it hundreds of times...most frequently at the end of Eagles games. But the implication behind that phrase is telling. We usually mean, “*We’ve tried everything else... and now we’re out of options.*” Corrie ten Boom once said that many Christians treat prayer like a **spare tire** instead of a **steering wheel**.

We strategize first.
 We scheme first.
 We argue first.
 We worry first.
 We control first.
 We get angry first.
 We talk to everyone else first.
 We exhaust every option first...
and then we pray.

But what if we prayed first? What if prayer really was the steering wheel of our lives, not the spare tire? If that were true, our **practice** would finally match our **theology**—because we say we believe that a relationship with God should be the first priority of our lives.

And I think we’d discover something else as well:
 we’d sin less and have fewer regrets,
 our relationships would be healthier,
 our emotions would be more grounded,
 and we’d be inviting God to be present and active in *every* area of our lives.

Here at Brandywine, it’s our desire to make prayer first, and we want to help each of you do just that in 2026. And that’s why we’re starting this year with **21 Days of Prayer**. Why 21? Well research tells us that it takes an average of 21 days to make something a habit. And so our goal is that every one of us makes praying first either a new habit or renewed habit in our lives. As you walked in, you should’ve received a prayer guide to help us do this together.. If you didn’t, grab one on your way out. For now, just set it aside. We’ll come back to it at the end.

If we are going to learn to put prayer first over the next 3 weeks, what better example to follow than Jesus. Prayer was the lifeline of Jesus’ ministry. It shaped His priorities, sustained His mission, and anchored His relationship with God the Father. In the Gospels, Jesus is shown praying around 25 times. And those are just the moments the writers chose to include. Luke tells us in Luke 5:16 that “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Prayer wasn’t an occasional practice for Jesus, it’s what Jesus put first.

Now, you might say, “*Well sure...He was God. That’s not exactly fair.*” And yes, Jesus is fully God. But He is also fully human. And the pattern of prayer He lived out was intentionally human on purpose for us so that we would follow him.

So today, we're going to learn from Jesus the **pattern of prayer** from the most well-known prayer in the Bible—the Lord's Prayer in Matthew chapter 6. The Lord's Prayer comes to us in two places in the gospels- in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6 as part of a larger context of what authentic worship is all about, and then in Luke 12 in response to one of Jesus' disciples, who after watching Jesus pray so often, asked Jesus to teach them to pray like Jesus.

Let's start by praying the Lord's Prayer together. ([Switch to full screen](#))

*Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, the glory forever and ever, Amen.*

Let's be honest, one of the challenges with studying the Lord's Prayer is that it's actually too familiar to many of us. When we lived in Virginia, our house was about five minutes from Dulles Airport. Planes flew low and loud right over our home. Whenever family came to visit, it startled them every time. They'd stop mid-sentence and say, *"How do you deal with that noise?"* And I'd say, *"What noise?"* Because after a while, I didn't even hear it anymore. It had become so familiar that it faded into the background. And that's exactly what can happen with the Lord's Prayer.

We know it so well that we can recite it without thinking. And when prayer becomes rote and automatic, it actually works against what prayer is at its core, which is a real conversation with God.

Can you imagine talking to the closest people in your life using memorized scripts? What if every morning before I left for work, I quickly turned to my wife and recited the same script: *"Good bye, wife. I affirm our covenant. Thank thee for coffee. I ask for forgiveness in advance. I will now depart in peace. Amen."* That would... not go over very well.

But that was never Jesus' intention when He taught His disciples how to pray. The Lord's Prayer was never meant to be a rigid script of exact words, it was meant to be a living, intimate pattern. A framework. A set of starter prompts for a real conversation with God.

And what I want to do today is show you how I personally use the Lord's Prayer in a way that has genuinely changed my prayer life, making it more relational, more meaningful, and more aligned with how God invites us to approach Him. The Lord's Prayer gives us a pattern of seven prompts, not words to memorize, but movements that shape how we pray.

Prompt #1 Relationship: "Our Father who art in Heaven"

It's hard for us to feel just how radical these words would have sounded to Jesus' disciples. Jesus wasn't simply teaching them to pray personally, He was teaching them to pray relationally. And not just relationally, but to address the God of the universe as Father.

What truly separates Christian prayer from every other kind of prayer is this Father-child relationship with God. The Bible tells us that through our trust in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross, we are not merely forgiven, we are adopted into the family of God. We don't just receive mercy; we receive a new identity.

This is why prayer must always begin with this doctrine of adoption. Before you say a single word in prayer, you have to let this truth sink into your soul: The most true thing about you, the deepest, most secure, most unchangeable identity you have is that you are a beloved child of God. And if that's who you are, then prayer is not a performance. It's not a transaction. It's a conversation between our Heavenly Father and His child. We pray best when we relate to God, not as servants trying to earn approval, but as sons and daughters who are already loved.

When I am praying this on my prayer walks- I make it personal- "My father in heaven- I'm just so grateful that you love me with the same love as you have for Jesus...Help me be secure in your love and acceptance today and not seek the approval of others today."

Prompt #2 Adoration: "Hallowed by thy name"

We don't use the word *hallowed* very often. It simply means to treat something as holy, sacred, and ultimate— to recognize something as most important. When Jesus teaches us to pray, He begins not with our needs, but with God's worth. This line is an invitation to adore God, to honor Him, to praise Him, to consciously place Him back at the center of our lives. Before we ask God to do anything for us, we remember who He is.

One of the ways I do this is by using the names and descriptions of God we find throughout the Bible. And there are hundreds of them, each one revealing something true about His character. God is our Shepherd. Our King. Our Rock and Refuge. The Alpha and the Omega. Our Helper, Comforter, Provider, and Friend.

So when I pray this prompt, it might sound something like this: "*Hallowed be Your name. You are my Rock in this turbulent season. You are Jehovah-Jireh, my Provider, and I need to remember that right now. You are my Shepherd, guiding me and comforting me. You are almighty, and my heart needs to be reminded that You are bigger than everything I'm facing.*"

Adoration lifts our eyes, recenters our hearts, and reminds us that the God we're praying to is holy, powerful, faithful, and worthy of our trust.

Prompt #3 Submission: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"

So often in prayer, we jump straight into what we want before we ever consider what God wants. But this prayer reminds us: it's His kingdom and His will, not Nate's kingdom and Nate's will.

I like to think of it this way: praying "thy kingdom and thy will" puts our hearts and wills into God's hands like metal into a furnace: to make it malleable, so it can be shaped into something useful and more precious.

And that's more radical than it sounds. Because when we sincerely pray, "Your will be done," it means at least two things.

First, it means we commit to obey diligently everything God calls us to do that day: to love the difficult person, to tell the truth when it's costly, to sacrifice comfort or possessions to meet a real need.

Second, it means we choose to submit patiently to everything God allows into our lives: a diagnosis, a disappointment, ruined plans, traffic that makes us late, decisions and circumstances completely outside our control. So when I pray this line, I often begin with a simple confession. I'll pray something like: "*Father, I know I'm prone today to force my own will. I want control. I want my way. And right now, I'm choosing to surrender this day to You.*"

It's only when our will is submitted to his will that we move to **Prompt #4 Petition: "Give us this day our Daily Bread"** Wrapped up in this simple phrase are **four important truths** that reshape how we ask God for anything.

1- We're acknowledging that GOD has everything we could possibly need for today. God alone is the giver of life, breath, and sustenance. When we pray this, we're reminding ourselves where our help actually comes from. Ultimately, it's not the government, not our employer, not our spouse, parents, or even ourselves. This puts us in the right posture of humility to receive from God.

2- We're acknowledging that God has EVERYTHING we could possibly need for today. He supplies us down to the smallest details: the food we eat, the water we drink, the strength we wake up with, and all the way up to our deepest needs for love, friendship, protection, and healing. Scripture tells us that *every good and perfect gift comes from the Father*. So we're invited to ask Him for everything, from a parking spot at the grocery store to healing a broken heart.

3- We're acknowledging that God has everything we could possibly NEED for today. Remember, we are asking God our Father not God as our Genie. Every good father wants to meet the needs of his children and cares deeply about their desires, but a wise father also knows what's best.

One of our kids, when he was little, would've happily eaten an entire large bag of M&Ms for dinner. If we gave him exactly what he wanted, it would've been disastrous. In the same way, God doesn't give us everything we *want*, and if we're honest, many of us can look back at when we were 5 or 25, or 55 or 85 and say, "*Thank God He didn't answer that prayer the way I asked.*" God may not always give us what we ask for...but He always receives the heart behind our prayers and provides what we truly need.

4- We're acknowledging that God has everything we could possibly need for TODAY. This is *daily* bread, not monthly bread...you wouldn't want monthly bread- it gets moldy. Daily bread is fresh! Walking with God means daily trust, confidence that He will give us what we need for the day ahead. Not necessarily more. Never less. That doesn't mean we can't pray about the future.

But I've found real freedom in focusing my prayers on *today*, my relationships, decisions, schedule, challenges, gospel opportunities. Trusting God with what's right in front of me.

Prompt #5 Confession: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us"

Something hit me fresh this morning as I was praying through this message and came to this prompt. Why does Jesus wait to give us this prompt until after the petition- the things we are asking for? You would like it would come before petition. And then it hit me, maybe it's because Jesus wants to show us God truly is a loving, gracious father. He's not waiting with arms crossed and a scowl, ignoring us until we confess our sin to him and THEN maybe he will hear our requests. Jesus wants us to see again and again his love for us isn't based on our performance, but his unconditional grace, mercy, and love in Jesus.

The prompt of Confession has two aspects. The first is we're inviting the Holy Spirit to search us, to lovingly reveal the places in our hearts we either can't see or would rather not see that we need to get honest about. That includes the obvious sins, but also the subtle ones. Attitudes. Bitterness. Pride. Impatience. We confess and we trust the gospel that in Jesus all our sins are eternally forgiven.

And then Jesus adds something weighty. "*Forgive us... as we forgive those who trespass against us.*" This doesn't mean we earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others. But it does mean that when we cling to resentment or nurse old wounds, we block our ability to experience that forgiveness fully. Grace is meant to flow through us.

So when I pray this prompt, I ask God to help me forgive, not just people from my past, but even people who might hurt, offend, or irritate me *today*. I've found it's often easier to surrender that in advance than to clean it up afterward. And sometimes for me, this is hard...I have to grind it out. I have to talk it through with God...it might be a second lap around the neighborhood. I have to really put my heart into that melting furnace so I'm ready to have the conversation I need to have, to humble myself, to ask for forgiveness, or to truly extend it.

Prompt #6 Warfare: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"

The Bible is very clear...God never tempts anyone to sin. So when Jesus teaches us to pray this way, He's not suggesting God is the source of temptation. What He *is* teaching us is to pray for deliverance in the middle of temptation in the tests of life, in spiritual opposition, in the unseen battle that is constantly being waged around us.

This prayer is a humble admission: "*God, on my own, I'm not strong enough.*" Scripture tells us that we have a real enemy, one who schemes, deceives, and looks for opportunities to pull us off course. We're warned in 1 Peter 5 to be alert and sober-minded because the enemy is always looking for a way to do damage. That doesn't mean we live in fear, but it does mean we live awake. Prayer is how we prepare for the battle before it shows up at our door.

As John Piper once said, "*Prayer is like a wartime walkie-talkie calling in to our General to send supplies to the front lines.*"

So when I pray this prompt, I ask God for spiritual clarity for the day ahead. I ask Him to help me see the lies I'm likely to believe, and to replace them with truth. I ask Him for strength where I'm vulnerable and wisdom where I'm tempted. I pray for a canopy of protection over my family, over our church. And I do it in the name and authority of Jesus. Because this prayer reminds us: We are not helpless. We are not alone. And the battle does not belong to us, it belongs to the Lord.

Prompt #7 Praise: "Yours is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory forever and ever"

God doesn't need to be reminded of His power. He doesn't forget His glory. When we pray this way, we're the ones being reminded. This closing line lifts our eyes off ourselves and back onto God—onto how limitless, glorious, and utterly sufficient He is in every way.

This is a doxology. A declaration of trust. A moment where we release our faith into the day ahead. We're acknowledging that it's not *my* kingdom that matters most. Not *my* power that sustains things. Not *my* glory that needs protecting. It's His. And it's His kingdom, His power, and His glory that will accomplish His purposes in me, in my family, in our church, and in our world.

This prayer ends the way it should with surrender and confidence. "*God, this day belongs to You. And whatever happens, You are more than enough.*"

I hope for many of us this just totally took the lid off of the Lord's Prayer and how we approach God.

So- let's take a couple minutes and look through the guide. We are calling our church to 21 days of prayer using the Lord's Prayer for our prompts....Walk through the guide.