

The Heart and Art of Praying First

January 4, 2026

Big Idea: A follower of Jesus prays as He did... from the heart to Our Father in Heaven.

- **When Did Jesus Pray?**

- Jesus prayed at _____ of his life.
 - Luke 3:21, Luke 6:12, Luke 9:29, Matthew 26:36-46
- Jesus prayed prayers of _____.
 - John 6:11, John 11:41, Matthew 26:27
- Jesus prayed prayers of _____.
 - John 17, Luke 22:31, Luke 23:34

- **The HEART of Praying First**

- You aren't the _____; GOD is... (v5)
- Pray _____ to God the Father. (v6)
- Don't heap up _____ phrases. (v7)

- **The ART of Praying First**

Instructions: Draw a line from the element of the prayer to the Scripture!

Please provide for us

⁹ Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

His name

Please forgive us

¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Please protect us

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,

His will

¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Please provide for us

His Kingdom

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Truth into Action:

- Be Intentional
- Be Practical and Personal
- Be Grateful
- TRUST HIM WITH THE OUTCOME

Pray first



Please understand we want to help you know Jesus personally and journey with you in taking fresh steps of obedience daily. We would love to pray with you and for you. Join us at the end of the service for prayer or send us your request on the Connect Card and we will lift them up throughout the week.

Table Talk

The Heart and Art of Praying first:

Let's Start by Reading John 17 as a group! This is a beautiful example of how Jesus prayed to His Heavenly Father!

Part 1: John 17:1-5

What do you notice about His posture in this prayer?

Part 2: John 17:6-19

Who is Jesus praying for here?

What requests is He making on behalf of the disciples? (Hint: v11, v15, v17)

Part 3: John 17:20-26

Who is Jesus praying for here?

What is Jesus praying for them for? (Hint: v20 and 23)

What will that prepare them for in the future? (Hint: See Matthew 28:19)

How can Jesus's prayer in this example inspire and help our own prayer lives?

Prayer Time: To emphasize praying from the heart. In addition to the normal prayer and praise requests; please spend time in prayer focusing on each of the components of the ACTS Prayer Method.

PRA'YER, noun

In worship, a solemn address to the Supreme Being, consisting of adoration, or an expression of our sense of God's glorious perfections, confession of our sins, supplication for mercy and forgiveness, intercession for blessings on others, and thanksgiving, or an expression of gratitude to God for his mercies and benefits. A prayer however may consist of a single petition, and it may be extemporaneous, written or printed.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

The ACTS formula for prayer has been taught to children and new believers for many years. ACTS is an acronym that gives a basic model on how to pray: with Adoration, with Confession, with Thanksgiving, and with Supplication. While prayer formulas can help us learn to pray, they do not necessarily make our prayers more effective or ensure that our prayers will be answered. This model for prayer is loosely based on the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13), except for thanksgiving.

Adoration – The A in the ACTS model stands for adoration, which means worship—glorying and exalting God. Through adoration, we show our loyalty and admiration of our Father. As we pray, we are called to worship God in adoration. This could be a song of praise to Him, praying a psalm of worship, declaring His attributes, or a myriad of other forms of worship.

Confession – The C in the ACTS model stands for confession. The word confess means “to agree with.” When we confess our sins, we agree with God that we are wrong and that we have sinned against Him by what we have said, thought, or done. God forgives us and restores our fellowship with Him (1 John 1:9).

Thanksgiving – The T represents thanksgiving. Philippians 4:6 says, “With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (ESV). How is thanksgiving different from adoration? The difference is that worship focuses on who God is; thanksgiving focuses on what God has done. We can thank God for many things including His love, salvation, protection, and provision.

Supplication – The S stands for supplication, which refers to prayer for our and others' needs. A supplication is a request or petition. We may pray for mercy (Psalm 4:1), leading (Psalm 5:8), wisdom (James 1:5), and much more. Paul encouraged us to make “supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18, ESV), which means to pray diligently for our brothers and sisters in Christ.