

# GROWING — Prayer I

When we're in survival mode, as many of us have been in the last year through the pandemic, our prayer could start to exclusively sound like maintenance prayers.

- God please get me through today!
- God please help me keep it together!

These prayers are part of a healthy prayer life, but serve a slice of the total pie of what our prayer lives could look like. There are seasons of life where maintenance prayer is required, but not every season is an emergency.

So what does it look like for us to pray out of this pandemic? God wants us to move out of exclusive maintenance prayers and integrate our prayer into Kingdom Prayer.

He wants us to pray from a place of deep security and peace, moving beyond our immediate needs and look both upward to God's glory, and outward toward our neighbors, church, work, and community.

The lens of the Kingdom is always expanding outward, while maintenance prayer is solely inward. As we grow, we invite you not to stop maintenance prayers, but to integrate them into the bigger picture of Kingdom Prayer.

## **Luke 11:1-4**

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "*Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.*"

He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,  
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.  
And lead us not into temptation.' ”

The New International Version. (2011). (Lk 11:1–4). Grand Rapids, MI:  
Zondervan.

The Gospel of Matthew has a longer version of this prayer, but we will be focusing on this core part of the Lord's prayer here.

Throughout the Gospels, the disciples don't ask Jesus to teach them a lot, so this is quite interesting that this is one of the very few requests recorded down in them.



Lord, teach us, teach me, how to pray. Help me move from maintenance prayer to kingdom praying.

This prayer that Jesus teaches them is for all people, all ages, and all time. This prayer is for our private prayer lives and for our public prayer lives.

This prayer is meant to be prayed often, every day.

Jesus is assuming, "when you pray...," not "if you pray."

This prayer is to be prayed at set times, and conversationally, every day. It was a way of life throughout every day, infiltrating every minute of our life. This was the fuel for Jesus, and is meant to be the fuel for our lives.

# Kingdom Praying is Relational

When we pray, we begin with, "Father," or "our Father."

This implies closeness, and connection. Not, "Big man in the sky," or even "God," but "Father."

## Psalm 139:13 - 14

For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,

I know that full well.

The New International Version. (2011). (Ps 139:13–14). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

There is this intimate, close idea that God made us in our mother's womb. David acknowledged that and said, "I know Lord, that you made me."

But we don't believe that all the time, do we?

Our culture is steeped in tearing down the image of God in people. We are best at tearing down the image of God in ourselves and others.



This mindset does not foster a sense of deep security in how God made us; this requires a paradigm shift to change what we believe and believe instead that God took care in how we were created.

Because he created us, we are his children; we are loved by him. We wake up every morning children of God. You wake up every morning, child of God.

So when Jesus teaches us how to pray, we are invited to live in the truth that God is close, and intimate, "Father."

If we observed a formality between children addressing parents by "Mr. Lastname" or "Mrs. Lastname," we would find something very odd about that relationship. And while it's not discouraged to address God formally, we are also invited by Jesus to address God as "Dad."



We are all too keenly aware that earthly fathers are broken and do not image God correctly, and that is something that Jesus invites us to dispel by seeing God as the perfect father. We can relate to him out of a place of security, knowing that we are loved, forgiven, and created by him. No matter how broken our father was, Jesus invites us to see a perfect father in God.

## Kingdom Prayer is Worshipful

It begins with adoration and praise.

Jesus said, when you pray, say, "Father, hallowed/holy be your name." Or said in another way, "Father, let your name be honored."

Holiness simply means set apart, unique, and other. Yahweh God is completely other, and unlike anything or anyone else in this universe. His name is holy and honored. We are invited to honor his uniqueness and otherness.

### Psalm 27:4

One thing I ask from the Lord,  
this only do I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord  
and to seek him in his temple.

The New International Version. (2011). (Ps 27:4). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

David is praying to see how beautiful God really is and see his holiness, righteousness, and love. This is Kingdom Praying: We want to see God and apprehend his nature and holy character.

Kingdom praying is relational and worshipful; it delights in God first before dwelling on our personal needs and just getting through the moment. It's taking time to pause and proclaim who God is to ourself; that he is holy and beautiful.

The length of the prayer matters not. It's the paradigm shift off of ourselves and onto God that these prayers will initiate.

When we glimpse God's character, his otherness and uniqueness, we will see something that no one else sees, and it will help us thrive.

## Moving From Maintenance to Kingdom Praying

It might feel funny or bizarre to you to shift from maintenance praying to kingdom praying. Thankfully, we have a template that Jesus gave us that was short and sweet.

And as we pray these truths back to him, we will find that our heart and mind will catch up with our mouth.

Pastor Perry talks about how it was a slow transition from maintenance prayers to Kingdom Prayers for him, and the change wasn't magical and instant, but it grew like a seed that was planted, that took time, and after a while joy and rivers of living water flowed through his life.



Our concern is that for some of us, through this pandemic, our Kingdom Prayers have slowed. We encourage you to move back to praying his Kingdom down. Fill your mind with his thoughts. Start your prayers out this way; welcome his name in your heart and begin to pray from a place of safety and security.

You pray differently when you feel secure about where you stand between you and God.



As we explore and grow in prayer, we'll look at practical ways to pray by ourselves and more into community. But right now, it is as simple as praying, "Father God, let your name be honored."

Don't worry about when or how long you pray, just make it your goal to say, "Father, let your name be honored as beautiful and unique."

| *"You're a good Father, and we are loved by you."*