

## Spiritual Practice: Praying the Lord's Prayer

Prayer is a central component in the life as an apprentice of Jesus. After all, how can we learn from a Master if we don't talk together?! Dallas Willard has said that, "Prayer is talking with God about the things we are doing together."

Prayer was intended by God to be an amazing gift, and yet most Christians, at some point in their life, find prayer to be a struggle. Sometimes we get distracted or feel like we're making 'speeches' to God (often with words that don't sound like us – why do we do that?). Sometimes, the issue is that we don't know what or how to pray.

The disciples of Jesus understood how we feel! They too, wondered about the difference they saw in Jesus' prayer life and their own. One day they asked Jesus about this (cf. Luke 11), and we are grateful that the Gospel writers recorded Jesus' answer so we could all learn from him.

What we often call 'The LORD's Prayer' provides a wonderfully helpful framework in which to 'talk with God about the things we're doing together.'

**This week as a spiritual practice, take some time with the Lord's prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 and experiment with praying the ideas expressed in your own words.** Remember, Jesus was not giving a 'formula' but rather a 'framework' within which to grow deeper with God.

To get you thinking, consider this example:

*Our Father, who is good and faithful and just, your love for me amazes me and I am in awe of you. You are from the beginning and you have no end. May your name be lifted up above all other names, because there are no others who can compare to your greatness. Would you bring your kingdom to bear in our world? God, would you bring justice, would you bring peace, would you bring love, not just for those we like but also for our enemies, that we would see our world transformed? You are the one who provides for my needs and I give you thanks for all that I have. Continue to teach me what it means to rely on you instead of my own strength and ability for my daily needs. Forgive me for the ways I have been short with those closest to me. Recognizing that I have been forgiven much, may I extend the same grace to those who have wronged me.*