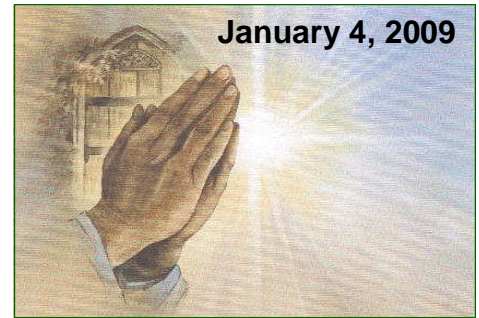


Praying as a Way of Life: How Best to Begin a New Year

There are only six petitions modeled by Jesus in Matthew 6:9-13. Learning to apply them daily will strengthen and renew your prayer life.



January 4, 2009

Matthew 6:9-13

This, then, is how you should pray:

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

Reflections

Jesus, the King of Kings, prayed to the Father regularly. This prayer, taught to his disciples, encompasses six essential reasons we seek God.

It is not a prayer about our needs — it is about our Father, the One who meets all of our needs. The petitions of the prayer reflect His character, kingdom, provision, forgiveness, guidance, and protection. Mike Breen writes that through it “we learn to align our lives with God’s will for us.”

The Lord’s Prayer can become rote and stale if we fail to contemplate its rich meaning as we pray. This week, try one of these ideas to experience prayer as a way of life:

1. **Pray one petition each day.** Select a petition or phrase from the Lord’s Prayer each day and meditate on what the words mean for you at this time. You may find that certain petitions are par-

ticularly meaningful for a season.

2. **Pray and pause.** Begin the Lord’s Prayer and stop on any word or phrase that catches your mind. Take a time of quiet to reflect on it. Explore why it is important to you this day. Pray it using your own words.
3. **Pray the hours.** Fixed-hour prayer is an ancient practice still used by many to build a regular and continuous prayer conversation with God. Divide the petitions over your waking hours to weave the Lord’s Prayer into the practical rhythm of your day. (See box at right for an example.)

What reminders or triggers would help you establish one of these prayer habits as you begin 2009?

Praying the hours with the Lord’s Prayer

When you wake up (*Lauds*)

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

As your day gets going (*Prime*)

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

Mid-morning (*Terce*)

Give us today our daily bread.

Noon meal (*Sext*)

Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven
our debtors.

Mid-afternoon (*Nones*)

And lead us not into
temptation.

Early evening (*Vespers*)

But deliver us from the
evil one.

Reference:

[A Passionate Life.](#) (Small group series.) Mike Breen & Walt Kallestad. Cook Communications, 2005.

Readings

Sunday, January 4 — The Son's prayer

Psalm 1:1-2; Mathew 6:9-13

What makes prayer authentic? What are the challenges you face when praying? How could the prayer of Jesus speak personally to you throughout your day?

Monday, January 5 — The Father's Character

Matthew 6:9; 1 John 4:7

"Our Father" translates as "our Daddy." Is it hard for you to call God "Daddy?" Why or why not? Try praying your own translation of this phrase. How does it open your eyes to who God is?

Tuesday, January 6 — The Father's Kingdom

Matthew 6:10; Luke 4:43

In what ways do you see the future kingdom of God breaking into the here and now? What specific area of darkness in your life do you want God's kingdom to overtake?

Wednesday, January 7 — The Father's Provision

Matthew 6:11; Exodus 16

What can we learn from God's provision to the Israelites? Beyond the practical needs like food, shelter, and money, what other needs do you have each day? What will you bring before God in prayer?

Thursday, January 8 — The Father's Forgiveness

Matthew 6:12; Luke 23:34

Receiving God's forgiveness is conditional on our willingness to forgive others. What do you find difficult about forgiving another person? What do you find difficult about asking for forgiveness?

Friday, January 9 — The Father's Guidance

Matthew 6:13a; Ephesians 6:10-18

What battle strategy do you think God wants us to have for fighting the enemy? What areas of your life required further preparation against temptation?

Saturday, January 10 — The Father's Protection

Matthew 6:13b; John 10:10

Jesus teaches us to call on our loving Father each day for protection. Consider an experience you've had that revealed how real Satan is and how he desires to disrupt your life. How has this helped you understand the magnitude of the protection you need from the Father?

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.