



Week 3 | Prayer: Our Father

Exercises

Exercise 1 - Enjoying God's Love

Find a quiet place and sit comfortably. Spend a minute in silence, quieting your mind and heart.

Read Psalm 139 slowly.

Consider in silence for a few minutes: **How does God gaze upon me? Am I able to receive and feel his love for me in this moment?**

Read Psalm 139 slowly again, aloud if you can, pausing after each verse. Substitute your own name for pronouns "me" and "I".

After reading, sit in silence for a minute or two and enjoy God's presence and rest in His love for you.

Respond in prayer to God's love for you, His knowing of you, His pursuit of you.

Journal:

Where or how have you felt God's love for you recently in this season of your life?

How does knowing or feeling God's love for you affect your prayers to him?

Exercise 2 - The Lord's Prayer

Get in a place free of distractions and noise. Take a few moments to get comfortable in God's presence, and then pray through the Lord's Prayer.

"Our Father..."

- Take a moment and think about the idea of God as your Father, with good intentions toward you. If you want, imagine God in your mind's eye. Picture his face. Make eye contact with him.

"In heaven..."

- Take a moment to think about the idea that God is all around you. As you breathe in and out, remind yourself that you are in the presence of God.

"Hallowed by your name..."

- Spend a few minutes just sitting with the Father in joyful, grateful, worship. You might want to sit in silence for a few moments. Or sing a song. Or rattle off a list of things you're grateful for. Or praise God with specific things you love about him.

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

- Spend a few minutes asking for God's will to be done in specific ways in your city/church/community/life.
- Verbally give God a few things in your life you're wrestling with control over. A simple prayer of, "Your will be done in _____," is a great place to start.

"Give us each day our daily bread..."

- Spend a few minutes praying for specific needs and wants in your life or that of your community.

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

- Spend a few minutes asking God for forgiveness for specific areas in your life, and releasing others to forgiveness.

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

- Spend a few minutes praying against temptation (the word can also be translated trouble) in your life.
 - Pray against specific sins.
 - Pray against any kind of evil - spiritual evil (demonic), human evil, natural evil, etc.
 - Pray against bad things in your life or community, and *for* God’s blessing - the divine flow of good things into your your life and community.

Adapted from practicingtheway.org

Exercise 3 - Simple Prayer

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” -Matthew 6:7-8

Often in prayer, when we are trying to pray about what we think we are “supposed to pray” about, we find ourselves distracted by the everyday details of our lives--our jobs, our families, plans for the week, emotions from the day. We often try to push these things out our minds and focus on the more “important” things.

Today, pray for those things that come to your mind, whether they seem “spiritual” or not; just tell God exactly what you are thinking about and feeling. Think of how God is described in Scripture--a father, a husband, a friend, a shepherd--in all of these relationships, God is pictured as caring about even our simplest needs.

Take a few moments and just sit and rest. As you do, notice what thoughts and worries keep coming to your mind. Bring those thoughts before God and ask how He wants to meet you in those details. Don’t feel the need to over-spiritualize this prayer. Bring your thoughts to God as they come.

“Prayer simply dies from efforts to pray about ‘good things’ that honestly do not matter to us. The way to get to meaningful prayer for those good things is to start by praying for what we are truly interested in. The circles of our interests will inevitably grow in the largeness of God’s love...Many people have found prayer impossible because they thought they should only pray for wonderful but remote needs they actually had little or no interest in or even knowledge of.” - Dallas Willard