

# The Lord's Prayer

## Fresh Ways to Embrace Jesus' Teaching

My childhood church was not liturgical in its practices. We memorized lots of Scripture in Sunday school and were always challenged to recite passages to earn a Bible camp scholarship. So, I know at one time I memorized The Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6.

But we did not regularly recite it. It wasn't until I started attending another church during college that I heard The Lord's Prayer spoken in unison as a congregation. I suddenly realized I might need to brush up on it if I didn't want to stumble during that portion of the service!

## Prayer of Agreement

Even though it was not my experience as a child, The Lord's Prayer is almost universally recited among people of various Christian perspectives. It's a prayer we can agree on—except for that awkward moment when we pause ever so slightly at the “forgive us our trespasses, debts, or sins” options.

You can be in almost any group of unrelated people, and at least a few will know and can recite The Lord's Prayer with you. Many of the truckers in Canada during their recent protests took time to start their day by reciting it together. You hear it at funeral services or as a common prayer before the start of a meal. It's a go-to prayer that can quickly unify a diverse group.

But often the prayer is simply recited—and not actually prayed. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He first warned them about babbling on in their prayers or reciting the same words over and over again, thinking that might be the key to having their prayers answered.

I don't think He meant for the disciples to be armed with a quick prayer they could invoke in any situation. I believe His intention was to pack a lot of theology into memorable phrases to help guide the disciples to pray from hearts tuned to His Spirit and in alignment with His Father. His desire was for them—and for us—to dig deeper into the ways of the Kingdom through prayer.

## **In This Issue**

And that's the point of this issue. The theme articles are designed to take you on an exploratory journey. They will encourage you to dig deeper, look further, and incorporate even more understanding into your prayers.

David Chotka starts this exploration by demonstrating how revolutionary this prayer would have been to the disciples. There was a familiarity or personal tone to His prayer that would have shocked His listeners. Chotka focuses on the profound statement of the seemingly simple words: "Our Father."

Dennis Fuqua writes from his own experience as one who prays The Lord's Prayer faithfully. He breaks the prayer into smaller segments and offers more depth, meaning, and relationship between the parts. And he points out that when we really understand this prayer, we will live it out as an example to others.

Our theme section is closed out by Jody Mayhew, who highlights the often-overlooked part of the prayer: *forgiveness*. Jesus included forgiveness because of the tremendous power in living without offense.

I still momentarily hesitate on the trespasses, debts, or sins part of The Lord's Prayer. But I know Jesus wants us to learn fresh ways to incorporate His teaching into our prayer lives. He invites us to explore the riches of a Kingdom prayer!

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