

Praying the Lord's Prayer, daily (Week 1)

An estimated 2 billion people pray or sing the Lord's Prayer on Easter Sunday every year. That's almost a third of the world's population! When Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray, this simple yet profound prayer was His response...

"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 sins

As we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever". Amen.

Try memorising these words and praying them each day emphasising a different line. When you know it well, try personalising each line so that it relates to your own life.

The Lord's Prayer is also a powerful way to structure daily prayer. Why not use its themes to worship the Lord; pray for the world; bring your own needs to him; ask for forgiveness and forgive others; and to pray for self-control and protection.

PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER AT MIDDAY EACH DAY.

People across the world set their alarms for midday. Wherever they are, whatever they're doing, they commit to pause and pray this prayer. As part of Jewish tradition Jesus would have paused at least three times a day to pray to his Father in Heaven. A rhythm like this can put you in some interesting situations. When that alarm goes off in a work meeting or in the middle of class lesson, saying the prayer becomes a challenge. Try praying the Lord's Prayer every day for a month and see how the themes and words grow in depth and meaning.

Petition (Week 2)

Jesus told a story of a woman so passionate about wanting justice she succeeded in getting her way simply by being persistent with the Judge who could solve her problem until He finally relented ([Luke 18](#)). Our Father is a lot more willing to act than a reluctant Judge, but Jesus used this story to illustrate the importance of not giving up when prayers aren't answered immediately.

It's OK to ask and ask again and keep asking God until we see a change, either in the circumstances, or in ourselves!

Are there specific things you want to persist in asking for? Try these three simple ideas to help you remember to pray and not give up:

- Use your hands – choose five people or situations you want to persistently pray about. Assign a finger or thumb to each, and spend five minutes a day holding each in turn and praying for the person or situation by name.
- Use your mirror – is there something you look at several times a day like a mirror, window, computer screen or phone? Write a note and stick it where you'll see it most as a reminder to pray.
- Use your clothes – do you have a favourite accessory or piece of clothing you wear often? Why not assign a prayer request to a specific item and every time you wear it make that request your prayer project for the day?

Intercession (Week 3)

'Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'.

Buy a newspaper. Take a moment to pray for a particular place, person or situation using the phrase above.

Take a prayer walk around your neighbourhood or workplace. Ask God to reveal what is on his heart and then pray for what (or who) you see around you.

Look at a map of the world or a globe. Choose a country to pray for. You may find it helpful to look at the BBC news website for information about what is happening in that country. If you are short of ideas of what to pray, simply use the phrase at the top of this page.

Look at our church website under 'Church Life', then 'Mission: Far and Near'. Pray for our links both at abroad and at home. Our church notice sheet has more details of individual projects we support. Again, you could simply use the phrase at the top of this page.

Perseverance (Week 4)

Sometimes it's difficult to focus during times of prayer. You could try the following:

Light a candle to remind you of God's constant presence.

Try using a dice and assign each number to someone or something you want to pray for, or as a way of connecting with Jesus, for example:

- thanking him
- a prayer for blessing – 1 Chronicles 4:10
- a prayer of worship – Psalm 8
- a prayer of repentance – Psalm 139:23-34
- use the words of a Christian song or a hymn
- look out of your window and notice something from nature that reminds you of one of God's promises, then thank him for keeping his promises. Some ideas are given below.

Birds – 'Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? (Matthew 6:26)

Flowers – 'If God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you'. (Matthew 30)

Trees – 'I am the vine and you are the branches. Remain in me and I will remain in you'. (John 4, 5, paraphrased).

Roll the dice and spend a few minutes on the prayer assignment it gives you.

Learning to Listen (Week 5)

It's easy to spend the whole of our prayer time talking at God. Try giving God more room to respond and to speak as you pray, and learn to discern whether you're hearing His voice or your own thoughts.

FOUR TIPS FOR LISTENING TO GOD:

1. Choose a peaceful place and set aside some time to help you focus on God.
2. Thank God that he is a God who speaks as well as listens and ask him to speak to you during your prayer time.
3. Clear your head. Many people find it difficult to still their minds when they sit in silence. If you find you're thinking of things you need to do, make a list for later, then put it to one side. It might help to think about a verse like, "*Be still and know that I am God*" (Psalm 46:10), to focus your mind.
3. Don't worry. If the thoughts filling your mind are about situations or worries you want to pray about, don't try to push them down. Give them to God one at a time and then let go of them. Don't let anxiety absorb your energy.
4. Learn to recognise His voice. God can speak in many ways. He can use our thoughts, feelings, the bible, our experiences or our surroundings to capture our attention. If you find your mind filling with pictures or thoughts that seem a bit strange or random, pay attention to them and test whether you think they're God's voice.

FOUR WAYS TO CHECK WHETHER IT'S GOD SPEAKING:

1. He will not contradict what He's said in the Bible
2. Ask for the Holy Spirit to give you the gift of discernment.
3. Ask the advice of a friend or leader who loves Jesus and makes wise choices.
4. Observe your own conscience – do you have a sense of peace or disquiet?
5. Ask the Lord for confirmation – to say the same thing in another way.

As you finish, write down what has come into your mind, even the things that seem strange or unrelated. If God is speaking He will continue the conversation. If they are just random thoughts, that's okay; it's all part of the process of learning.

(PTO)

Spiritual Warfare (Week 6)

As Christians we are in an unseen battle. We have an enemy who wants to discourage us, trip us up, make us fearful and who tells us lies about God and our relationship with him. That's why Jesus tells us to pray "Deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:13). The enemy was defeated through Jesus' death on the cross, but he still rattles his cage!

How do we handle temptation and counter the enemy's lies?

Resist. James writes: 'So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come close to God and he will come close to you' (James 4:7). Praying God's word back to God is a powerful weapon against the enemy. Here are some passages to help you.

Psalms 23, 121.

'But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one' (2 Thess. 3:3)

'I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one will snatch them from my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No-one can snatch them out of my Father's hand'. (John 10: 28,29).

Reflect on these words from St Patrick's breastplate.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Remember that Jesus is praying for you.

'I am not asking you to take them out of the world but to keep them safe from the evil one. (John 17:15).