



MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church
Dr. Rob White – Senior Minister
<https://aulc.us>

Welcome. Today's sermon is titled "A Lesson on Prayer".
Today's Scripture lesson comes from the Gospel of Luke chapter 11 verses 2 to 4.
Starting at verse 2.

He said to them, "Whenever you pray, say:

Father,
Your name be honored as holy.
Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves also forgive everyone
in debt to us.
And do not bring us into temptation."

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His Word.

Beloved, I want to invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of Luke, chapter eleven, verses two through four. As you're turning, let me set the scene for you.
The disciples had been watching Jesus. They had seen Him slip away in the early morning hours before the sun rose, finding a quiet place to commune with His Father.
They had witnessed Him spend entire nights in prayer before making critical decisions. They had observed the peace that flowed from His life, a peace that no storm could shake, no trial could diminish.
And somewhere along the way, one of them must have thought, "There is something about this Man's prayer life that I don't have. I want what He has."
So they came to Him with what may be the most honest request in all the Gospels: "Lord, teach us to pray."

Notice what they didn't ask. They didn't say, "Teach us to preach." They didn't say, "Teach us to perform miracles." They didn't say, "Teach us to heal the sick." They said, "Teach us to pray." They understood something we often forget...that prayer is the foundation of everything else. Prayer is the wellspring from which all spiritual power flows.

And Jesus, in His gracious response, gave them what we now call "The Lord's Prayer." But I want you to understand something from the outset: this was not given as a script to be memorized and repeated mindlessly.

This was given as a model, a pattern, a framework, an example of how God's children are to approach their Heavenly Father.

This morning, I want to share with you A Lesson on Prayer...lessons drawn directly from the words of our Savior when He taught His disciples how to approach the throne of grace.

Understanding What the Lord's Prayer Is Not.

Before we can fully appreciate what prayer is, we must first understand what it is not.

First, Jesus never intended for this prayer to become a ritual prayer or to be recited in a formal manner. When Jesus gave these words, He was not establishing a liturgical formula to be repeated in unison Sunday after Sunday. He was not creating a religious incantation. He was providing a template, a pattern,

showing us the priorities and attitudes that should characterize our communication with God.

Think about it this way. If I were to teach my son how to write a letter to his grandmother, I might say, "Start with a greeting, then share what's happening in your life, then ask how she's doing, then close with love."

Now, if my son simply copied my example letter word for word every single time he wrote to his grandmother, would that be genuine communication? Of course not! The heart of the matter would be lost in the mechanics.

Second, it was never intended by Jesus to be used as an amulet or special words to be repeated when one was in danger.

There are many today who treat prayer as a kind of spiritual lucky charm. They believe if they just repeat certain words...if they say the right phrases, in the right order, at the right time...

they will somehow manipulate God into doing their bidding. This is nothing more than superstition dressed up in religious clothing.

God is not a genie in a bottle who must grant our wishes if we say the magic words. He is the Sovereign Lord of the universe, and prayer is not about controlling Him...it is about communing with Him.

We must understand, beloved, that prayer is not a matter of ritual or formula. It is a matter of relationship.

The Two Sections of the Lord's Prayer...YOUR and US.

Now, as we examine this model prayer, we notice that Jesus divides it into two distinct sections. There is the first section dealing with God..."Your" kingdom, "Your" will, "Your" name.

Then there is the second section dealing with us...our daily bread, our debts, our forgiveness, our temptations.

And notice the order. The prayer starts first with God. This is not accidental...it puts prayer into the right perspective, the right viewpoint about life itself.

Think about how we typically pray. We rush into God's presence with our list of needs and wants.

"Lord, I need this. Lord, fix this. Lord, give me that. Lord, help me here. Lord, change this situation."

We begin with US rather than with God. We seem to be problem oriented and frantic about our needs rather than God oriented and relaxed in His presence.

But Jesus teaches us that prayer must first magnify the Lord. Just as tears magnify sorrow and laughter magnifies joy, so prayer must first magnify the Lord.

This teaches us that prayer is a means of entering into the joy and confidence of all that God is and all that He can do. It shows us that putting God first glorifies Him and demonstrates obedience on our part. You see, when we begin with God, everything else falls into proper perspective. When we remember who God is...His power, His wisdom, His love, His faithfulness...suddenly our problems seem smaller. Our anxieties are calmed.

Our fears are diminished.

The priority of prayer is the worship of God. Before we ask for anything, we acknowledge who He is. Before we bring our requests, we surrender to His authority. Before we seek His hand, we seek His face.

This is the wisdom of the model Jesus gave. Start with God. Always start with God.

The Nature of Prayer and the Privilege of Praying as a Child.

Now, let's consider together the nature of the prayer that Jesus models for us.

Prayer is an avenue of drawing near to God in worship and dependence because we see God as the all-sufficient One and ourselves as totally insufficient.

Prayer is not about picking and choosing specific words like a magic formula. It is not about repeating religious words without any careful thought. This prayer that Jesus gave the disciples is an example...not something

to be repeated over and over again in some ritualistic way. Prayer is the thoughtful exercise of the heart and the mind through which we seek to draw near to God in worship and dependence upon Him.

But here is something precious, something that should cause our hearts to rejoice: We are to pray as a child.

Notice how Jesus begins the prayer: "Father." This single word carries tremendous significance.

First, only the children of God can call God "Father." Therefore, prayer...other than the prayer for salvation...is really only for believers in Jesus Christ, who are the legitimate children of God.

The person who has not trusted in Christ has no access to the Father. But those who have received Jesus Christ, to them God gives the right to become children of God.

Second, prayer is to be addressed to God, using the term "Father"...not only to Jesus, God's Son. Jesus is the One through whom we receive things from the Father. Jesus is the One through whom we go in order to have

access to the Father. The Holy Spirit is the One through whom we have the power to communicate with the Father. But our prayers are addressed to the Father.

Third, "Father" is a term of honor, reverence, and relationship. Addressing God as "Father" demonstrates our attitude toward God as one of honor, respect, and trust, and our understanding of the relationship we have with God as one of His children.

When we talk with God as our Father, we come to God as His child and talk with Him as such. To pray to God as our Father is recognizing that He is intimately concerned about us. We can be frank as a child, resting in God as a

Father who has the heart of a father.

Calling God our Father means that we believe Him to be just that. We never consider calling Him something else. The word "Father" draws our attention to the nature of our relationship with God as a result of what Jesus did

for us.

Now, let's also consider the time that one prays. There is no commandment given to us as to when or how often to pray. Why? Because prayer should always be the response of the heart which in turn desires communication with God.

As the psalmist declared in Psalm chapter 42 verse 1, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God."

And finally, we are to pray to honor God's name. Names represent who people are and what they represent...their reputation. The word "hallowed" means to set apart, make holy, venerate, or treat as holy.

As God's children, we bear His name and represent Him before the world. How we act affects His name and reputation before others. When we pray "hallowed be Your name," we are saying, "Let the whole of my life honor,

venerate, and be a source of delight to You and all that You are."

To "hallow" God's name or sanctify it means to turn our lives over to Him for sanctification, opening up our lives for Him to make us like Jesus, His Son.

This is why we cannot hallow God's name while we walk in rebellion, disobedience, and self-dependence. To pray as Jesus taught is to pray in surrender and commitment—for God's name to be honored in our lives.

So what does this mean for us this morning? Let me bring it home to our daily lives.

First, examine your prayer life. Is it a relationship or a ritual? Are you genuinely communing with your Heavenly Father, or are you simply going through the motions? Do you rush through your prayers as if checking off a task

on a list, or do you linger in His presence?

Second, check your priorities in prayer. When you bow your head, where do you begin? Do you start with your needs, your problems, your requests? Or do you start with God...His glory, His kingdom, His will?

Let me encourage you to practice beginning your prayers with worship. Before you ask for anything, spend time praising God for who He is. This will transform your prayer life.

Third, remember your relationship. If you are in Christ, God is your Father. Not a distant deity. Not a harsh judge. Not an indifferent ruler. But a Father who loves you, who cares about you, who wants to hear from you.

Come to Him with the confidence of a child coming to a loving earthly father...with the same understanding that a child has of his or her father.

Fourth, consider how your life affects God's name. When you pray "hallowed be Your name," you are asking God to be honored in your life. You cannot pray that prayer with integrity while living in rebellion against Him.

Your words and your walk must match. You bear His name in this world—let your life bring Him honor.

Fifth, pray thoughtfully. Don't just repeat words without meaning. Engage your heart and mind. Choose your words carefully. Prayer is the thoughtful exercise of the heart and mind through which we seek to draw near to God.

Sixth, cultivate a desire for prayer. Don't let prayer become a duty. Let it become a delight. Long for it as the deer pants for the water brooks. Let it be the natural response of your heart...an outflow of your relationship with your Father.

As we come to this time of decision, I want to ask you some important questions.

Do you know God as your Father this morning? Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ, who alone provides access to the Father? If not, I want to invite you to come. The Bible says that Jesus is the Way, the Truth,

and the Life...no one comes to the Father except through Him. Today can be the day when you become a child of God, when you are adopted into His family and can call Him Father.

For those who are already children of God, I want to invite you to examine your prayer life. Perhaps it has grown dry, routine, ritualistic. Maybe you have allowed prayer to become a formal exercise rather than a vibrant relationship. Perhaps you start your prayers with your needs rather than with worship. Perhaps you have forgotten the privilege of calling God your Father. Or perhaps you need to come and surrender fully to God...to truly pray "hallowed be Your name" with a heart that is ready to let Him make you like Jesus. Whatever the need, the altar is open. This is a place where you can come and talk with your Father. This is a place where you can be honest, where you can bring your burdens, where you can lay your heart bare before the One who loves you. Come now, as the worship team plays, and let us do business with God. Don't leave this place without addressing the condition of your prayer life. Don't miss this opportunity to draw near to your Father.

Please bow your heads with me as we pray...

Heavenly Father, we come before You this morning with grateful hearts. Thank You for the privilege of prayer...the incredible truth that we can come into Your presence and commune with You. Thank You for sending Jesus, through whom we have access to You, and for making us Your children through faith in Him. Father, forgive us for the times we have rushed into Your presence with our list of demands, forgetting that You are the Holy God. Forgive us for treating prayer as a ritual rather than a relationship. Forgive us for failing to honor Your name through our lives. Teach us to pray, Lord. Teach us to begin with worship. Teach us to prioritize Your kingdom and Your will above our own. Teach us to come to You with the trust and simplicity of a child who knows their father loves them. We pray that Your name would be hallowed in our lives. Let every moment of our lives bring honor and glory to You. Make us like Jesus. For those who came forward today, we ask that You would meet them right where they are. Whatever burden they carry, whatever need they have, whatever surrender needs to be made—reveal Your faithfulness to them even now. And for those who have never known You as Father, we ask that today would be the day of salvation. Draw them to Yourself, Lord. Open their eyes to see Jesus as their Savior and their access to You. We thank You that the door of prayer is always open to us. We thank You that we never have to earn the right to come before You—it has been purchased for us by the blood of Jesus Christ. In His precious name we pray. Amen.

As we close this service, let me leave you with five truths to carry with you.

One. What Jesus taught the disciples was a model, an example...not some magical formula which forces God to do our bidding.

Two. Prayer, other than for salvation, is heard and answered by God only of His own family...His children.

Three. Prayer is to be made thoughtfully with carefully chosen words coming from the heart.

Four. Prayer is to address God as a child would his or her own earthly father, with the same understanding that a child has of his or her father.

Five. Prayer is to be made in such a way that God is honored...not only by the words spoken, but by the life that has been lived by the one praying.

May God bless you as you learn to pray as His child. Go in peace, and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Remember, Be a blessing and be blessed. For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed.

Thank you for watching and listening and we will see you next week.

This has been an AULC Studios Video Production.

Copyright 2012 to 2026, All Rights Reserved.

Copyright © 2026 – Athens Universal Life Church – All Rights Reserved!