

## MATTHEW 6:6-13

6But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9“*This, then, is how you should pray:*

“*‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

11*Give us today our daily bread.*

12*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

13*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*”

### NOTE TO LEADERS

There will be no 7:30am service next Sunday due to Comrades Marathon, but we invite everyone to join us for our 9am service or at 6pm for our worship night. Food will be on sale from 5pm, so bring the whole family and join us for an evening of worshipping the King.

### START TALKING

1. What new revelation did you take away from Sunday’s message?
2. How many of you grew up in a church/school where the Lord’s Prayer was recited each week/day? What are the potential pros and cons of reciting that prayer each week/day?

### START THINKING

1. Read Matthew 6:6-8. How many times does Jesus refer to “your Father”? What is the significance of Jesus teaching us to pray to God as our Father?
2. What is your perception of prayer in general? What do you remember from your childhood about prayer? Who taught you about prayer? What bad habits have you acquired in prayer? What good prayer practices do you have?
3. What do you think about the idea of using the Lord’s Prayer as a guide for our prayer? Have you ever tried it before, and why is it so helpful?

### START SHARING

1. Read Matthew 6:11. Why do you think Jesus teaches us to ask for “our daily bread” rather than simply “our bread”?
2. Read Matthew 6:12.
  - a). Is confession a regular part of your prayers? How do you feel about God forgiving our sins?
  - b). And what about when it comes to you forgiving others? What things do you find hard to forgive?
3. On Sunday, Steve said there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ method for talking to God and gave some examples of different ways (see notes below). How do you find it easiest to talk to God? Many of us go through seasons where talking to God doesn’t come easy. How have you persevered through those seasons? What has helped you to get through them? (Share personal stories and experiences).

### START PRAYING

Pray the Lord’s prayer together as a group with meaning in light of your discussion today.

### START DOING

1. This week, read the Lord’s prayer in a couple of different Bible translations, e.g. NIV, The Message, NKJV, ESV, and NLT. (You can read the scriptures in these various translations on [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) or the Bible app.)
2. Then, write your own prayer to God using the Lord’s prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) as a model.



This Sunday, Steve shared a message on prayer in the first of a two-part series, Talking to God.

Jesus spoke on the subject of prayer in Matthew, chapter 6:

*6But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Matthew 6:6-8*

Prayer can sometimes feel intimidating, but what if we replaced the word "pray" with "talking to God":

*6But when you **talk to God**, go into your room, close the door and **talk to your Father**, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7And when you **talk to God**, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Matthew 6:6-8*

Three things stand out from these verses:

**1. But WHEN you pray (v6)**

- a). Not IF but WHEN you talk to God.
- b). There is PRESUMPTION but not a PRESSURE that we would talk to God.

Jesus presumes that if we have a relationship with God, we will want to talk to Him!

**2. God is unseen, but He is not 'unpresent'**

*"pray to your Father, who is unseen."* (v6)

- a). This makes prayer unique, beautiful, and mysterious - we are talking to an invisible but all-present God. He knows what we need before we ask Him!
- b). Often we can be seen but not present (our mind drifts)! But, it's never like this with God - His attention never drifts from us.

**3. your Father, ... will reward you. (v6)**

The phrase "Father is used three times in Matthew 6:6-8. It implies a deep connection (relationship between a Father and children). The main reward that comes from prayer is a deeper relationship with God.

Sometimes we get over-busy and have less interaction with our spouse/family/children/colleagues. We talk about functional things more than thoughts and feelings etc. This usually leaves us feeling more disconnected, and it's far easier for misunderstandings to creep in. When we find a good rhythm in our communication, our reward is feeling connected, supported and more loved. The same goes for our relationship with God. When we speak to Him regularly, we experience His closeness and guidance.

The basis for a healthy prayer life can never be guilt or a poor view of God, e.g. if I am a good 'prayer', I can get God to do what I want Him to. It is rather an understanding that there is great reward in talking to God and that it is more for my benefit than for His. A poor view says: "the more I pray,

the more He will do **FOR** me". A healthy view says: "the more I pray, the more He will do **IN** me."

For many Christ-followers, prayer is a challenge, and we do not always find it easy to pray. We are often unsure what to say or how to go about it. Thankfully for us, Jesus talked about prayer (verse 6-8 above, and verse 9 below).

9"*This, then, is how you should pray [talk to God]:*

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

*11Give us today our daily bread.*

*12And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*13And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'*

This is God teaching us how to talk to Him and grow our relationship with Him. We can take this scripture as an outline for guiding our prayers. These are the subject lines to hang our prayers onto:

- *Our Father in heaven* - He is in heaven, and we're on earth (a positional statement)
- *hallowed be your name* - we celebrate who God is
- *your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven* - Pray in concentric circles: change me and help me to grow, pray for family, pray for the church, pray for our city, country and nations of the world
- *Give us today our daily bread* - provision, as well as grace, wisdom, peace, guidance
- *And forgive us our debts*, - confessing our sins in light of God's Holiness
- *as we also have forgiven our debtors* - unforgiveness holds us in bondage
- *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one* - God help us to keep following you rather than falling into temptation.

Finally, there is no 'right' or 'wrong' method about how to talk to God. There are many different ways that we can use to talk to God:

- in a room at home
- walking and talking
- journaling
- includes longer periods of time with Him, as well as passing conversation
- both speaking and listening

Over a lifetime, a relationship with Christ outworked in regular prayer and reading the Bible as a consistent habit will be completely transformative.