



To know  
Christ and to  
make Him  
known

# Praying Through the Lord's Prayer



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## Praying Through the Lord's Prayer

Jesus taught his disciples how to pray by giving them what we now call The Lord's Prayer. In the following pages, you will find various prayer activities to use when praying with the Lord's Prayer over the six week period of Lent. Some of these prayer exercises are ancient, some are more recent innovations. Some are contemplative, some are kinaesthetic, some appeal to the intellect, and some encourage more creative expression. Maybe some of the prayer suggestions included here might be a bit out of your comfort zone – we would encourage you to try something new. And in all things, invite the Holy Spirit to be present in your prayer experiences and be open to hearing from God in new and fresh ways through this most significant of Christian prayers.

Here are some versions of the Lord's Prayer that you might want to use:

### **Matthew 6:9-13 (Today's New International Version)**

"This, then, is how you should pray:

" 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.

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

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

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### Matthew 6:9-13 (The Message)

"The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

Our Father in heaven,  
Reveal who you are.  
Set the world right;  
Do what's best— as above, so below.  
Keep us alive with three square meals.  
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.  
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.  
You're in charge!  
You can do anything you want!  
You're ablaze in beauty!  
Yes. Yes. Yes.

### Luke 11:2-4 (English Standard Version)

And he said to them, "When you pray, say:  
"Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.  
And lead us not into temptation."



### Luke 11:2-4 (New Living Translation)

Jesus said, “This is how you should pray:

“Father, may your name be kept holy.  
May your Kingdom come soon.  
Give us each day the food we need,  
and forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
And don’t let us yield to temptation.”

### The Lord’s Prayer (BCP 1928)

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.



### Other Ideas for Creative Prayer

#### Drawing or Painting Your Prayers

For those of you who are more comfortable using images rather than words, you should feel free to draw, paint, or sculpt your prayers. You could take a more literal approach and recreate the Lord’s Prayer in a piece of art work, or you could depict some of the emotions or feeling that praying the Lord’s Prayer produced in you. Try meditating on various translations and interpretations of the Lord’s Prayer and use the variety and creativity in your artwork.

#### Writing Your Own Version of the Lord’s Prayer

You might want to take the structure or the various phrases of the Lord’s prayer and write your own prayer or intercession based on the Lord’s Prayer. This isn’t a translation of the prayer, it is an interpretation based on your own relationship with God and understanding of the Scripture. You might want to write it in the form of an intercession, or a poem, or a letter. Be creative and work out on paper some of your prayers to God.

#### Songs Based on the Lord’s Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer has been a source of inspiration for many songs over the years – you might want to gather a number of sung versions of the Lord’s Prayer and meditate on them. Or, you may want to write a song based on this text for yourself. Perhaps you could take various translations of the text and chant them, or create simple melodies to sing the Lord’s Prayer.



## Fixed Hour Prayer

Tony Jones, author of *The Sacred Way*, states that “along with the Lord’s Supper, fixed hour prayer is considered the oldest form of Christian Spirituality.” Fixed Hour Prayer, sometimes called the Daily Office, is a way that Christians order their daily routines around prayer, stopping to pray at various times during the day. This practice finds its roots in Jewish spirituality. *The Didache*, an ancient document from about 100 A.D., instructs the early Christians to pray the Lord’s Prayer three times daily. Various monastic traditions operate on a cycle of prayer at seven periods during the day, having taken to heart Psalm 119:164 “seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws”. Other Christian traditions established a routine of praying in the morning (*matins*) and evening (*vespers* or *evensong*).

Choose a routine and commit to praying the Lord’s Prayer at fixed hours during your day. This might be a little inconvenient. You might have to interrupt your work, or even your sleep, but the purpose of this prayer exercise is to orient your whole day around the practice of prayer, so challenge yourself. Below is a translation of the Lord’s Prayer from *The Didache*:

Our Father in heaven,  
 Sacred is Your Name.  
 Your kingdom comes.  
 Your will is accomplished,  
 on earth as it is in heaven.  
 Give us each day our daily bread,  
 and forgive us our debt  
 in the manner that we forgive our debtors.  
 And do not allow us to fall to temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil,  
 for Yours is the power and the glory forever.  
 Amen



## The Lord’s Prayer (ELLC 1988)

Our Father in heaven,  
 hallowed be your name,  
 your kingdom come,  
 your will be done,  
 on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
 as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial  
 and deliver us from evil.

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





## Lectio Divina

*Lectio Divina* is a form of contemplative prayer that invites God to speak to the pray-er through the Biblical text. The origins of *Lectio Divina*, which translates as Sacred Reading, can be traced back to St. Benedict of Nursia, author of the Rule of St. Benedict (540 A.D.). The purpose of *Lectio Divina* is to meditate on small portions of Scripture and to enter into communion with God. When practicing *Lectio Divina*, there are four primary steps that take place: reading, meditation, speaking with God, and resting in God. One of the most important things to remember when practicing *Lectio Divina* is to choose small portions of Scripture, only a verse or two. So, when practicing *Lectio Divina* with the Lord's Prayer, it's probably best to meditate only on one phrase or sentence at a time.

### The Four Stages of *Lectio Divina*:

#### *Lectio* (reading)

In this first stage, read the selected portion of Scripture slowly, preferably out loud and a number of times, attentively listening to hear a word or phrase that is God's word for you that day. Engage your imagination in the reading, and listen for a specific word or phrase that "jumps out" at you, or "rises to the surface" of your reading. Don't expect fireworks, it might take a few readings, but remarkably some word or phrase always stands out in the reading.

#### *Meditatio* (meditation)

Then take the word or phrase that stood out to you and repeat it, memorise it, allow it to permeate your mind and touch you in your heart. The image that is used for this step

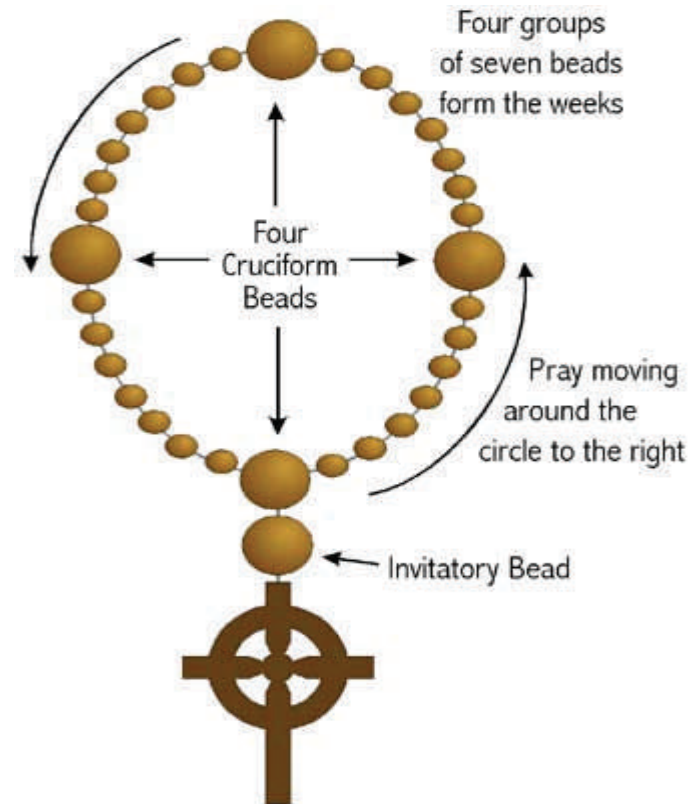


Image from: [www.kingofpeace.org/prayerbeads.htm](http://www.kingofpeace.org/prayerbeads.htm)



## Praying with Anglican Prayer Beads

Praying with beads or a prayer rope is an ancient practice found in many Christian traditions. Eastern Orthodox Christians use knotted ropes to assist them in praying, and of course Catholics use the Rosary. But did you know that Anglicans have their own version of this type of tactile praying? Anglican Prayer beads are a relatively new form of tactile praying that blends Orthodox prayer ropes and the Catholic rosary. You can order Anglican prayer beads online, or you can easily craft your own. They consist of 33 beads divided into four groups called weeks with a cruciform bead in between each week. Most often a cross begins the prayer cycle, along with an invitational bead. When using the Anglican prayer beads, you can assign a prayer to each bead. You might want to pray the Lord's Prayer for every cruciform bead, and then a simple prayer for mercy for each individual bead in the weeks. You can find more information and a sample collection of prayers that you might want to use at [www.saintgabriels.org/frames.html](http://www.saintgabriels.org/frames.html).

You can also find further instructions at [www.kingofpeace.org/prayerbeads.htm](http://www.kingofpeace.org/prayerbeads.htm)

Of course, you can pray spontaneously as well! You might want to assign a prayer request, a friend, or a family member to each bead - there really are no limitations. The beads simply help you stay on track and focused. For those of you who always need to be doing something with your hands, prayer beads might be a new and fresh way to engage in prayer and intercessions.

is one of a cow chewing its cud – perhaps not the most pleasant image but descriptive nonetheless! Allow the word or phrase to interact with your inner world – your thoughts, hopes, memories, or desires.

### *Oratio* (speaking)

In the *oratio* stage, respond to God and relate the reading to your own life. This is when you ponder the word or phrase you have received from God and ask the Lord how it may touch and change your life. This stage might require a specific response of some kind – a confession, a commitment, a choice that God might be calling you to make as a result of hearing his Word in a new and personal way. Take the time to dialogue with God – speak to him and listen for his voice speaking to you.

### *Contemplatio* (resting)

Finally, rest in the presence of God, the one who loves you and has invited you into his presence. There is no need to pray or use words, just enjoy the experience of being in the presence of God. Honestly, this is a tough stage to participate in if you are not used to simply resting in God's presence. But don't be discouraged – cultivate the practice of resting in God.

An excellent web site for further description: [valyermo.com/ld-art.html](http://valyermo.com/ld-art.html)



## Intercessory Prayer

Tertullian said that the Lord's Prayer was a summary of the whole gospel and Bonhoeffer stated that the Lord's Prayer is not merely the pattern of prayer, it is the way Christians must pray. Intercessory Prayer is prayer that is more thematic and outward looking. When using the Lord's Prayer as a structure for intercessions, it might be helpful to have a paper and pen nearby to write down the prayers that the Holy Spirit brings to mind. Conversely, you might want to have the Lord's prayer divided up into sections and write down your prayer points before you pray through the prayer. Either way, the Lord's Prayer provides the general structure for the intercessions and you (and the Holy Spirit!) fill in the blanks.

**Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven.**



Example:

Our Father (breathe in)

Who art in heaven (breathe out)

Holy (breathe in)

Is your name (breathe out)

Don't worry if you get distracted while praying, simply use your breathing to refocus your attention on the prayer. There are two primary ways to deal with distractions when participating in some type of contemplative prayer. One way is to have a paper and pen with you and simply jot down distractions so that you can refocus into your prayer. This works well if you remember that you need to buy milk or take out the garbage in the middle of your prayer. Another way to deal with distractions is to acknowledge that those thoughts that pop into your head while praying could be the Holy Spirit bringing people or events to your mind for prayer. If this is the case, you could either incorporate these intercessory items into your breath prayer, or you could also jot them down on a piece of paper and pray through them later. The most important thing is to not get frustrated with yourself if you find you have a short attention span or low concentration levels.

This kind of prayer takes practice – so start small and see where God takes you!



## Breath Prayer



Breath Prayer is a simple way to slow down your prayers, and to mediate on the words that you are praying. For those of you who are used to living your lives at warp speed, taking the time to stop and breathe your prayer might seem agonizing at first. That's OK – breath prayers are a great way to slow down and relax *into* a prayer.

It's really very simple. First, find a place that is quiet, comfortable and relatively free from distraction. If you like to watch the clock, set an alarm for the amount of time you want to spend in prayer, that way you won't be distracted by the need to check your watch. And remember, you don't have to start out with 4 hours! Begin slowly, with 5 or 10 minutes and add time as you feel able.

Then simply pray the Lord's Prayer very slowly, deeply breathing in on the first phrase, and breathing out on the second phrase and so on. You can breathe in and out through your nose or your mouth, and you should feel free to expand and contract your chest when breathing your prayers so as to involve more of your body. The purpose of breath prayer is much like *Lectio Divina*, it causes you to slow down and to contemplate what you are praying and even the implications of what you are praying.



**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.**



## Embodied Prayer

The practice of Embodied Prayer acknowledges the connection between the internal and the external. In other words, sometimes we need to externalize, or physicalise, what is going on inside of us. Some of us might be more movement oriented. This doesn't mean that you are a trained dancer or athlete or even all that coordinated. It simply means that you might like to physically express your thoughts, feelings, and even your prayers.

There are a number of ways you can practice embodied prayer. For those of you who *are* trained dancers, you might find it very meaningful to dance the Lord's Prayer, either to music or spoken word, or no words at all. Even if you do not consider yourself to be a very good dancer, you might find a great freedom praying through movement and music.

In addition, there are many simple movements that you can adapt or create that might help you express your prayers with your entire being. After all, there is a reason we sit, stand, kneel, or raise our hands in corporate worship! These actions externalize what is going on inside of us. They also cultivate a feeling, an attitude, a position before God.

First, try to experiment with various positions while praying the entire Lord's Prayer such as standing, kneeling, lying face down on the ground, stretching your arms out, palms, up, palms down – you get the picture. Take note of how the emphasis or feeling of your prayer changes when you pray in various physical positions. You might want to write down some of your impressions or reactions in a prayer journal.



Next, try creating various positions for each phrase in the Lord's Prayer. Some positions might come intuitively, for example, it seems natural to extend your arms as though you are receiving something when praying "Give us this day our daily bread". Experiment a little and remember that you can try to involve your entire body in this prayer exercise.

Some of you might have physical limitations. This doesn't mean that you are left out of this type of prayer – simply use whatever mobility you have to engage your body in prayer. And remember, most of us will feel a bit ridiculous as we experiment with embodied prayer. But, if you simply acknowledge that it feels a bit awkward and move on, you might find a new and fresh way to experience a text based prayer. You might even want to share some

