

A Model for Prayer

Key Verse: *“He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.”*
—Luke 11:2

Selected Scripture:
Luke 11:1-13

PRAYER OCCUPIED A place of singular importance in our Lord’s life and teachings. In times of decision and trial, he gave himself to approach the Heavenly Father in prayer. He fully realized that God is never confused, bewildered, perplexed, anxious, or worn by cares. Jesus knew that the Almighty’s plans would always succeed, having observed these things firsthand during his prehuman existence. Our Lord saw that God’s mighty

intellect reached to the bounds of all possibility and, knowing the end from the beginning, would always achieve his desired goals.

Indeed, our Lord Jesus understood his Father well, which is why, in confidence, he often approached him in prayer. The disciples of Jesus observed his habit of prayer, and the peace and inward tranquility it brought to their Master, so they requested of him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”—Luke 11:1

It may at first seem unusual that the disciples would ask Jesus to teach them to pray. We know from the Scriptures that the Jews, especially those who earnestly strove to keep the terms of their covenant with God, were a praying people. When their prayers were sincere and heartfelt, they were acceptable and answered, and

they were blessed as a result. In this way, the disciples of Jesus already knew how to pray, and their request to have Jesus teach them was evidently for other reasons.

As the disciples observed Jesus, they sensed that his prayers were much more intimate than the more mechanical form of prayer which they were used to. Since the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai, the Israelites had considered God a distant power that could never be approached closely, and thus their prayers tended to reflect that sense of separateness. In Jesus, however, they saw one who addressed the Almighty as “Father,” and who prayed as if in close contact with him.

In perceiving his intimate communion with God, and the evidence that God always heard and answered him, the disciples soon began to realize the great power and benefit of Jesus’ prayers. Because of his constant, close communion with God, even in times of great trouble and distress, their Master always seemed at peace. One of the keys to Jesus’ ability to maintain such a closeness to his Father is found in the fact that he always, and without exception, was in complete harmony with the will of God. Testifying of this, Jesus stated, “I do always those things that please him.”—John 8:29

Jesus honored the disciples’ request and provided them a model for prayer which, if followed from the heart, would help bring them into close communion with God, such as he had enjoyed. The order of his prayer is beautiful, and is very important to us as followers of Christ. It is no coincidence that the prayer begins, as stated in our Key Verse, by addressing God as “Our Father,” and in reverence honoring him—“Hallowed [holy] be thy name.” Having these sentiments, as well as the remaining words of this model prayer, the most prominent thing in our hearts when we pray, we too will be enabled to have intimate communion with God, as did Jesus and the disciples who were taught of him.—Matt. 6:9-15 ■