



Teach Us to Pray

Luke 11:1-13


Pattern of Prayer

- “One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’ (Luke 11:1, NIV) How did Jesus respond? Read Luke 11:2-4.¹

1. What can we learn from the order and content of this prayer?

Address: “Father”² (11:2a)

Jesus told his followers to address God as “Father,” expressing the intimate, personal relationship between the believer and God. Who can address God in this way?

 “to all who did receive [Jesus Christ], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12, NIV).

Two Statements (11:2b)

Before asking God to give us things, the pattern prayer makes these statements:

- “hallowed be your name,”³
- your kingdom come”⁴

These statements concern God’s glory in relation to his name, rule, and will.

“Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man’s will done in heaven, but for getting God’s will done on earth” (Robert Law)

Three Requests (11:3-4)

The pattern prayer then states the following requests:

- “Give us each day our daily bread.”⁵
- Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.⁶
- And lead us not into temptation.”⁷

These requests recognize our need of God’s forgiveness; and recognize our total dependence on Him for our physical and spiritual needs.



Parable of Prayer

- Then Jesus told them a short parable to teach them about prayer. Read Luke 11:5-8.⁸

¹ This is often called ‘the Lord’s Prayer,’ but is more appropriately ‘the disciples’ prayer.’ It should be noted that Jesus offers this prayer as a pattern for community praying, but the principles apply to personal praying as well.

² Jesus’ pattern prayer in Matthew 6 adds ‘in heaven’ reminding us that God is majestic, transcendent, and glorious.

³ In other words, ‘may you be honored as holy, as you should be; as the one, true, holy God.’

⁴ This statement refers to the consummation (final arrival) of the kingdom, i.e. Christ’s return and full establishment of God’s kingdom. However, it is not limited to that. The King *has* come, and the kingdom has broken into this age (though only realized by those whose hearts are ruled by the King). Thus praying for God’s kingdom to come also includes expansion of his kingdom, and a greater manifestation (visibility) of his kingdom through the lives of Christians. Jesus’ pattern prayer in Matthew 6 adds ‘your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’

⁵ ‘bread’ (*artos* – food) – refers to our material necessities, recognizing God as provider.

⁶ Being forgiven is connected with forgiving others. God forgives us when we confess our sins, and repent (turn away from our sin and toward God). If we are truly repentant (i.e., if our heart is right before God) we will also forgive others. A forgiven person is a forgiving person. Not forgiving negatively affects our relationship with God and our prayer life.

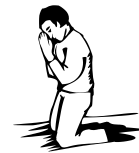
⁷ A request for God’s protection from the power of sin, and for the ability to avoid falling into sin. Jesus’ pattern prayer in Matthew 6 adds ‘but deliver us from the evil one.’

- ❑ There are different interpretations of this parable, largely depending on the meaning of the word *anaideian*, translated either “persistence” (NASB, NKJV, HCSB), “shameless audacity” (NIV) or “impudence” (ESV).⁹ Many agree that this parable is a “how much more” argument. However, is *anaideian* used positively or negatively? Depending on the answer, the point may be either...
- If a bothered person will get up out of bed at midnight in response to a friend’s persistence in asking, how much more will a gracious God respond to *your* persistence in asking?
 - If a bothered person will get up out of bed at midnight in response to a friend’s shameless boldness in asking, how much more will a gracious God respond to your asking?¹⁰

Promise of Prayer

2. Read Luke 11:9-13. Jesus says if we “ask, seek, and knock,” we will “receive” and “find,” and “the door will be opened.” This may sound like an easy way to get what we want. However, what are the conditions for answered prayer? (Consider the verses below.)

📖 “You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures” (*James 4:2b-3, NIV*).



📖 “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him” (*1 John 5:14-15, NIV*).

3. How does the example of earthly parents (in verses 11-13) relate to, and illustrate, the goodness of God?¹¹

Reflection/Application

- What do *you* want from God? What do you need? If you are not a believer, pray “seeker’s prayers.” Ask God to reveal his Truth to you. Seek the Truth and be willing to respond.
- As a believer, are you regularly talking to your Father? Set aside time each day for focused prayer, and pray often during the day. Use the “pattern of prayer” to help guide your praying.

⁸ A better translation may be: “Which of you (*tis ex hymōn*) who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, for a fiend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything?’ (vv. 5-7) I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is a friend, yet because of his impudence (rudeness, shamelessness) he will rise and give him whatever he needs.” (11:5-8, *ESV*) Verses 5-7 present a question, with the implied answer ‘no one would refuse to rise and help.’ [Klyne R. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 442].

⁹ Some translations combine these senses (e.g. ‘shameless persistence’ in NLT). However, the sense of ‘persistence’ is not clearly evident. This is the only time *anaideia* occurs in the New Testament. Snodgrass argues that ‘all [occurrences of the word] are...negative, except where Christian writers have assigned a positive use in dependence on Luke 11:8’ (Snodgrass, 443). His argument is convincing. Thus the NIV(2011) and ESV translations appear more accurate. Some assign *anaideia* to the sleeper, who would feel ashamed if he didn’t help, but this meaning is not supported by the text.

¹⁰ “The parable addresses the implied question ‘Will God respond to prayer?’ ...Indirectly the parable does encourage boldness in praying...[but it primarily] teaches the certainty of a God who hears prayer and responds” (Snodgrass, 448). This teaching is made clear in 11:11-13.

¹¹ God knows what we truly need, and he is faithful to give ‘good gifts.’ Like children, we may not always understand why God does not answer as we want, but God remains trustworthy. Matthew 7:11 says, ‘how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!’ Most commentators consider these ‘good gifts’ to be spiritual, and here it is ‘the Holy Spirit.’ The best gifts are spiritual – God’s presence, guidance, strength, and empowerment.