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How to *Pray*

Learning to pray the way Jesus taught: the Lord's Prayer line by line, a simple pattern, and answers to common questions

WESLEY A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
1500 LOMBARD STREET · PHILADELPHIA · SINCE 1820

BIBLE STUDY

How to *Pray*

Learning to pray the way Jesus taught: the Lord's Prayer line by line, a simple pattern, and answers to common questions

The disciples watched Jesus heal the sick, calm storms and feed thousands. But the only thing the Bible records them asking Him to teach them was this: *"Lord, teach us to pray."* They had seen that prayer was the secret of His life.

If you have ever felt that you don't know how to pray, or that your prayers don't sound like the deacon's, you are in good company. Prayer is simply talking with God and listening to Him. It is not a performance. It is a relationship. And like any relationship, it grows with time.

> *And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.*
>
> LUKE 11:1 · KJV

AND WHAT IT ISN'T

What Prayer Is

PRAYER IS...	PRAYER IS NOT...
Talking to God like a child to a loving father	Using fancy words to impress
Honest — you can tell God exactly how you feel	Pretending everything is fine

PRAYER IS...	PRAYER IS NOT...
Listening as well as speaking	A list of demands
Possible anywhere, any time	Only for church or for preachers
Something you grow in	Something you have to get perfect

JESUS' OWN PATTERN

The Lord's Prayer, *line by line*

Jesus did not only give us a prayer to repeat. He gave us a pattern to follow. Each line opens a door to a different kind of prayer. Pray the line, then pause and pray about it in your own words.

1 **Our Father which art in heaven**

Come close. Begin by remembering who you are talking to: a Father who loves you, and who is great enough to help.

2 **Hallowed be thy name**

Worship. Praise God for who He is. *Lord, You are holy, faithful, good, merciful...*

3 **Thy kingdom come, thy will be done**

Surrender. Ask for God's will in your life, your family, your church and your city — even before your own wishes.

4 **Give us this day our daily bread**

Ask. Bring your needs, big and small. God cares about rent, health, a job and a broken heart.

5 **Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors**

Confess and release. Admit where you went wrong, receive God's forgiveness, and let go of what others owe you.

6 **Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil**

Ask for protection. Pray for strength against temptation and protection from harm.

7 **For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory**

End with trust. It all belongs to God, so we can leave it all with Him. *Amen* means *so be it.*

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

EASY TO REMEMBER

A SIMPLE PATTERN: *ACTS*

LETTER	STANDS FOR	EXAMPLE
A	Adoration — praise God for who He is	*Lord, You are faithful. You have never left me.*

LETTER	STANDS FOR	EXAMPLE
C	Confession — admit your sins	*Forgive me for my temper this week.*
T	Thanksgiving — thank Him for what He has done	*Thank You for getting my son home safe.*
S	Supplication — ask for what you and others need	*Please heal Sister Johnson. Help me find work.*

HONEST ANSWERS

Common *questions*

Q Do I have to kneel, or close my eyes?

A No. People in the Bible prayed standing, sitting, kneeling, lying face down, with hands raised, and walking along the road. Closing your eyes and folding your hands can help you focus, but God hears you however you pray.

Q Does God hear me if I don't use the right words?

A Yes. Romans 8:26 says that when we don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit prays for us *"with groanings which cannot be uttered."* A sigh, a tear, or a simple *Help, Lord* is a real prayer.

Q Why does God sometimes not answer?

A God always hears, but He answers in different ways: *yes*, *no*, and *wait*. A good father does not give his child everything the child asks for. Sometimes God's *no* protects us, and sometimes His *wait* is preparing something better. Keep praying. Jesus told a whole parable about not giving up (Luke 18:1-8).

Q Should I pray out loud?

A Either way is fine. Many people find praying out loud, even quietly, helps them focus. Praying aloud with others — in a prayer group or at the altar — is a powerful part of our church tradition.

Q How long should I pray?

A Start small: five minutes a day. You can also pray short prayers all through the day — on the bus, at your desk, while cooking. Paul says *"Pray without ceasing,"* which means living in a constant conversation with God.

WRITE IT DOWN, WATCH GOD WORK

Prayer *journal*

Keep a simple record. Write the date, what you prayed for, and leave a space for how God answered. Over time you will have a written record of God's faithfulness — and it will strengthen your faith on the hard days.

DATE	I PRAYED FOR...	HOW GOD ANSWERED

PRAY WITH YOUR CHURCH

Big Wesley gathers for prayer during the week. You are also welcome to send a prayer request through our website or call the office at **(215) 735-8961**. You never have to pray alone.

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LUKE 11:1

Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church

"Big Wesley" · The Freedom Church · Founded June 6, 1820

SUNDAY SCHOOL	9:30 AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP	11:00 AM

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