



If we look at what prayer is, we see that it has several elements. However, the first and most important element to recognize is who our prayer is truly to be directed to.

God truly is God. God is the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our prayers must and should, always begin with acknowledging who our God truly is. If we see the example that Jesus gave to His disciples concerning how they were to pray, we see what the most important aspect of prayer should be. We must first acknowledge who our God truly is.

Let us take a look at the role model that Jesus gave to His disciples. The role model that I am referring to is found in both of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Mathew 6:9-13 - "...Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil..."

Luke 11:2-4 - "...Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

We see that Jesus teaches His disciples that the very first thing we must do is to truly acknowledge who we are praying to and who our God truly is. Jesus taught them that when we pray, we are not just praying to God but He makes it a more personal conversation. He tells us that we must know and believe that God is our "Father."

This tells us that the relationship goes even deeper than a person praying to their God. It tells us that there is a true relationship between the individual and their God. The term "Father" denotes a relationship. A close relationship. A relationship that is between two people that are in and have a common bond. The bond of "family."

God is not just my God but He is more importantly, my “Father.” It is capitalized because it denotes a real name, a real “person.” That is His name to those who are His children. Yes, He is known as many different and wonderful things throughout the Bible. However, it all changes in the New Testament with God, through Jesus, becoming known to us in a more personal and intimate way. He is still all those wonderful things. However, there is actually a closer relationship. He is now our Father.

Jesus goes even further by declaring Him to be our “Abba Father” which refers to Him even in a closer and more intimate way than the term Father. However, that aspect of God being our Father was not really emphasized in the Old Testament. That was because the people knew God more for all that He did for them and did not grasp the fact that He was always, even more than those names they referred to Him as – He was their Father, their Abba.

The following are the only scriptures in the Old Testament that refer to God as Father.

Psalm 68:5 - “A **father** of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.”

Psalm 89:26 - “He shall cry unto me, Thou art my **father**, my God, and the rock of my salvation.”

Psalm 103:13 - “Like as a **father** pities his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.”

Malachi 2:10 - “Have we not all one **father**? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?”

Did the people truly hear what God was really saying about who He was to them? They recognized God as being the one who could help them...but...they never truly recognized God’s love for them as a Father who truly **loves** His children. Are we in that same mode of thinking? Is God our Father or is He simply the one who will give us what we want. Hmmm... that sounds like some “spoiled children.”

Unfortunately, it was sin that “messed up” man’s understanding of who God really was to His creation. It was sin that created the division between the Father and His children. However, we

see that as the loving Father that He was, He gave them an opportunity to turn to Him. He gave His own Son, Jesus, to take our place and die on that cross and take the punishment of hell on our behalf. But... three days later God's Son, Jesus, rose from the dead and was the first born of all of the Father's lost children. All they need do is to simply believe in all that Jesus did!!!

We see that when Jesus came, He used that term, "Father," very often in referring to our God. It became a more intimate term in referring to our God. Jesus emphatically reminded us that, yes, even though God was all those things and all those names that the scriptures told us about His character and nature, God was, is and always will be our Father.

In the New Testament, we get the word "father" from the Greek word "*patēr*," which, in the Greek, literally means "one who generates or brings forth another human being." However, the Greeks actually used this same word, metaphorically, many times. Therefore, we must understand what Jesus was truly saying when He used and taught us this term.

Metaphorically, the term "*patēr*," means, **"one who has infused his own spirit into others, who actually governs their thoughts and minds; one who stands in place of a natural father and looks after someone in a paternal way.** They used it as a title of great honor.

Jesus, was revealing to the world that the term "father" was not just an attribute but rather it was who our God really was – our FATHER!!! He is the great "I AM that I AM." He is our FATHER!!!

In the New Testament we do not see the Hebrew term for father, "*ab*," used. However, it is actually changed to the Chaldean term, "*abba*." This became the most frequently used term to apply to our God. They chose to use this term to show the true relationship that we now have with our loving Father God. It refers to the term "Father" in a more intimate and closer way in the relationship. It was similar to calling Him our "Daddy, Father."

Jesus used this term, "Abba," in Mark 14:36 as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, "*Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not*

what I will, but what thou wilt.” It was a close intimate time of prayer. Therefore, Jesus used this term. Isn’t God now, through Jesus, our most personal and intimate “Abba, Father?”
Hmmm.....

Getting back to the main purpose of this writing which is on “prayer,” as mentioned previously, Jesus used the same format twice in teaching His disciples on how to pray. As mentioned, in Matthew 6, Jesus was speaking in a general way to all that would be listening to Him on that mountain side next to the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum. It was His first major teaching and it was setting forth the pattern of His ministry which was to simply get the people back on the right track in being the people of God.

However, just like us many times. His disciples didn’t get it. So later on we see in Luke 11, they asked Him again concerning how they should pray. So...He teaches them again. Jesus says the exact same prayer. Why??? The answer is simple... because prayer should be simple.

When his disciples asked Jesus in Luke, again, to teach them how to pray, He teaches them, again, with the exact same prayer. Therefore, this “format” should be our primary pattern for when we pray to our Father God.

Let’s take another look at it as it is found in Luke 11:2-4 - *“...Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”*

A few quick thoughts concerning our prayers. I know that sometimes we can get caught up in extra long times of prayer. That is not necessarily a bad thing as long as we are praying and not simply spewing forth an oration to try to impress God or others. Jesus gave us an example of how we should pray. We must know that the scriptures are very clear in telling us that the Father already knows what we need before we even ask Him.

Therefore, primarily, our prayer must simply be a time of acknowledging our God for who He is; the One who knows what is best for us; the One who knows exactly what we need and when. He is the One whose ways we are to desire. He is the One whose ways we should desire to be accomplished and not what we think should be accomplished.

In our prayer times, we can talk to God and discuss things with Him. However, never forget that our heart must always be that His will, not our will, should be done. In Isaiah 1:18, God implores the true believer by telling us, *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”*

No matter how bad we are or how bad the situation may be, God always implores us to come and talk it out. That is what prayer really is. It is talking to God. Yes we can ask Him for things but we must reason with our God about those things and He will show us what we really need.

In John 17, we see the prayer of Jesus as He was with His disciples at the Last Supper. He basically uses the same format as in Mathew 6 and Luke 11.

Jesus' Prayer in John 17

- He calls upon the Father
- He glorifies the Father
- He acknowledges that He has done the Father's will during His lifestyle
- He Prays for all believers
- He prays specifically for His disciples because He knows the way will be difficult for them.
- He asks for God to bless them and keep them.
- He prays for all those who will believe, as well as for the non-believer.
- He prays for the glory of God's Kingdom to be manifested.

The Lord's Prayer that Jesus Taught Us

- *“Our Father...”*
- *“in Heaven; hallowed be thy name...”*
- *“Let your Kingdom come, let your will be done on this earth as it is in heaven...”*
- A general prayer *“to forgive”* and to supply their needs. *“...our daily bread...”*
- *“And lead us not into temptation...”*
- *“...” deliver us from evil...”*
- *“...deliver everyone from evil and pray that they be safe from the devil and his ways...”*
- *“..For your is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever...”*

Obviously, it was not in the same words but it is very similar to the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Luke and in Matthew. This was simply showing the disciples and all of us today that prayer is to be basically, simple. It doesn't have to be in this format but we must recognize the truth in what Jesus was teaching to His disciples when they would go to their God in prayer.

I have no problem with praying long prayers. However, we must realize that God is God. He is our Father and He knows exactly what we need and when we need it. The problem is – Do we believe that????!!! Prayer is really an aspect of worship – acknowledging God for who He is. Prayer is not to be a time for asking or petitioning God for what we want but rather it should a time of acknowledging our God for who He is, our God, and for what He wants for us !!! It is actually a time of worship and fellowship with our Father.

Yes, there may be times when we are going through things and we turn to our God and we pray for certain things. Sometimes, situations are desperate and we are in dire times. I think of the time in 2Samuel 12:15-23, when David's baby child was dying and David got down and truly prayed for God to heal his baby child. We see that the child died. What did David do?

David, when told what took place, got up and cleaned himself up. When asked about his actions, he replied, *"...While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."* Wow!!! David had a relationship with His God that knew that God was in control of all things.

When we pray, it really should be geared, firstly, to acknowledge God for who He is. Then we should pray for the needs of others and then lastly, for ourselves? I pray that none of us will get to the place where we think that our prayers and the fantastic way we can turn a phrase and pray with great words is what really moves the hand of God? Are we confident in the way we pray... or are we simply confident in our God and in who He is? Hmmm.....

Jesus gave us a very good example of having the right attitude of heart when we pray. We see this in the parable He gave in Luke 18:9-14 as it tells us, “*To some who were **confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else**, Jesus told this parable:* ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ ¹³“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ ¹⁴“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

The first thing that we see in this parable is that the Pharisee in this story was standing “by himself.” Jesus was declaring that God was no where near this Pharisee. Oh, he made a great prayer but God did not hear it. That was because of the Pharisee’s prideful, arrogant and self seeking attitude of heart.

We see that the publican, who would be considered a terrible sinful man by the Pharisee and not good enough to be in the presence of everybody else, stood afar off from anyone else. He most likely was sinful. But...he recognized it and was honest before his God. He simply prayed, “*God, have mercy on me a sinner.*” It was simple prayer. But it was a real prayer. God heard that man’s prayer. Will He hear ours? Hmmm.....

That is the essence of prayer. It is not the words we speak but it is all about the attitude of our heart. Are we praying to our God in an attitude of worship and worshiping Him for who He is or is all about us and what we desire and want?

I believe Jesus gave us a great role model for prayer. We do not need to simply recite that prayer but, I believe we should simply follow the simple format that Jesus gave in our times of prayer. Remember, that prayer is actually a time of worship. As Jesus taught us in John 4:23-24, “*But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit*

and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

We must pray the same way we worship – being led by the Holy Spirit and desiring and wanting God’s truth, God’s ways and everything that God desires, not what we want or desire. That may be difficult for us to wrap our heads around. But...it is God’s Kingdom, not ours!!!

“...Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”

- Mathew 6:9-13 -