

Learn and use the six crucial elements to effective prayer

This is out of **Matthew 6:9-15**, commonly called the Lord's Prayer. This prayer, Jesus said, "*This is how you should pray*" not what you should pray. He's giving us an illustration of things we should use in prayer, not this specific prayer to pray.

There are **Six Crucial Elements** to Effective Prayer

A. The first crucial element to effective prayer is Praise. Begin by expressing your love to God.

Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored. (v. 9)

When you come to prayer you want to begin by expressing your love to God. Start by saying to Him, "Lord, I want to focus on You." If I come to prayer focusing on myself and my needs first, I just leave prayer more depressed and frustrated than when I began. But if I come to prayer with my focus on God, what I can see of Him, what I can learn of Him, what it is that He can show me then instead of going away thinking how big my problems are, I'll go away thinking how big my God is!

How do you praise God?

1. First, you can praise Him for Who He is—His character.

The first crucial element to prayer is God's character. God's character is the basis for answered prayer. God answers the prayers that acknowledge who He is.

2. Secondly, you can praise Him for what He does—His works.

Whole psalms are devoted to this—praising God for His incredible deeds for His people. Are you keeping a record of this in your life? In your family's life? The deliverances of God? The answers to prayer?

I'm praising God for being concerned enough about minor things in my life to answer!

Psalm 100:4 says "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

- Commitment: I will praise God for who He is and what He does.

B. The second crucial element to effective prayer is Purpose: Commit yourself to God's purpose and will for your life.

The next part of the Lord's prayer says,

¹⁰May your Kingdom come soon.

May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven.

This is an acknowledgment that God is God and I am not. This part of the prayer forces me to examine whether or not I really want God's purposes fulfilled in my life, in my family, at my job, in my school, in this country.

Have you ever thought through what this might entail; saying to God, "You do whatever you want in any aspect of my life. I want what you want more than what I want."

You want a **new car**. God has been saying, "The old one is fine. It still gets you from point A to point B, the heater works, and the insurance is low. Keep it! And use the money you'd have spent on it to help fulfill my work in giving to the poor."

That's what praying "Your will be done" means.

You love **chocolate cake**. God has been saying, "Lay off on the chocolate cake. One a day is too much. Cut back to one a week. Save the money you don't spend, and put it in the scholarship fund."

That's what praying "Your will be done" means.

You've been uneasy about coming home and spending as much time as you do with **ESPN**. God's been saying, "Your family needs you. Turn the TV off, limit your viewing to 3 hours a week."

That's what praying "Your will be done" means.

Romans 12:2 urges us to "Offer yourself as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer."

- Commitment: I will obey God no matter what He asks of me.

C. The third crucial element to effective prayer is Provision: Ask God to provide for your needs.

¹¹Give us our food for today

What needs do I pray about? Absolutely every one of them. There is nothing too great for God's power to take care of and there's nothing too insignificant for His concern. So all my needs I'm to pray about.

Here's a rule of thumb: if it's big enough for you to worry about, it's big enough for you to pray about. I'd recommend that you keep track of the things you worry about through the course of a day, write them all down, and make that your daily prayer list. Your worries are a good clue to the things you should be praying about.

Philippians 4:6 “Don’t worry about anything but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Philippians 4:19 says “*God will supply all of my needs from His riches in glory because of what Christ Jesus has done for us.*”

Prayer is my personal declaration of dependence on God. When I come to Him I’m saying, “I’m totally dependent upon You, God. Not because of what I can work for or what I can earn by my smarts or by my industry, but I am totally dependent on You for my needs.”

- Commitment: I will depend on God’s provision for all of my needs.

D. The fourth crucial element to effective prayer is Pardon: Ask God’s forgiveness for your sins.

¹²and forgive us our sins,

This part of the Lord’s prayer says, “Forgive us just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.”

There are four steps to forgiveness:

a. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal every sin.

Psalm 139 says. “Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me.”

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the sin.

b. Confess each sin specifically.

Sometimes we like to get away with confession of sin by just saying, “Forgive me all my sins.” You committed those sins individually, you better ask for forgiveness individually. None of this blanket coverage stuff.

Proverbs 28:13 “You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up. Then God will show mercy to you.”

c. Make restitution to others when necessary.

Matthew 5:23-24 “When you remember your brother has something against you, go at once to make peace with him, then come back and offer your gift to God.”

So when God reveals something that you’ve done to someone else make restitution and get it off your conscious.

d. By faith accept God's forgiveness.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.

When we talk about forgiveness you need to accept the fact that you don't have to live with guilt. It can be forgiven and wiped clean.

- Commitment: I will confess my sins as God reveals them and accept His forgiveness.

E. The fifth crucial element to effective prayer is Purity: Let go of your grudges and bitterness

The Lord's prayer says, “ just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.”

Christ's assumption is that we will be forgiving because we have been forgiven. God will not respond to your prayers as long as you are harboring grudges, bitterness, venom in your heart. Listen to what the Bible says,

1 John 3:21 Dear friends, **if our conscience is clear**, we can come to God with bold confidence.
²²And we will receive whatever we request because we obey him and do the things that please him.

Psalm 66:18 If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, **my Lord would not have listened.** ¹⁹But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer.

- Commitment: I will release those who have sinned against me because God has forgiven me.

F. The sixth crucial element to effective prayer is Protection: Ask for divine protection.

¹³And don't let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

We, as believers, face a spiritual battle every day and Satan wants to defeat us through temptation and fear. If I start the day without praying for God's strength, I'm going into battle with my own resources—and that ain't much!

If you pray this prayer, you need to search your own heart and life, find out where you tend to fall. You need to know yourself, because Satan, the enemy of your soul, is a master at knowing our weaknesses, and using them to bring about our downfall.

1 Cor 10:13 But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

- Commitment: I will learn my areas of weakness and depend on God's protection.

G. Relationship

This prayer begins in the context of relationship—our Father. If I lose sight of the fact that I have a relationship with a father in heaven, my prayers will deteriorate.

The foundation for effective prayer is a relationship with a loving Heavenly Father. Relationships thrive on communication, and wither without it. God's listening, are you talking?