



## river west church

Praying with Purpose

Matthew 6:10

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### **First Things First**

The single most important thing in prayer is who you are actually praying to. This is why Jesus taught us to think about God first when we pray. Jesus taught us to pray, "Our father in heaven, hallowed be thy name." In saying this, Jesus gave us a very specific view of God to hold in our hearts when we come to prayer; a view that encompasses God's love, God's power, and the miracle of our adoption as sons and daughters of God through Christ. When we pray, we don't just think about these things, we actually talk to God about them. We praise Him and thank Him. This is an affirmation of the foundational truths of the Gospel, from our hearts, to God Himself in prayer. This builds trust. This empowers us to pray in fullness of faith. Or, if we are unsure of these things, it is an invitation for us to ask for God's help to better understand the truth of the Gospel. As we enter into this first part of prayer, we should find ourselves developing hearts that are humble, grateful, and trusting in God.

### **Praying with Purpose**

The natural thing is for us to come to God with our personal needs and concerns. Jesus teaches us that this is exactly what we should be doing, "Give us this day our daily bread." But Jesus teaches us that there is something more for us to pray about. In fact, it is so important that it comes as the second theme in this great teaching on prayer.

The second great theme in the Lord's Prayer is the one that is the easiest for us to miss. The second theme is about the mission of Christ in our world, "Your kingdom come, your will be done." In this theme we learn that prayer is about more than just building a deeper relationship with God, or personal peace and prosperity. Prayer is connected to Christ's mission. It assumes a particular view of the world we live in, as well as our calling as Christ's followers.

Here we are reminded that we live in a broken world that is alienated from God. We remember that all is not as it should be in our world. We recognize that Christ came to invade this world with another kingdom – the kingdom of God; the power and authority of God. It means real change in people's lives through Christ; captives set free; hearts and bodies healed; eyes opened; and sins forgiven. It means the Gospel message spreading. As one pastor put it, it means, "Prying Satan's hands off of God's property!"

In this part of the Lord's Prayer, we learn that our prayers actually have a spiritual impact on the world all around us. We also learn that we live in a world of spiritual conflict. In prayer, we actually partner with God in His kingdom work in our world. Our praying matters at the deepest level. Our prayers, in some mysterious way, release the power of Christ and change lives.

### **Trusting and Attentive**

Do you believe this? Do you pray like this? Jesus wants us to grow in this kind of prayer. Call it the prayer of partnership in Christ's kingdom work in our world. Call it "intercession" perhaps. But in order to pray like this, we will also need to be more attentive. That is, we need to pay attention; both to God and to the world around us. We need to pray and ask God about His kingdom and His will. What does God want to do? We need to tune into the needs around us. We need to become more sensitive to the brokenness of our world. We need to ask God to help us see things from His point of view. We need to ask God to give us a sense of His heart for situations around us. Then we will grow in this second theme of the Lord's Prayer. And of course we must always be sensitive, because God may want to use us in a practical way to be the very answer to the prayer we pray!

This week, take some time and focus on this second theme of the Lord's Prayer. If it seems awkward for you, don't give up! Like learning to swim, just keep at it. The Lord will help you to grow in this practice of prayer. Nothing is more important!