

The Lord's Prayer

Why is the Lord's Prayer so widely used by Christians?

You may have heard of the Lord's Prayer, but did you know that two different Gospels contain different versions? This may be because Jesus told his followers this prayer on two separate occasions. In the account by Matthew, Jesus gives his followers the Lord's Prayer as part of a longer, powerful talk about how they should live their lives. In Luke's account Jesus is directly asked by his followers about how they should pray.

*"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites! They love to stand up and pray in the houses of worship and on the street corners, so that everyone will see them. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. But when you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you. When you pray, do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that their gods will hear them because their prayers are long. Do not be like them. Your father already knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray:
Our Father in heaven:
May your holy name be honoured;
may your kingdom come;
may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today the food we need.
Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.
Do not bring us to hard testing,
but keep us safe from the Evil One.
If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done."*

Matthew chapter 6 verses 5-14

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."
Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say this:
'Father:
May your holy name be honoured;
may your kingdom come.
Give us day by day the food we need.
Forgive us our sins,
for we forgive everyone who does us wrong.
and do not bring us to hard testing."*

Luke chapter 11 verses 1-4



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To do...

-  Highlight in one colour lines from both prayers that are identical.
-  Highlight in another colour lines from both prayers that are similar but not identical.
-  In Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer, underline two things that should be avoided when praying.

To do...



Write the words or phrase, from either of the versions of the Lord's Prayer, which match to these meanings:

Christians know they are talking to God

Christians ask for help to make earth like heaven: just, loving and peaceful

Christians believe that God loves and cares for them

Christians ask forgiveness and promise to forgive others

The Lord's Prayer is often used in church services, by being read aloud by the worshippers together (sometimes using a more formal-sounding translation of the passage than the one we have used here). They might also join in intercession prayers, asking for God's help for themselves and others, and they might pray privately in silence. Some Christians practise meditation as a form of prayer.

To do...



What do you think are the benefits for a Christian of praying using the words of Jesus in the Lord's Prayer, and of praying using their own words?