

## THE LORD'S PRAYER | *A Prayer for "Us"*

I want to invite you to pray with me right now. The Lord's Prayer is familiar to lots of us. Maybe the one downside to memorizing scripture is that the words can become **so** familiar, we kind of 'check out' even as we're saying them. Try not to do that; try to say these words as if you're hearing them for the first time. Wherever you are right now, pray this out loud (or out quietly) with me:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.**

(Mt. 6:9-13 NIV)

Have you ever noticed there is no "me" or "I" in that prayer? So often our prayers are consumed with our own individual needs and lives. But when Jesus teaches us how to pray, it's not "I, me, my" but "we, us, our." It's not "my Father" – it's "our" Father. That tiny kickoff phrase establishes us as siblings, in this together, called to belong to one another, to pray for one another. So I don't just pray that I would have my daily bread, but that we would. That all the needs in the community would be met. And "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" is a communal prayer, as much as it's a personal one. So I'm praying for friends in the family who aren't on speaking terms, for broken marriages, and betrayed trust, and grudges being held. Through prayer I get involved in the healing of all wounds and relationships in the community.

So let's pray it again, this time more consciously from that "we" perspective. Hold in your mind the people close to you (friends, family, church community) as you pray – for "us".

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.**

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And finally, let's pray it one more time, with our perspective widened even further. You don't have to look very far – these days – to see a broken world in desperate need of the loving care of God. As you pray this time, hold that "we" in your heart, the one beyond even your immediate contacts and relationships. Pray for the world that we are a part of, together.