

“Our Father who is in heaven”

We are all in this together as the opening word of this prayer indicates - *our*. God, the creator of all that is, has chosen to be *our* Father, whether we choose him or not.

It is this God who invites us into a relationship with him. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

This Son is Jesus of Nazareth. This life - the life of a child of God, *our Father* - is available to all who believe in Jesus.

“hallowed be your name”

Our Father is a good God. The Bible says, “God is love.” This God called to a man named Abraham nearly 6000 years ago and made a promise, “I will bless all the nations through you.” Through Jesus, God has fulfilled his promise!

Jesus promised to return and make all things right. When we remember God's promises, hope in God's promises and live in light of those promises we are in fact “hallowing” - or praising - God's holy name.

“your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

God's ways are not the ways of humanity. Everyday we hear news of violence, destruction and death. God's ways however, are radically different.

In God's kingdom things are right - the way they were created to be. As believers in Jesus it is our privilege to partner with God's Holy Spirit in living kingdom lives - lives centered on God's way of doing things. One day God's kingdom really will come on earth as it is in heaven.

“give us today our daily bread”

Since our Father is a good God we shouldn't be surprised that he wants to take care of us. Here we are taught to ask - not only for our ourselves, but for *us* - for daily bread.

We pray “daily” because it is day by day that we live as followers of Jesus. We ask for “bread” because we are called to live simply. In a world of great wealth and great poverty God's children are called to live daily, simple lives.

In this way, God provides for those who call him Father.

“forgive us our sins”

The Bible tells us, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." As you look at the world - and even your own life - this comes as no surprise. The good news is that Jesus offers us new life.

When we ask God to forgive our sins in the name of Jesus the Bible says, "he is faithful and just to forgive us."

Forgiven. Those who pray "Our Father" in Jesus' name are forgiven. This means new life; real life; eternal life!

"as we forgive those who have sinned against us"

Those who pray "Our Father" do not do so alone. Jesus is our personal savior, but he is not our *private* savior. We are called to live life with others.

In this new life given to us by Jesus we are called to offer the same forgiveness that we have been given. Only a God who chooses us, provides for us and forgives us can empower us to forgive others.

In fact, Jesus says, "If you do not forgive others then your Father will not forgive you."

"lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil"

Your new life in Jesus isn't perfect - at least not right away. You'll still be tempted. The good news is that with the Holy Spirit - Jesus gives everyone who believes in him this gift - we don't simply manage our sins, we overcome!

The life of a believer is one of continually setting aside acts that lead to death and taking up the cross of Jesus. By losing our lives in this way Jesus says we actually gain them!

Jesus - the only person to ever live a sinless life - invites us to imitate him in resisting evil, no matter what form.

"for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever"

At the heart of the Christian faith is a hard truth - Jesus calls us to be crucified to the world so that we can say,

"It is no longer I who lives, but Jesus who lives in me."

Our Father has a plan and purpose for each of us and he has a place in his kingdom. This prayer reminds us that it is not our kingdom, not our power, and not our glory. All of that belongs to the Father.

“Amen”

Literally, “Amen” means *true*. It is *true* that your Father in heaven loves you. It is *true* that your Father has a plan for you and all of creation - his kingdom come, his will be done.

It is *true* that your Father wants to care for you day by day. It is *true* that you need to have your sins forgiven and it is *true* that you need to forgive others.

It is *true* that Jesus came to conquer sin and death so that we could have life. It is *true* that God is calling you to participate in his kingdom, his will and with his power right now!

So I prayed “Our Father ...” and trust Jesus. Now what?

Great question! First, let us say we are excited for the journey you just began. Here's what you need to do next.

1. Find a local church (a gathering of believers) who love Jesus and love God's word and join them.
2. Get a Bible and start reading it. You might want to begin in the Gospel of Mark, but you don't have to start there.
3. Begin praying, that is, talking to your Father in heaven. In fact, we recommend using the Lord's Prayer as a guide.
4. Start telling as many people as you can about Jesus and this new life you now have.