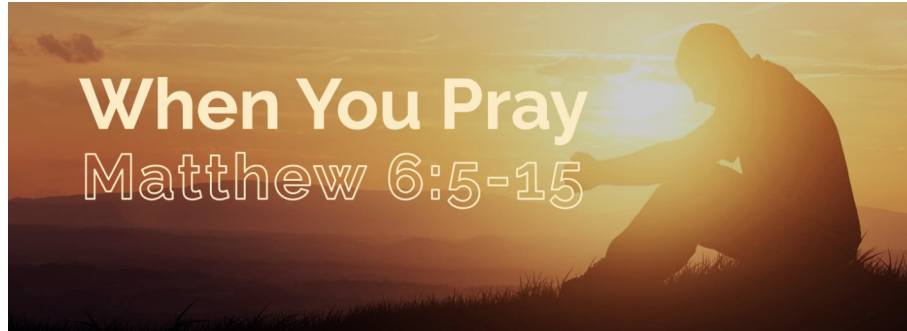


CONNECT

bella vista baptist church

Sunday, September 28, 2025



As we anticipate hearing from and voting on Justin Wright as our Associate Pastor of Family Ministry, it is good that we give ourselves to a season of prayer for the church, for the families to whom we minister, for families in our community, and for Justin and Crissy.

Following is a brief study guide to the prayer Jesus taught His followers in the Sermon on the Mount. The simplicity and depth of this model prayer continues to teach us how to come to our Father in prayer and what it means to be able to come to Him in prayer.

When we pray as Jesus taught us to pray, not only do we receive good things from our Father, we grow deeper in our relationship with Him and with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The BIG Idea

Prayer is a conversation between a child and the Father.

Prayer Points

Pray for grace, wisdom, and clarity for Justin and Crissy Wright as they are presented to the church.

Pray for wisdom and clarity for the church as we get to know Justin and Crissy.

Pray for our Father's will to be accomplished in the candidate process.

Pray for the spiritual growth of families in our church.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to draw families in our community to Christ.

Pray for God to open doors of opportunity and grant us the courage to make Jesus' name known.

Introduction

Jesus' lesson on prayer occurs in His Sermon on the Mount while warning His listeners not to be like the hypocrites, religious pretenders acting out a role on a theatrical stage.

Hypocrites pray to be seen by others. They love to make a public show, like actors on a stage. They love to shine before people as the main characters on the stage. They desire people's applause, taking a bow like actors on a stage.

Jesus' followers pray not to be seen by people, but to be heard by the Father. Jesus' followers don't create a clamor like Gentiles trying to arouse their idols, but pray simple prayers as children to their Father.

Jesus' followers pray like this.

Our Father in heaven.

The first word is first person plural. While prayer is often personal, "our" reminds each of us of our responsibility to pray not only for self, but to intercede for our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are family because of God's great love for us (1 John 3:1). And though our Father is in heaven, His Spirit is in us here on earth. As a result, He hears even the softest whisper of a prayer.

Hallowed be your name.

This petition is for the Lord's name to be treated as holy, infinitely precious and treasured above every other name. It reminds us of who our Father is, invokes our praise for who He is, and calls us to holiness for His name's sake.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

While this petition anticipates Jesus' coming Kingdom on earth, it also reminds us that His rule and His will should be evident in us now. We should be surrendered to His reign and living out His will now on earth.

Give us this day our daily bread.

This petition reminds us that even our most basic mundane needs are not too unimportant to bring to God. He is our perfect, loving Father who delights to give His children good things (Matthew 7:7-11). It also reminds us that He is to be trusted as the source of all good things. We look nowhere else except to our heavenly Father for our earthly needs.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

The only reason for us being God's children is because Jesus died in our place and forever remains the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:1-2). To refuse forgiveness is to deny the very basis of our existence as God's children, robbing us of the joy and freedom that Christ purchased for us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

This petition not only recognizes the reality of the evil one, Satan, and the evil that exists in the world, but also the evil that remains in our hearts. Praying this prayer requires our willingness to follow where the Father leads.

Verses for Meditation

1 John 3:1

Matthew 7:7-11

1 John 2:1-2

Ephesians 4:32

Matthew 18:21-22

Questions for Reflection

How might a shift from “my Father” to “our Father” not only affect how we pray, but also how we live? How can me-centeredness affect our life perspective and our joy?

Why are we able to call God our Father? (1 John 3:1) What happens to our prayer life if we forget why?

Why do you think the first petition is for the Father’s name to be treated as holy? How might considering the Father’s holiness affect you *as* you pray and *after* you pray?

We rightly pray for Jesus’ return and the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth. But how is His rule and will seen on earth today? What does this petition require of us now as we await what is to come?

What are some reasons we might not ask God for basic (or big) needs? How can it encourage your prayer life to know your Father delights to give His children good things? (Matthew 7:7-11)

On what basis does our Father forgive our sins? (1 John 2:1-2). How often will the Father forgive our sins?

On what basis are we to forgive the sins of others? (Ephesians 4:32) How often should we forgive the sins of others? (Matthew 18:21-22)

If we ask the Father not to lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil, will He do that? What happens if we do not follow His leadership?

To encourage and help one another, as a group, share how you are able to remain consistent in your prayer life.

Help one another with thoughts on how to recommit to your prayer life when it falls by the wayside?

Hymn: Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Robert Robinson (1758)

O to grace how great a debtor
daily I’m constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here’s my heart; O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.