

# Beliefs Matter

## Discovery Starters

### Prayer

We are called to **engage in intercessory prayer** for the people and causes on God's heart, including standing against evil in every form  
[Gen 18:20-33](#); [Exo 32:1-16](#); [Jdg 3:9,15](#); [1Ki 8:22-61](#); [Eze 22:30-31](#);  
[Eze 33:1-11](#); [Mat 6:5-15](#); [Mat 9:36-38](#); [Eph 3:14-21](#); [2Th 3:1-5](#)

### Belief #4 – Prayer: Mentored in Prayer

#### Biblical Foundation:

*"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

*"When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! Pray like this:*

*Our Father in heaven,  
may your name be kept holy.  
May your Kingdom come soon.  
May your will be done on earth,  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us today the food we need,  
and forgive us our sins,  
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.  
And don't let us yield to temptation,  
but rescue us from the evil one.*

*"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins (Mat 6:5-15).*

#### Discovery Starter:

This language would have been quite surprising for Jesus' audience, because in the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures God is referred to as Father on only 19 occasions (Deu 32:6; 2Sa 7:14; 1Ch 17:13; 22:10; 28:6; 29:10; Psa 68:5; 89:26; 103:13; Pro 3:12; Isa 9:6; 63:16a,16b; 64:8; Jer 3:4,19; 31:9; Mal 1:6; 2:10). Jesus' frequent usage of the

term was a distinctive mark of Jesus' ministry. With his advent, God was no longer just "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Exo 3:6; Mat 22:32). God had met personally with these revered fathers. But as the generations passed, the reality of those intimate encounters became increasingly distant. Jesus changed all that! In him, God is no longer the distant God of the fathers. God is *our* Father. There is a fresh proclamation of familial intimacy in Jesus' words.

The term "Father" is a reflection of the intimacy inherent within the Trinity. Jesus lived His earthly life conscious of the love His Father had for Him. In the place of prayer Jesus three times underscores His experience of the love of the Father (Joh 17:23,24,26). Indeed, much of the imagery of God as Father is expressed in the context of prayer (Mat 6:6,8-9; 11:25-26; 26:39,42; Mar 11:25; 14:36; Luk 10:21; 11:2; 22:42; 23:34,46; Joh 11:41; 12:27-28; 17:1,5,11,21,24-25.) This is a term of devotional endearment, of prayerful passion, expressing profound relational intimacy.

If prayer is nothing more than a functional task to be fulfilled, Paul's command to "never stop praying" (1Th 5:17) is endlessly burdensome. But if prayer is a relational invitation to be embraced, it is extraordinarily winsome. Paul understood what was implied when Jesus taught us to pray "Our Father..." – God is inviting us into unceasing relational intimacy in which we can always bear our hearts to him as we walk in continual, familial fellowship with him. Prayer can take many forms. It can include strategic intercession, personal petitions, spiritual warfare, high praises, adoring worship, intentional listening, faith-filled proclamations, repentant confession leading to heart realignment and reflective meditation. But whatever the particular expression, the essence of prayer is the call to live continuously in the refreshing renewal of God's presence.

### **Keep Going:**

Prayer was a part of Jesus' daily life – and it should be part of ours as well. Consider the example left by Jesus in the following passages. What did Jesus model for us when he prayed:

1. at the time of his baptism (Luk 3:21-22)?
2. in the early morning in Capernaum (Mar 1:35)?
3. late at night after feeding the 5,000 (Mat 14:23; Mar 6:46)?
4. all night before selecting the twelve (Luk 6:12-16)?
5. alone (Luk 11:1)?
6. with three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luk 9:28-36)?
7. with the twelve disciples (Luk 9:18)?
8. blessing the children (Mat 19:13-15; Luk 18:15-17)?
9. blessing before eating (Mat 14:19; Mar 6:41; 8:7; Luk 9:16; 24:30-35)?
10. to calm the storm (Luk 8:24-25)?
11. to thank God (Luk 10:21; Joh 11:41-42)?
12. to glorify God (Joh 12:27-29)?

13. for the protection of his disciples (Luk 22:31-32)?
14. for the unity of his disciples (Joh 17:1-26)?
15. while establishing the new covenant (Mat 26:26-29; Mar 14:22-25)?
16. in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mat 26:36-46; Mar 14:32-42; Luk 22:39-46)?
17. for forgiveness upon his enemies (Luk 23:34)?
18. entrusting himself into God's care (Luk 23:46; Joh 19:30)?

Jesus' famous prayer recorded in the Sermon on the Mount is known as the Lord's Prayer. But on eight other occasions the words of our Lord's prayers have been recorded. You will find them all in the following passages. Take time to read them ... to meditate on them ... to pray them.

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| ● Mat 6:9-13; Luk 11:2-4             | Jesus models prayer           |
| ● Mat 11:25-27; Luk 10:21-22         | while in public ministry      |
| ● Joh 11:41-42                       | while in public ministry      |
| ● Joh 12:23-33                       | while in public ministry      |
| ● Joh 17:1-26                        | while preparing for the cross |
| ● Mat 26:39,42; Mar 14:36; Luk 22:42 | while preparing for the cross |
| ● Mat 27:46; Mar 15:34               | while on the cross            |
| ● Luk 23:34                          | while on the cross            |
| ● Luk 23:46                          | while on the cross            |

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