

Lord of Our Prayers



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Isa. 53:12; John 14:12-14; Rom. 8:15, 18, 34; Gal. 4:5, 6; Eph. 1:5; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6, 12:24.*

Memory Text: “‘And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son’ ” (*John 14:13, NKJV*).

Key Thought: Those who choose to live under the lordship of Christ are called to follow the Master in a life of prayer.

The life of our Lord. Christ's life was a life of prayer. Jesus made prayer a top priority. Mark records that “in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (*Mark 1:35, NKJV*). Luke testifies that Jesus “went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God” (*Luke 6:12, NKJV*). “No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer!”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 362.

If we follow the life and teachings of Jesus, we, too, will devote ourselves to prayer, and we will learn from the example of our Lord. Prayer is the heart and soul of the Christian life. We would be spiritually dead without it.

When we pray, let us address our prayers to our heavenly Father. Let us pray in Jesus' name. Let us pray according to His will. Let us join our Lord in the sacred work of intercession.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 6.*

Praying to Our Heavenly Father

In His personal communion with heaven, Jesus addressed God as “Father” (*John 17:1*), “Holy Father” (*John 17:11*), and “righteous Father” (*John 17:25*). Even the brief prayer of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:21 is addressed to “Father, Lord of heaven and earth.” During His agony in Gethsemane, Jesus addressed the heavenly Father using the Aramaic term *Abba* (*Mark 14:36*), an endearing name connoting the idea of “my father.” The early Christians apparently followed His example, at least on certain occasions (*see Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:6*).

Look up the following Old Testament texts. How do they reveal the kind of relationship God sought for His people, and how does the image of “Father” fit in? *Deut. 1:31, 32:6, Ps. 103:13, Prov. 3:12, Isa. 63:16, Mal. 2:10.*

Ideally, a father is to be someone who is loving, caring, protecting, someone whom a child can love, trust, and obey.

Then there’s also the biblical notion of adoption, that as followers of Christ we have been “adopted” into the Father’s household (*see Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:5, Eph. 1:5*). In Roman times, when a son was adopted, he received all the legal rights and privileges that came with the new family. As followers of Christ, we receive the fullness of salvation that comes from being the children of God. “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are” (*1 John 3:1, RSV*).

Thus, praying the name *Father* should give us comfort, hope, and joy.

Of course, many earthly fathers have been the opposite of what a father should be. What advice can you give to someone for whom the idea of father brings painful memories? How can you help him or her experience the Father’s love?

Praying in Jesus' Name

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5, NKJV).

In John 14:12-14 Jesus tells us that we should ask for things in His name. That is, what we request from the Father, we should request in the name of Jesus. What does this mean? So often, when we pray, we pray to the Father, and then we often, in our prayer, end with something to the effect, “And we ask these things in Jesus’ name.” What is implied with these words?

What are the following texts saying to us that can help us better understand the idea of praying to the Father in Jesus’ name? *Isa. 53:12, Rom. 8:34, 1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 8:6, 12:24.*

By praying in Jesus’ name, we are declaring before ourselves, before other humans, and even before the universe (*see 1 Cor. 4:9*) that we, personally, acknowledge the authority and power of Jesus Christ in our lives. By praying in His name we verbalize our personal acceptance of Him as our Savior, our Redeemer, as the One who died for our sins and the One through whom we have complete access to the Father (*see Heb. 8:1*). By praying in the name of Jesus, we can claim the promises of God that we have in and through Him. By praying in the name of Jesus, we are openly expressing our faith in Him as the One who has closed the gap caused by sin between heaven and earth, the One through whom we, as sinners, have been reconciled to our heavenly Father. “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (*2 Cor. 5:18, 19*).

By praying in Jesus’ name, we acknowledge Him and what He has done for us. At the same time, what obligations does that place on us—we who pray in His name—regarding how we live, how we speak, and how we treat others?

Praying According to the Father’s Will

(Mark 14:36; John 6:38; 1 John 5:14, 15).

Jesus declared, “ ‘For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me’ ” (John 6:38, NKJV). Even in His prayers, Jesus demonstrated His commitment to yield His own will to the will of His Father. When we pray, there are certain requests we can know for certain are in harmony with the Father’s will. For example, when we pray for salvation, Jesus assures us in John 3:16 that we are praying in accordance with the Father’s will.

List three other requests we can make with full assurance that we are praying in accordance with the Father’s will.

Request	Scriptural Support
①	
②	
③	

In other situations, it may be more difficult to determine the Father’s will. For example, have you ever prayed for someone who is sick? How do you know the Father’s will for that individual? We are told to pray for the sick and to trust that God will bring healing. But we do not know the way in which healing will come, nor do we know God’s timing. Should we then shrink back from praying for those who are feeble and weak? No! “Let your prayer include this thought: ‘Lord, Thou knowest every secret of the soul. Thou art acquainted with these persons; for Jesus, their advocate, gave His life for them. He loves them better than we possibly can. If, therefore, it is for Thy glory and the good of these afflicted ones to raise them up to health, we ask Thee in the name of Jesus, that health may be given them at this time.’ ” —Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health*, p. 375.

Go back and read Jesus’ prayer in Mark 14:36. Notice the sequence of thought: (1) His word *Abba* expresses the close relationship with His Father. (2) He acknowledges the Lord’s power. (3) He expresses His own personal desire. (4) He surrenders His own personal desire to the Father. How does this serve as a model for our own prayers? Is there any prayer you need to pray right now that reflects this same pattern? Why not get on your knees, even now, and pray it in the will of God?

Praying for Others

It is impossible to live under the lordship of Christ and pray only for yourself. When Jesus Christ is Lord of your prayers, you will join Him in interceding for others. Jesus prayed for groups of people (*see John 17:9, 20*) and also for individuals (*see Luke 22:31, 32*). Several Greek verbs are used in the New Testament to describe the prayers of Jesus. One such verb means “to beg.” This is the verb used in Luke 22:32 to describe the prayer of intercession that Jesus offered on Simon Peter’s behalf. “Satan could do nothing against the all-powerful intercession of Christ. And the prayer that Christ offered for Peter He offers in behalf of all who are humble and contrite in heart.”—Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 91.

How do the following texts help us understand why we should pray for others? *Jer. 29:7; Mark 9:29; Rom. 15:30, 31; Phil. 1:9, 10; James 5:16.*

Many times we are asked to pray for others when they are facing difficulties and trials. Lists are read in church of people who “need our prayers.” On occasion, we may be tempted to feel overwhelmed because there are so many people on our prayer list. Nevertheless, there are too many mandates and examples in the Bible of God’s faithful servants praying for others. We can’t neglect doing our part, as well. There’s a power in prayer that only those who pray in the Spirit and in truth can experience.

In fact, even science is beginning to understand more about the power of prayer. Though the issue is still debated, studies have been done that have convinced many “secular” scientists and doctors that praying for sick people does, indeed, help the sick get better—a fact that from their “scientific” perspective does not make sense. All of this simply shows how prayer is something beyond science.

What are some of the things Satan throws before our minds to make us think our prayers are not needed? Or don’t matter? What can you do to reject those thoughts and make a personal commitment to pray for others in need?

Prayer Examples

The Bible is filled with examples of powerful prayers uttered by God's people. None of these folk were perfect, none of their lives sinless, and none had any righteousness in and of themselves to commend them to God. All of them were—as all of us are—sinners in need of divine grace, in need of the incense of Christ's righteousness to mingle with our prayers and make them acceptable to a holy God (*see Rev. 8:3*). Nevertheless, in their great need, in their realization of who they were and who God was, they prayed to their Creator, their Redeemer, their heavenly Father.

Prayer is an expression of our realization that we can't do it ourselves, that there are forces beyond our control, and that we are beings dependent upon something greater than what we ourselves or what our material world could provide for us.

Below are referenced a few great prayers depicted in the Bible. As much as time allows, read each prayer (or pick one or two), and write down what thoughts come to you about what makes these prayers so powerful. As you read, ask yourself: *What can I learn from these prayers that can help my prayer life be more effective?*

1 Kings 8:15-61

Psalm 51

Dan. 9:4-19

Further Study: Perseverance in prayer. Read “The Privilege of Prayer” in *Steps to Christ*. Note what new insights impress you in the context of this week’s study.

Note: Various models for prayer have been helpful for Christians. The best-known model is the Lord’s Prayer. It is possible to recite this prayer in fewer than 60 seconds. However, if you use the main movements of this prayer as an outline for prayer, your prayer time can be expanded to last for half an hour, an hour, or even all night.

The earthly sanctuary is also a helpful model for prayer, including praise, confession, cleansing, prayer for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, empowerment through God’s Word, intercession, and intimate communion with the Lord before the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place.

Discussion Questions:

- 1** The apostle Paul encourages believers to “pray without ceasing” (*1 Thess 5:17*). What do you think that means? How can we pray “without ceasing”?
- 2** Share in class some personal experiences with prayer. You can talk about dramatic answers to prayer or about what prayer does for you, or how you understand how prayer works. What can you share that can help edify and encourage class members in their own prayer life?
- 3** Is there anyone whom you, as a class, know needs prayer? Why not stop everything and, right now, pray as a group for this person? Afterward, discuss the experience of praying as a group as opposed to praying individually.
- 4** How can you help your children, or children within your circle of influence, to experience a meaningful prayer experience with their heavenly Father?

Free to Believe

Charlotte Ishkanian

Jane Bor grew up in Kenya in a family that worshiped traditional spirits. In school she met some Adventist children who often talked about Jesus and sang lovely Christian songs. She wished she could worship Jesus instead of the spirits, but she knew her parents would not allow it.

In school, time was set aside for pastors to teach the children doctrines. Jane belonged to no Christian church, so she went to the Adventist class to learn about Jesus. More and more she wanted to follow Jesus.

When Jane finished primary school, her family sent her to marry a man from another village that they had chosen for her. She was happy to learn that the man was from a Christian family, and she hoped that she could worship God openly. But soon after their marriage, Jane's husband stopped attending church, started drinking heavily, and forbade her to attend any church. Deeply disappointed, Jane prayed that God would provide a way for her to worship Him.

Four years later Jane's husband was killed, leaving her with two small children. According to custom, she went to live with her husband's family. Jane found an Adventist congregation nearby, but her relatives forbade her to go to church on Sabbath. When Jane refused to marry her husband's brother, as tradition required, she was told to leave. She returned to her parents' home, but they were unwilling to allow her to worship God as she wished. Jane fasted and prayed to know God's will.

One day Jane's mother suggested that she go live with her sister and look for work at the nearby university. She was thrilled to learn that the university was an Adventist school. She packed her few belongings and went to live with her sister near the university. There she is free to attend an Adventist church.



Because she has no skills, the only work available for her is as a helper on a construction site. Jane works long hours and travels home every two weeks to visit her children and give her mother money to care for them. She is praying for a place of her own, where she can have her children with her and teach them the faith she has learned to love.

Jane Bor (left). Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Mission.

Book Ad



Welcome!

On beautiful Ulrueng Island, off the coast of Korea, Soon Joel Lee has accepted Christ as her Savior and joined the Adventist church. She is one of only a few members on this island. The small group currently meets in the pastor's home, but they long for a facility to which they can invite neighbors to join them. They look forward to having room to hold health and temperance meetings, and as a base to serve their community.

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help build an evangelistic center/church on Ulrueng Island.

MISSION

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on September 24
supports projects in the Northern Asia Pacific Division.