

LESSON 2 Come to God the Right Way

Have you ever heard children arguing as they play together?

“Give it to me, now!” one says.

“Why?” asks the other.

“Because I want it!” says the first.

And on they argue, back and forth. They have not yet learned how to approach others when asking for the things they want.

Some people act like these children when they pray. But although God always hears us when we pray, we need to come to Him the right way.

In this lesson, you will learn how to come to God with an attitude that shows Him the respect and honor He deserves. You will study what the Bible teaches about the way, time, and place to pray. The things you learn will give you confidence when you talk to your heavenly Father.

The Plan

- A. What is the Right Way?
- B. Attitudes for Prayer
- C. Where to Pray
- D. In What Position?
- E. In What Pattern?

The Goals

1. Explain the importance of coming to God through His Son, Jesus.
2. Follow the biblical teaching about how, when, and where to pray.
3. Discuss what the Bible says about when and where to pray.
4. Describe what the Bible says about physical positions for prayer.
5. Analyze the Lord's Prayer as a pattern for our progress.

A. WHAT IS THE RIGHT WAY?

Goal 1. Explain the importance of coming to God through His Son, Jesus.

“Does it really matter how we pray?” some people ask.
 “Don't all religions lead to God?” Jesus said:

John 14:6 “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

So we go to the Father through Jesus, on the basis of what He has done for us. We pray in Jesus' name, presenting His promises. Jesus himself is there to honor the promise, to identify us as authorized to draw on His account. The Bible tells us about this for those who believe in Him:

John 14:13 “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.”

Hebrews 10:19–22 “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of

Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us . . . let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.”

Hebrews 4:14–16 “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Application

- 1** Which of these do you mean when you use the words “in Jesus’ name” in your prayers?
- a)** I ask, not because of my goodness but because of what Jesus did for me, making me a child of God.
 - b)** I do not think of what the words mean but just use them from habit.
 - c)** I come to ask for and receive what Jesus has promised me.
 - d)** I belong to Jesus and ask Him to help me.
 - e)** This is something that Jesus would ask for, that will advance His cause, that will please Him, so I ask for it in His name.
 - f)** The words are like a magic formula that are supposed to make our prayers heard.
 - g)** Jesus, as my High Priest, please ask the Father for this in Your Name.
 - h)** I pray this way because Jesus told us to. I really do not know what the words mean.
- 2** Hebrews 10:19–22 teaches that we have freedom to approach God because of the
- a)** death of Jesus on the Cross.
 - b)** sincere repentance we show.
 - c)** prayers of the saints.
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B. ATTITUDES FOR PRAYER

Goal 2. Follow the biblical teaching about how, when, and where to pray.

Respect, Joy, Thankfulness, Confidence

Thinking about who God is and of His goodness, love, and power makes it easier for us to come to Him with the right attitudes. We come with respect and submission to our Lord and Maker, ready to do whatever He tells us. We come to our Father with joy, thankfulness, and confidence. We know God will hear and answer our prayers because He loves us and because He has promised to give us what we need. Jesus has told us about prayer:

Luke 11:9 “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

When we have truly prayed and have heard God speak to us or have seen Him answer, we learn from experience that He does hear and answer prayer. This strengthens our faith. Sometimes we have to wait with patience, but we can trust and thank God for the answer that will come.

God has no favorites. He loves everyone and welcomes us all. The apostle Peter learned this by experience and said:

Acts 10:34–35 “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.”

Humility and Repentance

Jesus told of two men to illustrate the right and wrong attitudes in prayer:

Luke 18:10–14 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts

himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Pride and a critical attitude toward others are sins. And sin separates us from the presence and blessing of God. The Pharisee was shutting the door in his own face. But repentance (being sorry for the wrong we have done and wanting to stop doing anything that is wrong) opens the door for us to receive forgiveness and God’s blessing. Humility is the opposite of pride. The tax collector knew he was a sinner and acknowledged it. He knew he did not deserve God’s blessing, but he came asking for mercy. And God forgave him.

Forgiving and Loving Others

Hatred, resentment, and unwillingness to forgive those who have wronged us will close the door between God and us. Jesus said:

Matthew 6:14–15 ““For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.””

If we have done someone else wrong, Jesus teaches us that we should make it right and ask forgiveness. We should be careful to treat others with love and kindness in our home, at work, or wherever we are. Harsh attitudes hinder prayer.

Matthew 5:23–24 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”

Estela, a young Peruvian school teacher, was praying for God to fill her with the Holy Spirit. As she prayed, God brought to her mind the resentment she felt against a certain person. “Lord,” she prayed, “I forgive her. Please forgive me for holding resentment against her. Tomorrow I will write her a letter and ask her to forgive me.” Immediately a deep joy and peace filled Estela and she praised God as He answered prayer and filled her with His Spirit.

Sincerity and Earnestness

Mean what you say when you pray. Too often we simply say a prayer without thinking about what we are saying. Jesus had a great deal to say about this.

Application

3 Below is a list of attitudes. Underline each one you want to have when you pray.

Joyfulness	Sincerity	Pride
Listening	Earnestness	Praise
Thankfulness	Repentance	Love
Forgiveness	Confidence	Humility
Worship	Obedience	Respect

C. WHERE TO PRAY

Goal 3. Discuss what the Bible says about when and where to pray.

God is everywhere; so, wherever we are God will hear us and answer. However, we learn in the Bible that there are special places of prayer. For instance, our churches, like God's temple in Jerusalem, have been dedicated to God as His house where we go to meet with Him. Churches are special places of worship.

Mark 11:17 Jesus said, “Is it not written: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?””

Jesus taught that the place was not as important as the attitude, but He also said we should pray privately at home. We follow this principle when we pray silently within ourselves, but it is good to have a place where we can get alone with God regularly. There we can think and listen quietly for the voice of God when we pray.

Matthew 6:6 “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

God shows us in His Word that we should pray with others too. You may do this with a friend who is willing to be a prayer partner with you. If possible, pray with your family. In many places prayer groups meet in homes or in other convenient places. We read about one such group in the book of Acts, a women’s group that met down by the river. Then of course, you will have a special opportunity to worship God as you join together with other believers in His house.

The Bible teaches that there are many times and situations when we can grow through the blessing of prayer. So, pray wherever you are.



Application

4 You have just read a list of six places or situations where you can pray. Write the list in your notebook, then describe the special benefit each situation has. Are you receiving these benefits by using all your opportunities to pray?



D. IN WHAT POSITION?

Goal 4. Describe what the Bible says about physical positions for prayer.

In the Bible people sometimes stood to pray, showing respect and reverence. Sometimes they knelt, as they might before a king to show their respect, submission, and willingness to obey his orders. The psalmist spoke of praying in bed during the night. We read, also, that David “sat before the Lord,” and the 120 believers were sitting when the Holy Spirit filled them on the Day of Pentecost. If we are praying for a long time, it is important to be comfortable and relaxed, thinking about God instead of about how uncomfortable we are. Sometimes, though,

we may want to stand up and walk about in order to stay awake when we pray.

Some pray with closed eyes to shut out any sights that would distract their attention from God. Some lift their eyes toward heaven in prayer as Jesus did. Sometimes we bow our heads and clasp our hands in an attitude of worship and of earnest request. Sometimes we take the hand of the person with whom we are praying, uniting our prayers in agreement. As people did in Bible, we also lift our hands to God in praise. We may place our hands on the person for whom we are praying, trusting that God will use our hands as His to heal or encourage the person.

Psalm 95:6 “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”

Psalm 134:2 “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD.”

Application

- 5** The examples of prayer in the Bible show us that when we pray, we
- a)** must kneel down and bow our heads.
 - b)** may be in any position.
 - c)** need to close our eyes.



E. IN WHAT PATTERN?

Goal 5. Analyze the Lord’s Prayer as a pattern for our progress.

Jesus has given the best pattern for our prayers as well as wonderful teachings about prayer. We call it “The Lord’s Prayer” and use it in two ways: 1) as a prayer that we memorize and repeat, and 2) as a pattern for other prayers.

Matthew 6:9–13 “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘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. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”

You may be used to a different translation of this prayer. Some of the ancient manuscripts include the words, “for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” We begin and end our prayer with recognition of who God is and looking forward to the time when He will establish His perfect rule on earth. *Amen* means “may it be so.”

In this model prayer, Jesus tells us to pray “Our Father in heaven.” God is the One to whom we pray. We come with confidence as His children to talk with Him about our needs. We come respectfully, praying that His name may be honored.

One of the first and most important things for us to pray about in every circumstance is for God’s will to be done—that He may do what He knows is best. As we let Him guide us in prayer, He will impress on our minds what to pray for. We cooperate with Him as we pray in His will for those things that are best for our family, our nation, and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our heavenly Father loves us and wants to give us whatever we need for each day—the work to earn our food, the strength and health to work, the wisdom, the right relationships, shelter, clothing—He tells us to ask for it.

We are to pray for God to forgive us for anything that we have done wrong. This includes getting rid of any bad feelings that we may have toward anyone else. It also means that we stop doing what is wrong. We ask for God’s help to do right, along with His forgiveness for our faults and failures.

We pray for God to guide and help us resist temptation. We ask to be kept safe from the power of Satan, the tempter, the evil one, the enemy of God and of our souls. This may include deliverance from his attacks: from doubts, fears, wrong attitudes, sickness, discouragement, anything that would hinder us from doing God’s will.

We close our prayer by reminding ourselves that God is in control. He will give the victory. His power is sufficient for all our need. And someday we will see Him and live with Him forever in His perfect kingdom. His is the glory forever, Amen!

Application

6 Read “The Lord’s Prayer” line by line. Think about the meaning of each line and talk to God about how the words apply to you.

7 Now pray, using each line as your pattern. You may begin like this: “My Father in heaven, may I bring honor to Your name today in all that I do. May I follow Your will and trust You for my daily needs”

8 If you have not memorized the Lord’s Prayer yet, learn it now. If the congregation in your church prays it together, learn that version so you can pray it also.



Check Your Answers

- 4** Your answer. Learning to pray in all kinds of different situations will cause your relationship with your heavenly Father to grow stronger.
- 1** Answers a), c), d), e), and g) are all good ones. When you pray in Jesus' name, think of them. Too often, we could give answers b), f), or h). Answer f) is, of course, completely wrong.
- 5** **b)** may be in any position.
- 2** **a)** death of Jesus on the Cross.
- 3** Your answer. The attitude of pride is the only one you should avoid. These lessons will help you develop the right attitudes.

