



# Teach Us to Pray

November 15, 2020

## Introduction

## Invitation

## Prelude

### Call to Worship:

Let us rejoice in God's love for us as we worship together today! This is a time for prayer and praise because of all God has done for us through the gift of his Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ! Let us worship!

**Hymn:** "Sweet Hour of Prayer"

**Reading the Word:** Matthew 6:5-14

## Ministry of Music

**Message:** "Teach Us to Pray"

### Prayer:

We come before you today with prayers in our hearts and minds, Gracious God. As we approach your powerful Presence, we humbly ask, as Jesus' disciples did centuries ago, "Teach us to pray." Remind us that you hear our prayers regardless of how we bring them. Help us to keep an open mind and heart so we can hear your answer, whatever it may be. Thank you for the joy of being able to pray to you, knowing that you hear our prayers and answer them. Amen.

### The Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Hymn:** "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

Matthew 6:5-14

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.

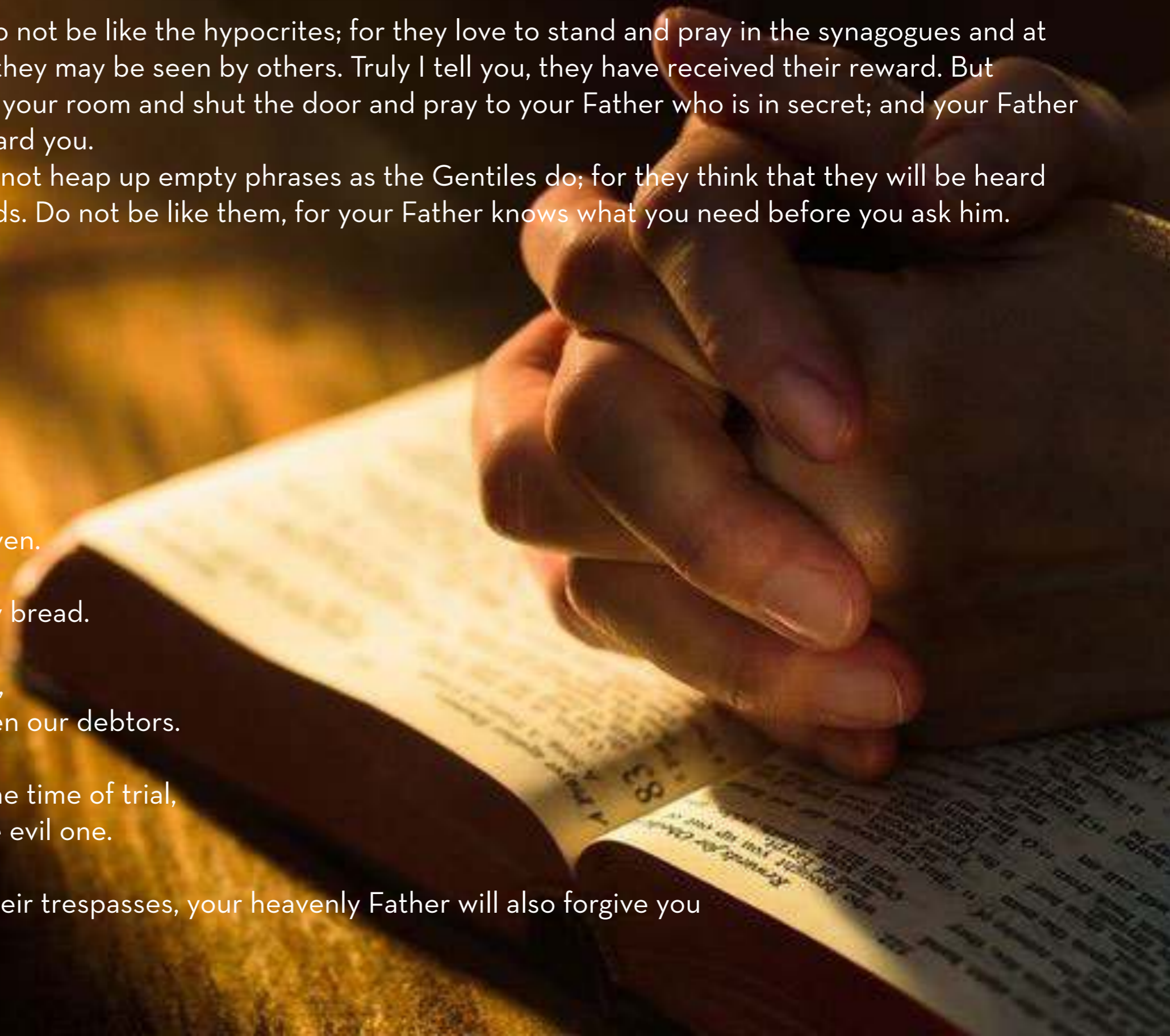
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And do not bring us to the time of trial,  
but rescue us from the evil one.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you





**SERMON TRANSCRIPT  
GIVEN BY  
Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson**

# Message “Teach Us to Pray”

## Rev. Dr. Debra Hanson

Matthew 6:5-14

Have you ever struggled with prayer? Have you ever wondered if you needed special words or phrases or to stand, sit, or kneel in a certain position? Maybe you thought your prayers needed to be a certain length or have some eloquent words to offer. When I became a pastor, I discovered that most of the time, I was expected to offer the prayers because supposedly, I had more practice and knew what to say.

I’m here to tell you that all pastors start right where everyone else does - learning how to pray and wondering if we are “doing it right.” When we end up being the “professional pray-er,” others don’t have the opportunity for to offer their prayers from their own perspective, so today, I thought it might be interesting to talk about prayer.

The setting for our scripture lesson in Matthew takes place while Jesus is up the mountain delivering the Sermon on the Mount and beginning to teach the disciples about what it means to follow him. By this time, his newly called disciples would have seen him pray often, in many circumstances, and in many locations.

One commentator, Dr. David Lose, said that Jesus prayed “in the morning, in the evening, in the middle of the night. On a mount, on the plain, when it was dark and when it was light. Inside, outside, alone, or with friends. In thanksgiving, in distress, and toward all kinds of ends.”\* Jesus teaches that prayer comes from our hearts and is not restricted to a time, place, or designated group of people.

We can pray whenever we need to, want to, or have to. Our prayers can be lifted no matter where we are and for any reason because God hears our prayers no matter what. Years ago, I read Norman Vincent Peale’s book “The Power of Positive Thinking,” and I remember that he talked about “prayerizing” your life. In other words, pray whenever you can, throughout the day, and wherever you are. Filling our lives with prayer helps us to feel that we have a Companion on the journey.

Maybe we struggle with WHAT to pray. In essence, prayer is conversation with God, so when we pray, we can talk with God, and then spend time listening. In our conversations with God, we grow in trust and build a relationship with God. When we listen, we can begin to hear God’s voice in a variety of ways. Sometimes we have an “aha” moment; other times we may hear an answer through what someone else says or maybe while reading the Bible.

A few years ago, I remember that there was a delivery service called Guaranteed Overnight Delivery - G-O-D. One of my friends used to see their trucks bring deliveries in while she was at work, and she would call a co-worker who worked on a different floor to say, "GOD is in the parking lot." On each truck was written 1-800-Dial-GOD. It seems as if prayer could be like just picking up the phone and dialing, except we don't have to use a phone. God is accessible any time, any day, anywhere. God is but a breath away.

When we pray, we bring our deepest thoughts, needs, and longings to God and lift them up, seeking answers and guidance. It is good to remember that God may not answer our prayers in the way we expect, maybe not with what we want, but always with what we need. Prayer opens us to aligning our hearts with God's and helps us to grow in faith so that we can recognize the answers or the alternative direction where God is leading us. Prayer also gives us the assurance that God is with us and helps us go through the journey, whether it is a celebration, sorrow and grief, loss, or any other circumstance.

Yet, many of us still wonder if we are "doing it right." Jesus' disciples were in the same situation; they wanted to learn to pray, so Jesus taught them the Lord's Prayer. There are some things we can learn from the Lord's Prayer. We begin by speaking to God with humble praise and asking God to hear our prayers. Then we ask for God to care for us, to forgive us and to help us forgive others. We also ask for God's protection and guidance, and in some churches, the prayer again closes with praise and thanksgiving.

Jesus' model helps us to recognize the importance of addressing God, praying for ourselves and others, and praising God. Maybe what we can learn the most from this prayer is the reminder that it is based on love: God's love for us, loving our neighbor as ourselves, and it invites us to show love in our actions.

The biggest mystery about prayer is not what we say, what our circumstances are, where or how we say it. The biggest mystery is that God hears us, loves us, and wants what is best for us.

Let us surround ourselves with the love of God as we pray in whatever way works for us - maybe in a variety of ways. Let us remember that God hears our prayers whether we are in church, driving our cars, standing at the sink washing dishes, working at our desks, enjoying time off, sitting by the bedside of someone who is sick, watching television news, or any other place where we might be.

Let us pray without ceasing, as the apostle Paul says (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Let us "prayerize" our lives. Let us trust in our God who loves us and walks with us as we grow in our relationship with God and others. Thanks be to God! Amen.

\*David Lose, found at [WorkingPreacher.org](http://WorkingPreacher.org)



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# PRAYER LIST

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Steve & Colleen Nelson

Scarlett

Rita and her family

Geisinger Family

Dennis Hoskins

Maria

Erika

Earl

Jim

Delores

Juliann

Jayne Griffin & Family

Jim Slater

Charles Gilman

Amelia and Michelle

Barbara Glidden

John

Gil Stebbins

Danny Westbrook

Dan Strange

Bobbie Noble

Pixie & Wayne Balt

Durgin Pines Residents & Workers

Riverside Rest Home Residents & Workers

Those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19

Those in nursing and assisted living care

Our Denomination

Our Church Family