

STUDENT STUDY GUIDE

HOW DO WE PRAY?

SESSION 2 – OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

Discovering the Relationship That Shapes Every Prayer

SESSION FOCUS

Prayer is shaped not only by what we say, but by **how we understand God**. When Jesus teaches His followers to pray, He begins with words that define the entire relationship: **“Our Father in heaven.”**

Before any requests are made, Jesus invites us to approach God from a place of **belonging, trust, and reverence**. This session explores how seeing God as Father reshapes prayer—from something we perform into a relationship we live within.

The goal is not to force a particular feeling, but to reflect honestly on how our view of God influences the way we pray.

OPENING REFLECTION

Before reading, pause and reflect honestly.

What words would you use to describe your view of God?

How comfortable do you feel approaching God in prayer?

What experiences—positive or difficult—have shaped how you relate to God?

(You may want to write a few notes before moving on.)

SCRIPTURE READING

Read **Matthew 6:9–13** slowly.

As you read, pay attention to:

- The opening words Jesus chooses
- What comes before any requests
- The tone and posture of the prayer

Do not rush. Notice what feels comforting, challenging, or unfamiliar.

KEY IDEA



Prayer begins with **relationship**.

When Jesus teaches us to pray, He starts by naming who God is—and who we are in relation to Him. Addressing God as **Father** invites us to pray from belonging, not fear or performance.

PART 1: LEARNING TO BEGIN PRAYER

The disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray. His response is not a technique, but a model that reveals how prayer begins.

Reflection Questions

- Why do you think Jesus begins prayer the way He does?
- What might this opening teach us about what matters most in prayer?
- How does beginning with relationship change the tone of prayer?

Personal Notes:

PART 2: “OUR FATHER”

Jesus invites His followers to address God as Father—a deeply relational and personal way of speaking to God.

Reflection Questions

- What does the word “Father” suggest about God’s posture toward us?
- How does this language affect your sense of closeness or distance with God?
- What emotions does this image stir for you?

Personal Notes:

PART 3: BELONGING BEFORE ASKING

Calling God “Father” suggests that prayer flows from **identity**, not achievement. We do not pray to earn God’s attention—we pray because we already belong.

Reflection Questions

- How does belonging shape the way someone prays?
- Where do people often feel they must prove themselves before God?
- What would it mean to pray without trying to impress or persuade?



Personal Notes:

PART 4: “IN HEAVEN”

Jesus balances intimacy with reverence. God is close—but also holy. Personal—but not ordinary.

Reflection Questions

- Why do you think Jesus includes the phrase “in heaven”?
- How does this help hold together closeness and awe?
- How can prayer remain both honest and reverent?

Personal Notes:

PART 5: HOW WE APPROACH GOD

Our approach to prayer often reveals what we believe about God.

Reflection Questions

- When you pray, do you tend to feel confident, cautious, distant, or uncertain?
- What assumptions about God might shape that posture?
- What might God be inviting you to trust more deeply?

Personal Notes:

LOOKING FORWARD: SHAPING PRAYER MOVING AHEAD

Prayer is not about finding perfect words—it is about growing in relationship.

As you continue this study:

- What might it look like to begin prayer from belonging rather than effort?
- How could your view of God reshape your prayers?
- What is one gentle shift you want to carry forward?

Personal Response:

CLOSING PRAYER

Take a moment to pray—silently or aloud—for:



- A deeper trust in God's care
 - Freedom from fear or performance
 - Openness to relationship with God
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OPTIONAL TAKE-HOME PRACTICE

This week:

- Begin your prayers simply with "Father"
- Pause before asking for anything
- Notice what it feels like to begin with relationship

Ask yourself: **What changes when I pray from belonging rather than effort?**

FINAL THOUGHT

Prayer does not begin with requests.

It begins with relationship.

You are invited to approach God not as a stranger,
but as a child who belongs.

Let prayer start where Jesus begins—with trust.

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