

Matthew 6:7-13
“The Lord’s Prayer”
WRCoB 8.4.24

Years ago, I visited a website devoted to prayer.

It was named Newprayer.com

In its intro, it says

Simply click on the 'Pray' button and transmit your prayer to the only known location of God.

That’s right, the site claims

It sends prayers via a radio transmitter
To God's last known location.

According to the website the last known location
Is a star cluster named M13.

It is believed to be the oldest stars in the universe.

Crandall Stone, 50, a Cambridge, Massachusetts
Engineer and freelance consultant
Set up the site after an evening with friends.

As they were sitting around
The conversation turned to Big Bang theory.

Someone made the comment

If everything started from one concentrated point
At the time of the explosion
God must have been there, too.

“It's the one place

Where we could be sure God was.”
Stone said.

“Then we thought that if we could find that location
And had a radio transmitter
We could send a message to God.”

Ge this, they went so far
As to consult with NASA scientists.

Then they chipped in about \$20,000
And built a radio-wave-transmitting Web site.

Stone reports they transmit
About 50,000 prayers/week
From seekers around the globe.

The website is down now.
It's for sale
If anyone is interested!

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A radio transmission to the star cluster M13?
Is that the best way to communicate with God?

The psalmist reminds us

Psalm 139:7-10 NRSV

⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;

if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

⁹ If I take the wings of the morning

and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,

and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Guys, drop the radio transmitter

And get down on your knees

God is omnipresent!

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Jesus went up on a mountain

And the crowds followed him there

And he sat down and began to teach them.

Beginning in Matthew, Chapter 5

And continuing through chapter 7

Jesus preaches what we know

As the Sermon on the Mount.

We are in chapter six.

Let's listen as Jesus teaches about prayer.

He begins by telling us
What not to do when praying.

We are not to heap up empty phrases
Thinking that the more words we use
The greater the chance we will be heard.

Instead, we are to seek a quiet place
And pray in solitude.

Public prayer has its place, to be sure
But it should be done humbly and sincerely.

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Then Jesus tells his listeners
This, then, is how you should pray (v. 9a).

And then he gives his followers the Lord's Prayer.

Whether it was meant to be a model
Of how one should pray

Or it was meant to be the prayed word-for-word
Jesus' instruction is not clear.

But we can look to an early 1st Century writing
Known as the Didache for insight.

The Didache is an early Christian Book of instruction
Written as early as 50 to 70 AD.

Scholars debate whether Matthew
Borrowed from the Didache, or vice versa.

Interestingly, as a side note
It instructs believers to baptize
In the exact same method we do as Brethren.

Kneeling, total immersion, three-times forward
In the name of the trinity.

But that's for another discussion.

The Didache also includes, the Lord's Prayer.

And in fact, the prayer is almost the exact replica
Found in the King James Version.

Here is the version from the Didache

The Didache [trans. Kirsopp Lake]_VIII 2-3

*2. And do not pray as the hypocrites, but as the Lord
commanded in his Gospel, pray thus:*

"Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, as in Heaven so also upon earth;

give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debt as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into trial, but deliver us from the Evil One, for thine is the power and the glory forever."

3. Pray thus three times a day.

According to the Didache

Believers were to pray the Lord's Prayer
Three-times/day.

It was meant to be recited word-for-word.

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The KJV of the prayer is divided into three sections
With three subsections in each.

Our Father, who art in heaven

- 1. (addresses God)**
 - a. Hallowed be thy name**
 - b. Thy Kingdom come**
 - c. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**
- 2. (addresses human's needs)**
 - a. Give us this day our daily bread**

But our best example is Jesus himself.

The Gospels share that Jesus pray all the time.

Mark 1:35;

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Matthew 14:23;

²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone

Mark 6:46

⁴⁶ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray

Luke 5:16

¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 6:12;

¹² One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

Matthew 26:36

36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”

Now, let me see if I get this right.

Here is Jesus, the very Son of God
Sent by the LORD God
Creator of all things in heaven and earth.

Anointed with the Holy Spirit
Empowered to do great things
The One who was in the very beginning
The Alpha and Omega
The Word turned flesh

And he finds it valuable
To spend whole nights in prayer?

Can we begin to see the significance of prayer?

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Philip Yancey writes

If prayer stands as the place where God and human beings meet, then I must learn about prayer.

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Luke 11:1a

**¹ One day Jesus was praying in a certain place.
When he finished, one of his disciples said to him,
“Lord, teach us to pray . . .**

The disciples didn't ask, “teach us HOW to pray,”
But “teach us TO pray.”

And maybe that's the lesson for us today.

To use the Lord's Prayer as a stepping stone
To deepening our communion with God.

To develop the habit of prayer life
Personally, and corporately.
Privately and publicly

You don't have to be eloquent
Using big words and lots of them
To express your praise and needs to God.

Jesus clearly says in our Scripture Lesson.

Matthew 6:8 NIV

**⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what
you need before you ask him.**

God knows our hearts.

In prayer, we can know our hearts too.

There are, of course, different kinds of prayers.

From praise, and thanksgiving
Supplication and intercessory
Lament and prayers of anguish

Whatever the reason for praying
God hears you.

God may or may not answer your prayer
In the way you might wish God to answer.

But if you are open to God's Holy Spirit
God will answer your prayer
In the way God sees fit.

Prayer is the opportunity to reach deep
Into the recesses of our souls

And share with the One who loves us unconditionally

The lesson is not to learn how to pray
But to learn to pray.

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Let's consider our own prayer life.

Is it a source of strength and comfort?

Is it something we'd like to nurture more?

Remember the Lord's Prayer

It is a wonderful prayer to start and end your day.

Pray it slowly, sincerely, and deliberately.

And remember also, Jesus is present everywhere.

We don't need a radio transmitter
To make our prayers heard by God.

God hears all, sees all, and knows all.

Jesus saw immense value in prayer.

If the Son of God needed to pray
Then what does that say about us?

My prayer today is that the Lord's Prayer
Will inspire all of us
To make it our own cornerstone of faith.