

Acts 1:24-25

And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

In today's devotional, this is the first recorded prayer after Jesus had ascended up to heaven, and the Apostles with about 120 men were together with Peter discussing what had happened and what Judas Iscariot had done.

† *Acts 1:15-17 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, "Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry."*

And as you read on, they discussed who should replace Judas Iscariot; and I love how they do that, which was to pray and ask the Lord who should replace Judas Iscariot. That's where today's verses come into play as we read that prayer, which I want to focus on today.

† *And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."*

Two things I want us to notice in this prayer, and that's how the prayer was started, as well as how it ended. I also want to remove some myths that we have learned about how to pray. Now before I go any further, one note is, if you do these things, you are not wrong and you don't need to stop praying that way, but I pray that this will help you in your prayer time with the Lord.

First, notice Peter does not start out with "Our Heavenly Father" like we have been taught to do. So did Peter pray incorrectly? No, not at all. But if you look in the bible, you will not find one instance where a prayer started out with "Our Heavenly Father". And even though Jesus taught it, we do not read of one prayer starting out with "**Our Father which art in heaven**" either.

So, where do we get that opening statement from, or why are we taught to pray that way? I believe it's a form of how Jesus taught the disciples when they asked Him about prayer.

† *Luke 11:2 So He said to them, "**When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.**"*

“*Our Father in heaven*” sounds a lot like “*Our heavenly Father*” but it does not mean you have to start each prayer that way. But when Jesus taught them to pray, He was telling them to acknowledge Who God is when you start your prayer, and as you read through the bible, there are many ways God is acknowledged for Who He is in prayer.

Second, notice Peter does not end this prayer with “*In Jesus name I pray. Amen*”. Once again, there is not one recorded prayer in the bible that ends with “*In Jesus Name, Amen*”. So why are we taught to end our prayer that way if the bible does not record anyone doing it? I believe that it’s from what Jesus said:

† **John 14:13-14** *And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*

And what Jesus taught has been taken to the extreme of always ending with “*In Jesus name I pray. Amen.*” It’s almost like someone has taken what Jesus taught and turned it into a magic formula where you must say “*in Jesus name*” or you won’t get an answer. But that’s not what Jesus taught, and the emphasis was not on saying to pray in Jesus name, at the end of each prayer, but more so “*that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*” It’s praying that the Lord God would be glorified in our prayers, because Jesus always pointed to the Father, never to Himself to be glorified and we should do the same in our prayer life, as well as our lives in general.

So, once again, is it wrong if you don’t start your prayer with “*Our Heavenly Father*” or end it with, “*in Jesus name I pray. Amen.*” No, not at all, because we see in scripture how someone came up with those phrases. So it’s not wrong if you start and end that way either. Just don’t let it hold you back in your prayer life on how you pray, because, we were taught as children to pray the following things, but they are not taught, according to the bible, as a requirement for prayer:

You don’t have to pray with your eyes closed.

You don’t have to fold your hands.

You don’t have to kneel on your knees and other things that we have been taught to do, because God never said in the bible that you must do it this way and this way only.

I often pray with my eyes open, and sometimes I will close them.

I rarely fold my hands in prayer, and some times I have them open, as a sign of offering, or handing my requests to God.

I also stand, kneel, and sit at various times when I pray, and when I do, the position of my legs, hands and eyes do not affect my words. Because prayer is not a matter of the position of the body, but rather the position of the heart.

The Disciples asked Jesus how to pray in **Luke 11:2-4 (KJV)**, “*And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our*

sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”

When you read Jesus’ response, remember not to get caught up in man made traditions, or even to repeat a prayer template, and simply speak your heart to God.

As a musician and when I record music, I have a template in my recording software that has the basic tracks for audio, more tracks for effects, plugins for others Apps, etc. But it is just a template to help me get started in recording, because I add a lot more to it than just what the template has given me, because I have the ability to add all kinds of tracks and effects and layer upon layer of music and instruments and vocals to the recording. I simply take that template and use it to start to pour my heart into recording and producing music for the Lord.

With music in mind, did you realize that when you sing to the Lord a worship song, you are actually praying to God or Jesus, because prayer is a communication between you and God, and even though a song does not beginning with “Our Heavenly Father” or end with “in Jesus Name. Amen” you are still talking or communicating with God. We read to **“pray without ceasing” 1 Thessalonians 5:17** Well one way you can do that is by singing to the Lord, because it means you are communicating with the Lord, just singing the word, not speaking them.

So, with all that in mind, remember as we follow Jesus template for prayer in **Luke 11:2-4**, we should pour our hearts into prayer by:

- ✎ First acknowledging God for Who He is... GOD **“Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.”**
- ✎ Next, giving thanks for His daily provisions **“Give us day by day our daily bread.”** (One note on this is, in order to ask and thank God for His provisions each day, you must pray everyday.)
- ✎ Pray confessing our sins **“And forgive us our sins”**
- ✎ Pray for others **“we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.”**
- ✎ And pray for God’s guidance and direction for each day **“And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”**

Don’t complicate it or think of all these rules, because God does not want to hear a bunch of rules from you, but rather a bunch of your heart from you, towards Him!

† **Psalm 119:145-152 (NLT2)**
*I pray with all my heart; answer me, LORD!
I will obey your decrees.
I cry out to you; rescue me,
that I may obey your laws.
I rise early, before the sun is up;
I cry out for help and put my hope in your words.
I stay awake through the night,*

*thinking about your promise.
In your faithful love, O LORD, hear my cry;
let me be revived by following your regulations.
Lawless people are coming to attack me;
they live far from your instructions.
But you are near, O LORD,
and all your commands are true.
I have known from my earliest days
that your laws will last forever.*