



## Prayer That Changes Us

by Kendra Hanes

It is with a certain amount of fear that I put pen to paper on the matter of prayer. I have been stretched in prayer lately, considering new and old forms of prayer and seeing where I fall short. In the midst of this growth I have also been considering how others might pray for friends, acquaintances, and loved ones who are struggling with homosexuality.

There are great men and women of prayer that have written eloquent books on the subject, yet sifting through those could take years. God's own words to us in Scripture are rich, so I will stick mostly to them in answering how we can pray for someone in the lifestyle or for someone struggling with homosexual attractions.

First, I would like to comment on our mindset going into prayer. God instructs us to pray without ceasing. This is not just a matter of persevering when we don't see how God is answering our prayers. It's a matter of keeping a frame of mind that is always ready to pray, whether that is praying in the midst of doing the dishes, driving to work, writing a report, or reading the newspaper.

Second, we should not come to God expecting to "fix" someone else's lifestyle through prayer. This does not discount the power of God to work in someone else's life, but the focus should be on God doing His work, which often looks different than we might expect. Our first priority in praying for others should be that they will have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. If they already have a relationship in Christ, the priority in prayer is still that they grow in that relationship. Let God work in each person in His own time and way through their relationship with Him.

For the actual act of prayer, one method of praying for another is following the Lord's Prayer. In looking at the Scriptures surrounding the Lord's Prayer, there are two simple guidelines that Jesus laid out for us. First, he taught humility. Right before giving the Lord's Prayer in the book of Matthew, he warns against the hypocrisy of praying to get attention. Then, within the Lord's Prayer, he models that we should pray for God's will to be done, putting God's will above our own. This, of course, includes surrendering when we think God should act, trusting His timing for His answers to prayer. In a sermon on Matthew, chapter 8, Martin Luther concludes, "Therefore faith prays in such a manner that it commits everything to the gracious will of God; it lets [God] determine whether it is conducive to his honor and to our benefit." Second, Jesus explicitly taught perseverance. In Luke's gospel, Jesus gives the example of a man knocking on a friend's door asking for bread late at night. Though the friend did not want to get up, the persistent knocking got him to respond. How many of us want to give up after seeing no immediate change or expected result?

The Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew 6:

*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."*

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*** All prayer should intentionally glorify God. Before we begin praying for another person, we should remember who God is and give attention to praise.

***Your kingdom come, your will be done.*** This is a time to invite God to work in that person's life. Without assuming we know how it should look, we should pray that God's will would be done in their life. In some ways, this will feel vague. This is because God has a plan that we are not privy to. We should be praying that his plans unfold how he wants them to, not how we want them to.



**Give us this day our daily bread.** A guiding question here is, "What does the person I am praying for need?" These are specific, concrete needs. The need may be monetary, medical, relational, or something else entirely. If this is for someone we know well, we'll know more specifics. For an acquaintance, we may have to generalize a bit more. In both cases, we can pray in faith knowing that God will provide for each need.

**Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.** There are some questions we may want to bring before God in regard to our relationship with the person we are praying for. "Do I have something against the person I am praying for?" "Have I forgiven that person?" "Does that person know I have forgiven them?" "Have I acted wrongly toward them?" "Do I need to seek forgiveness from them." Aside from these relationship concerns, we may be grieved by specific sinful acts in which the person is engaged. If this is the case, the best example I know of is Nehemiah. When he prays fervently for his nation's sins, he includes himself in them, acknowledging that he and his people have collectively failed to keep God's commandments. Nehemiah 1:4-7 reads,

*When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses."*

**Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.** We can pray that a person will not be tempted to sin. And in praying for the person struggling with homosexuality, we can pray specifically that the person will be protected from influences that lead them into homosexual behavior. More importantly, it helps focus us on God as the deliverer and Satan as the enemy. We are not delivering someone by our prayers. God is. We are not fighting people. God redeems people. It is on this note that the Lord's Prayer ends.

In leaving the example of the Lord's Prayer, I want to end with a thought from Oswald Chambers. In *My Utmost for His Highest*, he writes, "True intercession involves bringing the person, or the circumstance that seems to be crashing in on you, before God, until you are changed by his attitude toward that person or circumstance." May you allow God's heart to transform yours through prayer for others.



Whether sharing a testimony, answering questions, or giving a ministry highlight, **communication** with you is a priority for us. It gives us incredible opportunities to extend a message of hope to those impacted by homosexuality.

For more information, visit: [www.midvalleyfellowship.org/communicate](http://www.midvalleyfellowship.org/communicate)

## Pray With Us

*Heavenly Father,  
Scripture teaches us that  
every good and perfect gift  
comes from you.  
Help us to use wisely  
the gifts that you have given us,  
guiding us in your purposes.  
We ask for the ability to  
hold loosely all that  
we have received,  
remembering that you  
have called us to serve.*

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