

The Prayer Jesus Taught Us to Say:

Or, Why They Killed The One Who Taught Us to Call God Daddy

Notes by David Ewart

Our	<i>Notice that you are not praying to "my" Father, but to "our" Father. As you begin to pray, intentionally bring others to mind. Who are you including in your "our?" Who are you overlooking? Forgetting? Which part of the universe is not part of your "our?" Or, which part of the universe excludes you? Looks down on you? Jesus invites us all to belong to his "our."</i>
Father	<i>God is not male, nor female. But neither is God impersonal. God is not like an energy or a force. The Aramaic word Jesus uses here is the word a baby or child might use: Abba, which might better be translated, Dada. Jesus is inviting us to address God intimately, with deep trust and vulnerability. Since "Father" is meant as a metaphor, feel free to explore other images of deep trust and vulnerability. Try using the Aramaic Abba, or Dada, Mama, etc.</i>
Who art in heaven	<i>Let's be clear that we are not talking about any earthly fathers (no matter how kind and loving they may be).</i>
Hallowed be thy name	<i>All prayer begins with adoration. Try to get your heart around how great God is. ("Hallowed" means: May your name be revered as holy.) This also a request that God hallow God's name. That is, that God will respond not because of who we are, but because of who God is, because of God's good name / honour / reputation.</i>
Thy kingdom come	<i>The operative word in this phrase is "thy." THY kingdom come - as opposed to the way things currently are, and seem likely to be headed. God, we want to live in a land ruled by you; by your justice and your grace.</i>
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.	<i>Again, the stress is on the word "thy." It is good that there already is a place where God's will is being done - heaven. Imagine what heaven is like. Now ask that earth be like that. Now imagine being the Roman occupying armed force. Do you think this prayer might make you a bit nervous? Do you think that continuing your violent, unjust occupation is aligned with God's will?</i>
Give us this day our daily bread	<i>For some of us, this means: Help us to let go of fear about not having enough. Help us to be satisfied with what is sufficient for today. (Try writing "Give us this day our daily bread" on all your credit cards.) But for all of us, the "us"</i>

	<p><i>means: Give every man, woman and child enough to eat today. Or better still: Give us all the will and means to live in a way that all may have enough to eat today. Or best: Give banks, business and rulers the will to operate in a way so that all may have enough to eat today.</i></p>
<p>And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.</p>	<p><i>Yikes! This is the place to pray really hard about those grudges, grievances and gripes that we carry around like garbage in our souls. This is asking God to help you forgive as God forgives. Do not assume that you know how God forgives, or that God forgives the way you do. God's forgiveness is always transformative, just, healing and restores us to right relationship. The word "trespasses" can also be translated as "debts." So this is a place to also reflect on your attitude toward money. What would the world be like if all banks, rulers and employers lived by this prayer?</i></p>
<p>And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.</p>	<p><i>Since temptations are unavoidable, I've always thought we should change this to, "Lead Thou us into temptation," meaning, "God, as we face this temptation, please be in front of us. You take the lead, and we will follow you, and be delivered from this evil." Either way, this asks for God's protection and guidance as we deal with temptations and trials in our lives. This asks that we live with courage and integrity.</i></p>
<p>For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen</p>	<p><i>Again, the word to stress is "thine." Lots of people and things want to rule us, to have power over us, and to claim our attention. But for us, God alone is the centre of life. The word "Amen" means: May it be so - today.</i></p>