

## CityPrayer: Using the Lord's prayer to pray for our cities.



One of the most strategic questions recorded in the Bible is this: Lord, how should we pray?

Here is Jesus' answer:

*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. (Matthew 6:9-13)*

Jesus is teaching you and me to pray that God would be glorified by meeting the needs of people. Here are the four needs that Jesus highlighted:

1. Physical sustenance ("give us today our daily bread")
2. Right relationships between people and God ("forgive us our debts")
3. Right relationships among people ("as we also have forgiven our debtors")
4. Right responses to sin and Satan ("lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one")

By taking time to understand your city in these four categories, you will be able to pray specific prayers, clearly communicate the needs of your city, and be more sensitive to how God wants you to be part of His answer to your prayers.

**Action Step:** Take a moment right now to ask God to show you your city through His eyes.

## "Give us today our daily bread."



Physical needs such as food, water, clothing, shelter and safety are common to all people everywhere. However, an urban reality is that these needs are often unmet or under-met for many people.

By understanding the reasons for this in your city or neighborhood, you will be able to pray more specifically, communicate needs more clearly, and meet the needs that God wants you to meet.

### Sample research questions:

- To what degree are the basic physical needs of people being met?
  - Which needs tend to be met?
  - Which needs tend to be unmet or under-met?
- Are some groups more likely to have their physical needs met than other groups?
  - Who are these different groups?
  - Why is there a discrepancy?
- What health problems are particularly common? Why?
- What trends are influencing the physical needs of people in your city or neighborhood?

### **Action Steps:**

1. Use the results of your research to describe 3-5 physical needs of the people in your city or neighborhood that you and others will be praying for.
2. Suggest ways for people to pray - that is, what specific changes will happen in this area as the Kingdom of God comes to your city or neighborhood?

## “Forgive us our debts...”



Each person's greatest need is to have a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Until that happens, however, people will always find a way to worship created things rather than the Creator.

By understanding both what and how the people in your city or neighborhood worship, you will be able to pray more specifically, communicate needs more clearly, and more effectively point people to Jesus.

### Sample research questions:

- What are the historic religious beliefs and practices of the people in your neighborhood or city?
- What are their current beliefs and practices?
  - Do these practices vary among different geographic or demographic groups?
  - If so, how?
- To what degree are historic beliefs and practices part of current beliefs and practices?

### **Action Steps:**

1. Use the results of your research to describe 3-5 false beliefs and the ways in which they are manifested.
2. Suggest ways for people to pray - that is, what specific truths of God can directly combat these spiritual lies?

**“...as we also have forgiven our debtors.”**



We are created to live in community. However, just as sin has broken our relationship with God, it has also broken our relationships with one another.

While the brokenness of relationships is expressed in many ways, it is most damaging at the level of unforgiveness. By understanding the ways that relationships in your city or neighborhood tend to be broken, you can better pray for the healing of relationships through forgiveness.

Sample research questions:

- Men and women
  - How do men and women treat each other within marriage? in the workplace? in society?
  - How common is marriage? How frequent is divorce?
  - In what ways are women most likely mistreated? In what ways is this accepted or challenged?
- Children
  - How are children viewed?
  - Who raises children? How?
  - In what ways are children at risk? In what ways is this accepted or challenged?
- Power
  - How has power been used against the people of your city or neighborhood in the past?
  - How has the historical use of power influenced current-day relationships in government, society, business and the home?

**Action Steps:**

1. Use the results of your research to describe 3-5 common sources of broken relationships.
2. Suggest ways for people to pray - that is, what ways do the people of your city or neighborhood need to be protected from each other, and in what ways do they need to forgive one another?

**“And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.”**



Right relationships with *God*, right relationships with people and physical health and safety are all subject to threat from sin and Satan. Because of this, we are encouraged to be alert and clear-minded, to resist the devil and stand firm in the faith (1 Peter 5:8-9).

By researching the particular ways in which believers in your city or neighborhood tend to be tempted and attacked, you can support them in prayer and help them overcome sin and Satan.

Sample research questions:

- What temptations are associated with various places, neighborhoods and businesses?
- What public practices appeal to the desire for power, prestige and possessions?
- What socially accepted sins are most likely to be practiced by believers?
- What are the typical attitudes and responses of believers to private sin? to public sin?
- How does Satan tend to attack communities of faith?

**Action Steps:**

1. Make a map of your city or neighborhood that identifies areas that are associated with specific temptations.
2. Use your map and the other results of your research to describe 3-5 common ways that Satan tries to kill, steal and destroy.
3. Suggest ways for people to pray - that is, how can believers in your city or neighborhood come alongside one another in order to stand firm in their faith?

## **"Amen" - Be the Answer!**



When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, he answered by telling them how to live. Here is what I mean:

*We can't really pray for others without offering ourselves up to be part of God's answer to those very prayers.*

While I hope the Lord's prayer has encouraged you to pray specific prayers for your city and to help others do the same, my greater hope is that you are discovering how God wants you to be part of His answer to those prayers.

Let me prompt your listening with four simple questions:

1. What physical needs is God asking you to meet in His name?
2. Who is God asking you to point to Jesus and the salvation found in Him?
3. How does God want you to bring hope and restoration to broken relationships?
4. In what ways is God calling you to stand in the gap on behalf of the people in your city?

Thank you for letting me encourage and challenge you! Feel free to use the comment sections at [bit.ly/uDMMSLordsPrayer](http://bit.ly/uDMMSLordsPrayer) to stimulate me and others to love and good works.