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GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS FOR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Praying to Our Heavenly Father



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Praying to Our Heavenly Father

What Is Prayer?

Jesus taught, “Ye must always pray unto the Father in my name” (3 Nephi 18:19, page 443).

Prayer is a great blessing that allows us to communicate with our Heavenly Father and seek His guidance daily. While you are an inmate, prayer may be one of your greatest tools to help you conquer your sins and feel close to your Father in Heaven. As you pray sincerely each day, He will help you to become the person you wish to be.

Why Do We Pray?

When we pray, God hears and answers us and we draw closer to Him. We can pray for many things—for example, we should pray for strength to resist temptations. We should also pray to confess our sins to God and ask Him to forgive us.

Each day we should pray for the Lord’s guidance and help. We can pray for our families and friends, neighbors, daily work, and other activities. We should also pray for protection from our enemies. (See Alma 34:17–27, page 294.)

Prayer can help us remember our identity as children of God. We must remember to express love to Him and thank Him for the blessings He gives us each day. As we continue to ask, our Heavenly Father will give us the strength to live the gospel.

When and How Should We Pray?

We can pray either silently or aloud whenever we feel the need to communicate with our Heavenly Father. At times we may not feel like praying because we feel tired, angry, or discouraged. However, this is when we should make a special effort to pray. Satan tries to discourage us from praying so that he can tempt us to do wrong things (see 2 Nephi 32:8–9, pages 115–16). The scriptures teach us that we should pray always (see Alma 34:17–27, page 294).





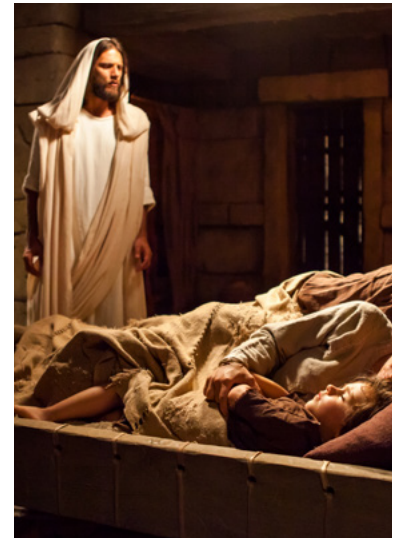
As an inmate, it may take courage for you to pray. But if you continue to pray each day, you will begin to see answers to your prayers, and you will feel God's love for you. No matter where you are or whether you stand or kneel, pray vocally or silently, you should always pray in faith and sincerity (see Moroni 10:4, page 529).

As we pray to our Heavenly Father, we should tell Him what we really feel in our hearts, confide in Him, ask Him for forgiveness, plead with Him, thank Him, and express our love for Him. At the end of our prayer, we close in the name of Jesus Christ.

How Are Prayers Answered?

Our prayers are not always answered immediately or in the way that we want, but our sincere prayers are *always* answered. Sometimes the answer may be no, because what we have asked for would not be best for us. Sometimes the answer is yes, and we have a warm, comfortable feeling about what we should do (see D&C 9:8–9, page 16). Sometimes the answer is that we must wait. Our prayers are always answered at a time and in a way that the Lord knows will help us the most.

As we live the gospel of Jesus Christ and pray always, we will have joy. "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers" (D&C 112:10, page 231).



"Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God."

Alma 37:37, page 303

LOOK
THEM
UP

Additional Scriptures

- **James 1:5–6, page 1538**
(pray in faith for wisdom)
- **James 5:16, page 1543**
(the power of a prayer from a righteous person)
- **Alma 37:36–37, page 303;**
Moroni 10:3–5, page 529
(promises for prayer)
- **D&C 88:63–65, page 169**
(seeking answers to prayers)



Personal Experience

When I first came to prison, I felt lost. I couldn't find the strength to go on with my life. Somehow I stumbled on an LDS study packet. For the first time in decades, I felt a desire to believe in God. I wondered if I could pray to Heavenly Father and if He would listen to me.

A local volunteer had written a challenge on the packet: "Ask God how He feels about you." The challenge seemed like a bad idea. I had spent half my life either defying God or denying His existence.

But the challenge persisted in my mind. I found myself wishing I could approach Him. I had been humbled by my experiences, and that humility led me to get on my knees and pray. I turned to Him with all my heart and was willing to surrender everything in order to know Him.

At first it was awkward—like I was talking to the ceiling. But then I had the courage to ask Him, "How do you feel about me?" I was no longer focused on my judgments or everyone else's. I was focused on God. And I got my answer. It was immediate and overwhelming. God does love me, and He cares about me even when I have gotten far away from Him.

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RESPONSE FORM

What blessings can you receive if you pray regularly?
What are some of the consequences of choosing not to pray?



How has prayer helped you feel closer to Heavenly Father?

What challenges do you face that could keep you from praying regularly?



How can you overcome these challenges?

Handwriting lines for the response to the first question.

How can regular prayer help you in your life right now? How will it prepare you for your life when you're released from jail or prison?

Handwriting lines for the response to the second question.

Is there anything else that you have learned from this lesson that you would like to share?

Handwriting lines for the response to the third question.

Name _____ Offender # _____

Please answer the questions on this response form, detach, and return to the address below:

Correctional Services
50 East North Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150
1-801-240-2644

Please request the next lesson you would like to study: _____