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CHURCH OF CHARLOTTE

Prayer is a Gift

Prayer Booklet



Personal Prayer

Target Training in the Secret Place

Jesus did not leave us without instruction on how to pray. He taught us what is known today as the Lord's Prayer. The words were not intended to simply be recited. This prayer is to be a lifestyle. Here is how Jesus taught us to pray:

Matthew 6:5-13

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathens do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Therefore, do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, 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 this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.


For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever."

Amen

Through this prayer Jesus is teaching us how to have relationship with our Heavenly Father. It is essential for each of us to find our "secret place" to meet with God on a daily basis, for He is there. We need to learn how to become quiet before the Father so we will develop spiritual and sensitive ears to hear what the Spirit of God has to say. Prayer is not just talking to the Father; it is also listening to Him. He longs for a genuine relationship with His family.

Just as Moses climbed a mountain at the beginning of his ministry and received the Ten Commandments from God and delivered them to the Israelites, early in Jesus' ministry, He climbed a mountain on the Sea of Galilee. There, Jesus delivered what is known as "The Sermon on the Mount," which contains the central principles of Christian discipleship (Matthew 5-7). Included in that message was His teaching on how to pray. He taught what we call the Lord's Prayer. Then, He spent His life modeling and praying the very words of that prayer. This is the Lord's Prayer as a lifestyle practiced by Jesus:





He often spent time in His secret place alone with His Father in prayer. Most of the public prayers of Jesus in the Bible are simple phrases to the Father as He abides in Him continually. Jesus greatly revered His Father's Name. In His prayer written in John 17, Jesus refers to the Name four times! The Name can be manifested, kept through – so none will be lost and declared – that His great love would be in us for Jesus and Jesus Himself in us (John 17:6, 11, 12, 26). The Kingdom of God did come on Earth as in Heaven as Jesus ministered. He sought to do the will of His Father, always – He only did what He saw His Father doing. He modeled this part of the prayer to Peter, James, and John as He brought them to His secret place while in the garden and they overheard Him cry out "Not My will, but Yours be done." He modeled surrender to the Father's will – even to death on the cross.

He, as God Himself, supplied loaves and fishes for the hungry and gave thanks to the Father as He blessed the bread – He even referred to Himself in John 6 as the bread from Heaven. He modeled what true forgiveness looks like, the very Gospel revealing a love most powerful that covers a multitude of sins. He was led into temptation and overcame the evil one by the Word. His is the Kingdom, power, and glory forever. He is returning for us and will reign forever!

That day, early in His ministry, Jesus brought perfect clarity on how He wanted His disciples to pray. He was the model of that prayer by His lifestyle and recorded prayers. The prayers of the first century church followed suit.

In the latter part of His ministry, as Jesus headed to Jerusalem to accomplish His mission, a disciple found Him in His "secret place" praying (Luke 11). This disciple asked Jesus to teach about prayer. Jesus instructed them with the same words that He told them when they started on the journey with Him. He taught them the Lord's Prayer.


He repeats himself! Toward the end of His ministry, after all His modeling of this prayer, they were still asking Him how to pray! Thousands of years later we are doing the same thing! There are endless books and teachings on how to pray. It is so simple! Jesus Himself has specifically told us how and what to pray. May we bless Him by our obedience to the Word of God.

The following is an experience in praying as our Lord Jesus instructed us to do.

Prayer Based on Knowing God and Acknowledging Who He Is

"The Apostle Paul gave his life to persuade people to reconcile to God and prepare to meet Him face to face. He knew that the character of God included love, grace, and holiness." (Living On Target).





This Holy God wants a relationship with you. He desires a love relationship with you so much that the first commandment is: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mark 12:30; Deuteronomy 6:5). He wants to reveal Himself to you so you can experience His love, grace, and holiness.

This relationship is so important to Him that when people asked Jesus what they must do to do the works of God, He said the work of God is to believe (trust) in the one He sent (John 6:28-29). Christians can perform good works for the Lord and others, but miss the most essential ministry of all – their heart relationship with Him. In the book of Acts, a healing was done by the hands of Peter and John. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13).

The purpose of the secret place is to be with Him enjoying and blessing the Lord by a personal relationship with Him. The fruit from the quiet time is the ability to intercede and minister to others.


There is no possible way to achieve biblical order in our lives unless we establish an intimate relationship with Him in our quiet place. He is the foundation upon which every other relationship or event along our journey should be built. When this is established, then, and only then, can any of us begin to exhibit a victorious and fruitful life.


He has made a way for each one of us, individually, to know Him – to experience being the object of His attention. In Matthew, Chapter 6, Jesus instructed His disciples to go into their secret place and pray the Lord's Prayer. Let us obey.

May you have an encounter with your God and Father. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek HIM. "In His presence is fullness of joy; at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore" (Psalms 16:11). He invites you to come to Him to get rest for your soul (Matthew 11:28-30), there is no better rest! Please come: He is waiting there for you.

Our Father in Heaven

Welcome to your secret place. You might feel like you are alone. You are not alone. Jesus didn't say to begin this prayer with my Father, but with our Father. When you are born into the family of God you are never alone. Even when you are physically in this secluded place there is a heart connection in the Spirit with those in the body of Christ. Most importantly, He is here. Your Heavenly Father! He came in when you did because your body is the temple of His Holy Spirit. Our Lord lives in us but we can still neglect the relationship. Rekindle your love for Him. You are not just praying to God, you are praying with Him. Pause and think on that. He is present! The Bible says, "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place." (Matthew 6:6). Acknowledge His presence (even if you can't feel Him there). Welcome Him. Tell Him you love Him. Pull up a chair and spend some time just enjoying conversation with Him.





Do you remember the first time you had an encounter with Jesus? Like a child with their father, talk to Him about it. Reminisce with Him (Psalms 40:5). Were there situations that were impossible that He brought you through? Acknowledge that He was there the day you were born and breathed life into you. Thank Him that you will not die alone. He will be with you when you take your last breath. He said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." There is nowhere you can go from His Spirit (Psalms 139).

Only Christians can call God their Father and have this kind of relationship. If you are not a Christian, He created you, but He is not your Father. Jesus said He was the only way to the Father. If you would like to be born into the family of God, that can happen right now and you can be a part of His family. From your heart, just tell Him that is what you would like. Acknowledge your sins, repent, and put your faith in Jesus Christ for your salvation. It is that simple – yet the most powerful miracle that can ever be performed.

Hallowed be Your Name


The name someone is called reflects who they are to the person addressing them. Even though your Father is God Almighty, El Shaddai, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Nissi, Creator of Heaven and Earth, etc.; in this prayer Jesus has told us to call Him our Abba, Father. He has made it so personal for us. Please make it personal for Him as well and open your heart and let Him experience the pleasure of being received in your life as "Father."

Think on His Name and let go of self. Your Father is in control. Yesterday is over, the future is not yet. All you have is this very moment. Honor your Father right now by focusing your full attention on Him. Jesus could return before you finish this prayer and all the concerns of the day would be canceled. Rest in His great and holy Name.

Pray "...hallowed be Your Name..." and then pause.

Play a worship song, sing for your Father from your heart about who He is to you, or just meditate on Him. Even Jesus sang a hymn before departing to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. As you minister to Him, surrender fully to the Holy Spirit Who lives in you. Let Him flow from your heart and take you into a place of abiding in the Lord's presence as you worship. There is nothing as precious as being in His presence. This is most important as the rest of the prayer will flow from here in His Name (or His Spirit).

You might like to bless the Lord and worship His holy Name by appreciating who He is and telling Him: OH God my Father, You created Heaven and Earth. You put the stars in place and know them all by name. You are everywhere present and nowhere absent. You see all things. All wisdom and knowledge belong to You. You know when a bird falls to the ground. You know the number of hairs on every head. You can hear every prayer from every person on the planet at the same time and each one is as an only child. You love me. You love me not because of anything I have or haven't done. I do not deserve Your affection. You love me because of who You are. You are love. Your grace is amazing. There is nothing so messy that You can't redeem it. There is nothing impossible for You. You are mighty, holy, and just. You are forever faithful and will forever keep Your word. All who come to You, You will never cast any away. You alone are God. Your name is a high tower; the righteous run into it and are safe..."





Your Kingdom come. Your will be done On Earth as it is in Heaven.

In First Samuel 8, the people asked for a king. They already had a King – The King of kings (God, Himself). He loved them and cared for them. He brought them out of Egypt and fed them with manna. But, they wanted a king like the rest of the nations in the world. They wanted a human king. The Lord was jealous over them because of His great love for them; but they wanted someone else to be their king to protect and sustain them. They wanted a military to fight for them instead of the Lord of Hosts, Himself. How that must have hurt the heart of our Father.

As you blessed the Lord by allowing Him to fill the Father place in your heart, bless Him now by receiving Him in His rightful place as the King of your heart. Let Him rule and reign over every part of your life. Pray for His literal Kingdom to come and that His will would be accomplished on Earth, as it is in Heaven, in your personal life, in your spouse's life, in your children's lives (name your children by name), in your extended family, in your church's life, etc.

If you are struggling with a child, finances, work situation, spouse, physical sickness, or other ailment, praying in this way can be very challenging, but if you press in and don't relent, it can be most freeing.

Jesus lived this prayer. He understands. He poured His heart out to His Father in the garden the night before dying on the cross. His prayer was so intense that His sweat became like blood (Luke 22:44). "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Yet, Jesus' final plea was, "Not My will, but Yours be done." As a result, the Kingdom of Heaven became forever established to those on Earth.

Even on the cross, Jesus cried out "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" – Only to finish as a trusting son to His Father saying, "Into Your hands I commit My spirit."


In many of the Psalms, David also cries out from a broken or angry heart only to press through and end the psalm with trust and faith in God's faithfulness.


Are you afraid or in pain? Has someone hurt you deeply? Are you discouraged? Have you lost your first love for the Lord? Pour your heart out to God your Father until you can release it to God, your King.

Be real, raw, and honest with Him. When the tears stop, ask Him for His Kingdom to come and His will to be done in each situation and person. Then surrender them to His care. It honors Him to have you accept His will above your own. He knows the beginning from the end and the end from the beginning. His view is from eternity while ours is very shallow. Sometimes messy, stinking crosses in our lives become the fragrance of salvation for others.

Ask Him for help and wisdom to know His will and purposes.

Be aware of thoughts, scripture passages, ideas, people and an abiding peace that you may experience. All of these could be the Lord speaking to your heart and mind.





We expect miracles because He is a miracle working God! He can also perform the miracle of changing your heart – establishing a deeper relationship with you in the middle of any circumstance. His goal is an eternal one.

Rest and trust as He responds. Throughout the scriptures God's timing on answering prayer varies between instantly to years later. But He will answer! He is a good Father and He is a just King.

"The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."
(Lamentations 3:25-26)

Prayer from a humble and thankful heart Give us this day our daily bread.

Next, we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." The early church truly depended upon God for their daily food, and so should we. For many of us, God has already provided for today's needs, yet we should pause and thank Him for His provision and continue to ask Him to supply our bread. If there is any excess above what we require, we can give it with joy to others who are hurting, hungry, in need... Or who would simply be blessed by receiving it. May we regularly thank Him for meeting our basic needs and for the privilege of giving to others (Living On Target).

Jesus patterned thanking the Father for what He has given us and sharing it with those around us.

"So Jesus commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude." (Matthew 15:35-36).

Spend this time recognizing and thanking your Heavenly Father for all He has given to you and tell Him how much you need Him and His provision.

*Thank Him for specific people and things in your life;

*Thank Him for eternal life;


*Thank Him that you have great hope in Jesus because you will never die (John 11) and that to be absent from the body will be a time of presence with the Lord;

*Thank Him for the hope of a glorified body;

*Thank Him for creating this day and putting you in it. Our Father has given us all the minutes and hours in this day; so -

*Thank Him for allowing this time, today, to be here with Him.

As a child, my father used to give me money to put in the offering plate as it passed. It was his money, not mine, but it felt so good to be able to give it to Jesus. Thank the Father for the opportunity we have to give back to Him and share with others what actually all belongs to Him.





Ask Him for any specific needs you might have.

Our need for bread is new every day. Just like in our relationship with Jesus, yesterday's provisions can't satisfy us today. We need Him fresh every day!

Jesus is the true bread (or sustenance) that came down from Heaven. He was given to be shared. At the Last Supper, He took the one loaf representing His body and distributed it to His disciples. Each had their piece of the bread, yet the pieces, together, were one loaf. Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst." (John 6:35).

"I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from Heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." (John 6:48-51).

This bread cost Him everything! Communion (optional): Acknowledge the holiness of His body and blood given for you. Prepare your heart and receive the living bread with thanksgiving.

Ask Jesus Christ to live His life in and through you continually communing – abiding in oneness. He longs for this relationship with you. He prayed for it in John 17.

**Prayer from a heart free from bitterness
Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

"And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on His right and one on His left. And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" (Luke 23:33-34).


"God, the Father, made Jesus to become sin in our place. He took all of our transgressions upon Himself at the cross. Upon our repentance from sin and placing our faith in Him, alone, the righteousness of the Almighty was imparted – and we became the righteousness of God in Christ. It was a gift given to us at conversion." (Living on Target).

Check your heart. Daily we have sin issues. We live in a flesh body and in a broken world. Is there anything that is blocking your relationship with the Lord? Nothing and no one is worth separation from His presence.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (John 1:8-9).

If you will be real with Him, you will experience Him being real to you. Let Him minister to you. Let go and let Him cleanse you from all sin and restore His life into your heart.





Was there a time when you gave a Christmas gift of a shirt or clothing to someone you wanted to bless? Seeing the person wearing and enjoying it, blessed you. Receive the gift of being forgiven, knowing it was given at a great cost by our Lord and it brings Him joy and blesses Him for you to “open it and wear it.” You will never be worthy of it and neither will anyone else.

Thank Him for the free gift of forgiveness, and then, give it away, freely, to all. That, in itself, is a gift given by you back to Him. Remember that forgiveness is not a feeling. Whether you are the one receiving forgiveness or you are extending it to someone else; it is an act of faith and obedience.

Ask the Lord if there is anyone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from. “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in Heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in Heaven forgive your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25-26).

“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19).

“So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12).

“Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled...” (Hebrews 12:15).

If the Lord instructs you to make amends or do something to make things right with a person or a situation, write it down so you won’t forget! Take care of this quickly so as to keep a free and joyful heart.


Resource: Living on Target pages – Peace and reconciliation begins with you


**Prayer from the foundation of the Word of God
Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.**

“It is important to ask the Father, daily, to protect us from the enemy and guard our hearts and minds as we put on the armor of God, piece by piece, so we can stand firm in the faith. Since we know we will be tempted by Satan to sin against God, we must ask the Lord to empower us to live lives of holiness.” (Living On Target).

Ask your Father to keep your heart pure, your motives pure, and your decisions pure for the Lord and His people. Ask Him to keep your heart soft and not allow it to be hardened and embittered in the daily battles of the faith.

As you pray on each piece in the following scripture, meditate on what each one represents. “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Ephesians 6:13-17).





Jesus understands what we go through because He lived this part of the Lord's Prayer, too. He was tempted in all ways (yet was without sin). He, Himself, was led into temptation. He was delivered by using that sword: the Holy Scriptures (Matthew 4:1-11). In order to use that sword, you must have the scriptures stored up in your heart.

"How can a young man stay pure? By reading Your Word and following its rules."
(Psalms 119:9).

"If you abide in My Word, you are My disciples indeed." (John 8:31).

This is a time to LISTEN to Him through His Word

Jesus said in John 10 that His sheep will know His voice. Ask the Lord to teach you how to discern His voice from other voices. When He speaks, it will be by wisdom from above and through His Spirit. His words cause you to love Jesus and love people:

On wisdom – "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."
(James 3:17-18).

His Spirit – "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23).

"For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

Pray: Ask the Lord to use the sword of the Word to do surgery on your heart, soul, and spirit as needed.

Read your Bible systematically – Choose a book from the Bible and read chapter by chapter. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you as you open the Bible and listen from your heart.

Journal our acronym for Living On Target:


L – Listen to the Holy Spirit and underline scriptures that speak to your heart.

O – Observe what the scripture is saying and its application personally to you.

T – Take it to the Lord and respond by applying it to your own life through actions of obedience.

**Close your prayer time in Praise and Worship
Declare: For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the
Glory forever.**





The Lord's Prayer was a lifestyle for Jesus. May we grow in making this prayer our lifestyle. In all situations continue to acknowledge His Fatherhood and Kingship and desire His Will. Thank Him for daily blessings whether they are physical or spiritual. Ask for His help as needs come up for wisdom or provision. Cry out to Him when hurt or afraid and rejoice with Him when joyful, ask for forgiveness and forgive when there is conflict. Respond to temptation by scriptures or even by the truth in your heart. Ask Him to keep you from evil. Worship the Lord continually by your actions. Practice abiding in His Name or presence.

Walk in freedom and joy! Like Peter and John, you have been with the Lord today. May the presence of Jesus, love of the Lord, and the Kingdom of Heaven advance wherever you go.

RESOURCE: PEACE AND RECONCILIATION BEGIN WITH YOU

Jesus reemphasized the importance of forgiveness right after He taught us how to pray. Matthew 6:14-15 says, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Obviously, this is a huge, difficult issue for all of us. Asking for and extending forgiveness keeps our intimacy pure with the Lord and our relationships with others unhindered.


The Apostle Paul wrote, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (Romans 12:18). How significant this admonition is to live peaceably with all those under our own roof, with our extended families, our brothers and sisters in Christ, our neighbors, co-workers, and community contacts. And how gracious of Paul to say, "as much as it depends on you!" We are not called to force people into compliance with us or brow-beat them into a relationship with us. We are called to be peace-loving people, asking forgiveness of one another and extending forgiveness on a regular basis as much as it depends on us.

In scripture we are told: "Strive for peace with every one, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no 'root of bitterness' springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled..." (Hebrews 12:14-15).

The harsh consequences of not living in peace—living in bitterness—have caused many homes and relationships in and outside the church to deteriorate to the breaking point. Pursuing peace and holiness will bless our households, churches, and communities in ways that will provide an atmosphere for love to flourish.

We must remember that there are no flawless churches, flawless marriages, flawless families, or flawless people. One of the reasons that conflict is a part of our lives is that we have not yet been perfected. In Heaven, conflict will no longer exist because we will not have to contend with our flesh or the enemy tempting us to sin. Until then, however, we will indeed face conflict, regularly, within our circle of relationships.





Jesus knew this would be challenging so He gave us clear instructions on how to handle offenses and pursue peace. These principles apply to all relationships. If we would practice the following three essential teachings from Jesus we could eliminate bitterness and keep ourselves peaceful and pure, and our witness strong:

First: Overlook the offense.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "And 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 6:12-13).

If you can forgive, overlook, and not be tempted to bitterness with the offense, then simply let it go and move forward. This is an awesome and freeing option. The scripture commends a man for overlooking an offense; it is "to His glory" and honor to do so (Proverbs 19:11). Not being easily offended keeps us free from anger and bitterness.

If, however, you are unable to overlook an offense, it is not sin. The good news is that Jesus has provided a way to help us resolve these hurts. If this is the situation, please follow our Lord's teaching by embracing one of the next two options so that you will not be tempted to sin with bitterness.

Second: Approach the person who offended you.


Our Lord invites us to go to the offending individual privately, without anger, and share how he or she has offended or hurt you. Receive and give clarification, understanding, and/or forgiveness from the other person. If you achieve resolution, you have retained a relationship that would have been damaged or lost, and it keeps you free from bitterness, yourself. Press into these conflicts until you have peace, even if there is an agreement to disagree on some issues. If there is no resolution or reconciliation, agree to bring in another person or two as a counselor, or as witnesses. If this is not successful, bring the situation to leaders in the church to resolve (Matthew 18:15-20). Do not retreat from the conflict. Press in – until there is peace within you.


Third: Approach those who you have offended.

Be it real or perceived, you should immediately go to the person who has expressed that you have offended or hurt them. Biblically, the offended individual should come to you, first, but typically, the tis not what happens. Even if you hear of the offense through someone else, quickly go to the offended one.

It does not matter if you agree with their claim, or how they handled the situation; their perception is real to them and that is where we must start. It could tempt them to sin with bitterness if not death with.

Address their offense with clarification or by asking forgiveness. If how they handled the situation offended you, then deal with that biblically, as above. Again, the goal is to get and receive clarification, understanding, and/or ask for forgiveness. To protect the name of Christ, your integrity, and your relationship with this person, as well as not to hinder their worship, or yours, go quickly to the offended person to settle the issue in love and humility (Matthews 5:23-24)!





Unfortunately, there continues to be much strife in our homes and in the church. This strife hinders the discipleship process. We are called to be reconcilers! I pray we heed our Lord's instructions on how to achieve and live in peace with all people, in as much as it depends upon us. We are not responsible for the response or actions of those with whom we are pursuing peace. We are responsible for our own responses and actions. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9).

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