*divING DEEPER* **Discussion Guide**

**TEXT SUMMARY**Today’s text, Matthew 6:9, comprises the opening address and first petition of Jesus’s model prayer we know as the Lord’s Prayer. Rabbis taught their disciples to pray using a device scholars know as the “index prayer,” a framework for prayer that the disciple could use in his own way, supplying his own details. “The Lord’s Prayer” is just such an index prayer.

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It opens with petitions (requests) about God’s glory and God’s kingdom and God’s will, then turns to petitions about us: our needs, our sins, the danger we face in temptation.

The sermon examines four key “alignments” in the opening verse of the prayer:

* “Our” instead of “My”
* Addressing God as our “Father”
* Addressing God as our Father “in heaven”
* Beginning with adoration

**INTRODUCTION** (observation)

Notice several things about Jesus’s instruction on prayer:

1. How Jesus tells us to approach God in prayer
2. What priorities should come first in our supplication (peititions, requests)

**Reading:**

Before you read the text (Matt 6:9), take a look at the questions on the back of the page.

Each week when we study the Lord’s Prayer, make it a habit to read not only the text but all that Jesus teaches on prayer in this passage (Matt 6:5-15).

**DISCUSSION** (interpretation)

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**Questions:**

1. Why does it matter that there are no first person singular pronouns in Jesus’s model prayer?
2. If you go back through the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), you’ll see Jesus say several things about his Father (5:16, 44-45, 48; 6:1-18, 25-34; 7:7-11). How do these other references to God as “Father” influence the way we read “our ‘Father’” in his prayer?
3. There is a built-in tension in thinking of God as both our Father and as the High King of Heaven. How should that tension affect our approach to prayer?
4. It is only as we are aligned in the first three ways that the fourth alignment makes sense: we approach God in a state of adoration. How does adoration differ from thanksgiving?

**SO WHAT?** (application)

These are the four application questions that closed the sermon:

1. What are the things/who are the people that I pray about/for most often?
2. Do I know God as my good, good Father, and do I trust that He can be relied upon to be always wise and good, even when He doesn’t give me what I ask for?
3. Do I really believe that God is entirely sovereign and entirely able (as Paul put it) “to do exceedingly abundantly above all that I could ask or think”?
4. Are my prayers driven by a desire to see God’s Name be honored, even more than I want Him to supply my needs?