

## How to pray

*Jesus teaches people about prayer; paraphrase of  
The Lord's Prayer, from Matthew 6*

IN THOSE DAYS there were some Extra-Super-Holy People (at least that's what they thought), and they were called "Pharisees." Every day, they would stand out there in the middle of the street and pray out loud in big Extra-Super-Holy Voices. They really weren't praying so much as just showing off. They used lots of special words that were so clever, no one understood what they meant.

People walking by would stop and stare, which might sound rude — except that's exactly what the Extra-Super-Holy People wanted. They wanted everyone to say, "Look at them. They're so holy. God must love those people best."

Now, you and I both know they were wrong — God doesn't just love holy people. But the people walking by weren't so sure. Perhaps you did have to be really clever, or good, or important for God to love you. Perhaps you had to know lots of difficult, clever words to speak to God.





So one day, Jesus taught people how to pray. He said, "When you pray, don't pray like those Extra-Super-Holy People. They think if they say lots of words, God will hear them. But it's not because you're so clever, or good, or so important, that God will listen to you. God listens to you because he loves you.



"Did you know that God is always listening to you? Did you know that God can hear the quietest whisper deep inside your heart, even before you've started to say it? Because God knows exactly what you need even before you ask him," Jesus told them.

"You see, God just can't wait to give you all that you need. So you don't need to use long words or special words. You don't have to use a special voice. You just have to talk.


"So when you pray, pray in your normal voice, just like when you're talking to someone you love very much. Like this ...







Hello Daddy!  
We want to know you.  
And be close to you.  
Please show us how.  
Make everything in the world right again.  
And in our hearts, too.  
Do what is best—just like you do in heaven,  
And please do it down here, too.  
Please give us everything we need today.  
Forgive us for doing wrong, for hurting you.  
Forgive us just as we forgive other people  
when they hurt us.  
Rescue us! We need you.  
We don't want to keep running away  
and hiding from you.  
Keep us safe from our enemies.  
You're strong, God.  
You can do whatever you want.  
You are in charge.  
Now and forever and for always!  
We think you're great!  
Amen!  
Yes we do!



You see, Jesus was showing people that God would always love them — with a Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love.

So they didn't need to hide anymore, or be afraid, or ashamed. They could stop running away from God. And they could run to him instead.

As a little child runs into her daddy's arms.

