



Praying as a community.in one accord.

In "This, then, is how you should 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 today our daily bread.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

It astounded me how I always pray this prayer. . .give me today my daily bread. . . See I always INDIVIDUALIZE my prayer.

But Jesus instructed us to pray as a community. Did you notice that He said—Give US today; Forgive US as WE; Lead US not into temptation, but deliver US. They are all plurals—referring to the community of disciples. This jumped off the page at me!

Now I am pondering; **what does it mean to pray as a community?** Not just my individual prayer time, but as our house churches are gathered, **how ought WE pray?** I am open to learning more of how WE can pray and how WE can experience being the church together. As you learn, please share it with the rest of us so WE can pray more like Jesus wants us to!

As I looked for places in the Scripture where the community prayed together, Acts 1:14 jumped out. It is the time after Jesus has ascended into heaven and before Pentecost when the Church is formed and the Holy Spirit comes. This verse describes the activities of that group of the apostles and other disciples (about 120):

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (NIV)

The word "together" is translated in the King James as

"with one accord" and in the New American Standard as *"with one mind"*

So they were praying TOGETHER, in ONE ACCORD, with ONE MIND. Let's try praying as a community--on the same page!

Evelyn Christenson (author of *What Happens When Women Pray?*) Developed and promotes the following method for praying in one accord.

1) Subject by Subject

pray for only one subject at a time. Rather than one person saying their extended prayer about everything they want to pray about and then moving on to the next person. Just pray about one thing at a time. Nobody prays for something else until everybody has a chance to pray about that subject. Then move on to the next item.

2) Short Prayers

This is a hard one. And we fall victim to the same thing as the pagans who keep on babbling for they think they will be heard because of their many words. (Matt 6:7) **Pray one or two sentences.** This allows everyone to participate. In addition it helps everyone concentrate on the subject of the prayer, rather than wander off into the next thing they want to pray about.

3) Simple

Often, people are afraid to pray aloud in a group. They think that they aren't eloquent enough! But, prayer isn't a performance. It is honestly, innocently and with child-like faith placing your desires before God.

4) Specific

Our prayers can be too general, because we are praying about too many things at once. If we pray subject by subject we can pin point our specific requests to God.

5) Silence

We tend to be afraid of times when nobody is talking, but when we're praying in one accord there needs to be times of silence to make sure that everyone has prayed all that needs to be prayed for the topic. After 15 seconds or so, when it seems like everyone has prayed, you can "switch the channel" to another subject and do it again!!!

A couple of helpful/practical links I found, kinda on this topic:

<http://www.motherswhocare.com/groups/meeting.html>

http://www.watchword.org/nee/principle_of_praying_thrice_by_w.htm