



Our Father: Near, Listening, and Holy

June 21, 2026 – Brian Coles

WORSHIP

Begin your group with a time of worship. If someone in your group can lead worship, invite them to lead two or three songs. Alternatively, consider using one or more of these songs from our Sunday morning worship time:

- **Praise (Elevation Worship)**
- **I've Witnessed It (Passion)**
- **Jesus Be the Name (Elevation Worship)**

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Hebrews 11:6
- Psalm 34:17
- Psalm 65:2
- I John 5:14-15

OPENING PRAYER

Ice Breaker (5-10 min)

What is one of your earliest memories of prayer? (From childhood, a parent, grandparent, or significant moment)

SERMON OVERVIEW

This week, Pastor Brian began a series on The Lord's Prayer, focusing specifically on the opening phrase: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." The sermon emphasized three key truths about prayer:

- Our Father is near
- Our Father hears
- Our Father is holy

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Write these down or share them on screen:

- Prayer is relational, not transactional—we come to “Our Father,” not a distant diety
- God is NEAR to us—He is with us in every circumstance
- God HEARS us—we can pray with confidence knowing He listens
- God is HOLY—we approach Him with reverence and awe
- Prayer doesn’t need fancy language—just be yourself with God
- We should pray daily, throughout the day, alone and with others

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (35-40 min)

Part 1: Understanding “Our Father”

1. The sermon emphasized that prayer begins with “Our Father” not “My Father.” Why is this significant? How does starting with “Our” change the way we approach prayer?
2. Read Hebrews 11:6 together. What does it mean that “without faith it is impossible to please God”? How does believing God exists AND that He rewards those who seek Him impact your prayer life?
3. Pastor Brian mentioned that Jesus introduced a revolutionary concept—God as “Abba Father” or “Daddy God.” How does viewing God as a loving, personal, benevolent father change your relationship with Him?

Part 2: Our Father is Near

4. Review some of the “nearness” scriptures shared (Psalm 34:18, 145:18, Matthew 18:20). Which verse resonates most with you right now, and why?
5. Andy Stanley’s question was posted: “How would someone in your circumstances respond if they were completely convinced that God was with them?” Take a moment to personally reflect, then share: How would YOU pray differently? Act differently?
6. For parents/fathers in the group: The sermon challenged dads to be “near” to their children—not just physically, but relationally and emotionally. What are practical ways fathers (or mothers) can be more present with their children?
7. The sermon mentioned addictions to phones and screen time as barriers to being near. How can we create boundaries with technology to be more present with God and with those we love?

Park 3: Our Father Hears

8. Read through a few of the “hearing” scriptures (Psalm 34:17, 65:2, I John 5:14-15). How does knowing that God hears you change the way you pray?
9. The sermon asked: “How would you speak differently if you knew He hears you?” Discuss how this truth might impact not just our prayers, but our everyday conversations and words.
10. Great fathers listen well. The sermon listed several listening skills:
 - a. Tell me more about that
 - b. Can you say that in a different way?
 - c. How did that make you feel?
 - d. Listening means not speaking, not fixing, but understandingWhich of these is most challenging for you? How can we become better listeners in our relationships?

Part 4: Our Father is Holy

11. “Hallowed by your name” means God’s name is holy, set apart, sacred. How does reverence for God’s holiness affect the way we approach Him in prayer?
12. The sermon mentioned that great fathers show reverence to God in their lives. What does it look like practically to model reverence for God in our homes and daily lives?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION (10 Mins)

This Week’s Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. Daily Prayer Commitment: Set aside 10-15 minutes each day to pray, reminding yourself before you begin: “God is near. God hears. God is holy.”
2. Prayer Journaling: Write out your prayers this week, beginning each one with “Our father” and reflecting on what that means to you.
3. Family Prayer: If you have children or a spouse, initiate prayer together at least three times a week (meals, bedtime, morning).
4. Practice Listening: Use one of the listening questions from the sermon in a conversation with your spouse, child, or friend this week. Focus on understanding rather than responding.
5. Phone-Free Time: Designate specific times this week to put your phone away and be fully present with God and/or your family.
6. Memorize Scripture: Choose one of the “nearness” or “hearing” verses to memorize this week.

Closing Prayer and Reflection

Group Prayer Activity:

- Go around the circle and have each person pray one sentence, beginning with “Our Father . . .” and completing it with something personal (a thanksgiving, a request, an acknowledgement of His nearness, etc.)

Example:

- “Our Father, thank You that You are near to me even in my struggles . . .”
- “Our Father, help me believe that You really hear my prayers . . .”
- “Our Father, teach me to show reverence for You in my home . . .”

Close with someone praying for the entire group’s prayer lives to grow deeper this week.

“The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth.” – Psalm 145:18