

## Week 1: Our Father In Heaven

**As you begin, read Matthew 6:5-13 together.**

In verse 5 and 7, Jesus seems to be responding to a prevalent problem in their day: religious people making a show out of their prayers. Instead he encourages simplicity. Do you ever struggle with making your prayers a performance, whether in public or private? How so?

In verse 6, Jesus encourages us to pray in secret. Do you have a particular place in your world where you can be alone with God, or do you struggle to pull away from the world? If you do — where is that place, and how often do you spend time there?

In verse 8, we learn that we can pray simply because our Father knows what we need before we ask him. Think about that — if we believed that God knows everything we need, how would that change the way we prayed?

### **Praying to God as Father**

For many conflicts and struggles with our earthly fathers make it difficult to look at God as our Heavenly Father. Has anyone struggled with this? How so?

Read John 5:19-20. How would you describe Jesus' relationship with the Father? How might praying as Jesus taught us help us know and walk with the Father the same way?

Read Matthew 7:7-11. We already learned that the Father knows everything we need, and these verses tell us that he is not withholding from us. Do you struggle to believe this? How might we pray differently if this took root in our hearts?

### **Learning to Pray**

The Father loves us right where we are. Spend time asking the Father to reveal his love for you. Settle in to a mentality of rest, not trying harder. Focus on receiving his love.

Our Father knows what we need and isn't withholding it from us. Like a child coming to their Father, what might you ask him for this week? Don't hold back — where do you need him to provide?