

## **Know the Rules to Improvise**

The visual arts have rules. They set the borders for artists' use design, colors and composition. Once a person masters these rules he or she is ready to develop his or her own style. My friend Sean Seal, one of our "artists in residence" shared a few tweets about these rules this week. Music has a basic structure, a foundation of scales and rhythms upon which all melodies are built. True improvisation has to bridge off of this foundation. "Prayer (also) has a basic structure, a foundation of theology and intentionality. Throughout history, Christians have developed the practice of prayer upon this base...." Citation: The RHYTHM of PRAYER: a forty day experience, Mark A. Moore, Copyright © 2006 by Wesleyan Publishing House

## **A Pocket-sized Prayer**

Matthew 6:9-13 NIV

"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. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

## **Sermon in a Sentence:**

Jesus gave us a pocket sized prayer to teach us how to pray.

## **Here's How to Pray**

1. Worship God
2. Declare His Kingdom's expansion
3. Request God's provision
4. Surrender your relationships to God
5. Confront your weaknesses with God's power

## **New Paradigm for Prayer**

Prayer seems mysterious to many people as if mere mortals may never manage to accomplish it. We come up with all kinds of excuses not to pray – not enough time; don't know what to say; it feels weird; or don't know how to start. But prayer is only connecting with God. There are a few foundational rules – worship God; declare his Kingdom; request his provision; surrender your relationships and confront your weaknesses. Jesus listed them in the prayer he taught us to pray. Knowing and practicing these basics makes prayer simple.

## **First Steps?**

Before you attempt to pray for long periods of time, master the basics.

Pray the Lord's Prayer daily.

When you've mastered the basics, start using the Lord's Prayer as a guide.

Add your own variations.