

## The Lord's Prayer Prototype – Our Prayer

Last week, we looked at the practice and pattern for prayer that Jesus exemplified in His life. He prayed often, regularly, alone and with others, prayed for Himself and for others, taught persistence in prayer, realized that not every prayer is answered as we wish and yielded to the will of the Father in prayer.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6) and in response to a disciples request to “teach us to pray” (Luke 11), Jesus responded with a model...a prototype...on how we should pray. It was probably not meant to be “recited” as a liturgy, as many churches and individuals do (in the place of natural, heartfelt, personal, spontaneous, regular, individualized, sincere, passionate, customized prayers). It was, rather, intended as a guide as to the elements we should consider when praying. It really isn't the Lord's Prayer (He didn't need to ask for forgiveness or provision or protection from temptation and sin), it is really Our Prayer.

### *Our Father in heaven*

*Our Father* – “*Our*” indicates that we are part of a larger family. We have brothers and sisters in the Lord! “*Father*” – The Almighty God and Creator of the universe wants us to call Him “Abba”, “Father”. The Bible is full of illustrations and parables indicated God's love for us as a Father, not some distant, impersonal, heartless deity. That should allow us to approach Him with anything...*anything* that we want to talk with Him about.

*In heaven* – the acknowledgement that there is a physical and spiritual realm where the God of the universe dwells and where we shall one day, dwell with him.

### *Hallowed by Thy Name / Holy is Your Name*

The foundational attribute of God is holiness. We must always be mindful of that. God's love, mercy, grace and goodness is upheld by his holiness. We must approach Him in prayer with the understanding that He is a holy God. (Revelation 4:8, Isaiah 6:3)

### *Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

This acknowledges that 1) God's kingdom will ultimately be established and that everything is under His control (Revelation 11:15). It may not seem like it at times, but it is. And 2) that we are yielding ourselves to His will in our lives.

### *Give us this day our daily bread,*

For most of us, “bread” isn't our entire meal for the day, but it represents our essential needs. This reminds us and helps us acknowledge that everything we have, and need for our provision, comes from God. We are dependent on Him and we never outgrow that dependency.

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*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

Now this is not about being forgiven money we owe someone, as long we forgive someone who owes us money. This is much larger than that. In fact, in Matthew 6:14-15, following this prayer, Jesus gave a stern warning about the penalty for not forgiving others.

Realizing the huge, un-payable [sin] debt that we owe God (or have been forgiven), we should show compassion and forgiveness to others. (Matthew 18:23-35)

*And lead us not into temptation,*

First of all, God does not lead us into temptation (James 1:13-15). These words seem best taken as "don't let us yield or succumb to temptation" (cf. Mark 14:38) or "don't abandon us to temptation." We do of course periodically succumb to temptation, but never because we have no alternative (1 Corinthians 10:13). So when we give in, we have only ourselves to blame.

*...but deliver us from evil [the evil one].*

We must be on guard and aware that Satan is out to deceive us, dishearten us, defeat us and destroy us. (I Peter 5:8). Satan has been given temporary [restricted] domain over this earthly realm (John 12:31, 14:31, 16:11), so it is only by God's strength and protection can we resist him (James 4:7).

This is where most reliable manuscripts stop. It is commonly believed by most biblical scholars that the final phrase (in Matthew 6) was added as a benediction or doxology, as was standard in many prayers. It is omitted or foot-noted in most translations. So, as a benediction, we shall look at the final phrase:

*For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory... forever!*

Every prayer should include or conclude with the humble acknowledgement that God is Sovereign and that He deserves all the glory, and honor and power! (Revelation 4:8-11)