



Lord Teach Us To Pray

Please read Luke 11:1-4

The above words were presented to our Lord Jesus by His disciples after He had had a time of prayer Himself. They had obviously observed His technique and desired to follow His example.

In reply, Jesus gave them – and us – what we now know as “The Family Prayer” or “The Lord’s Prayer.” This He intended to be a general pattern for all prayer, the form of which should characterize our individual prayer times and also our prayer meetings.

It would not, I think, be untrue to say, given that we so often repeat these familiar words taught by Jesus at our Church Services, Sunday Schools and elsewhere, that they can become somewhat mechanical and perhaps “the done thing”, with their true meaning and significance becoming obscured.

Jesus taught His disciples the prayer as a general outline for all to follow. I wonder how many or even how few of our prayers follow on this fashion. You will notice that no petition is made until halfway through the prayer. Before that, we reflect on who this God we are addressing is, and how revered His name is.

Do we tend to launch into our requests right away and finish without considering that we must ask in the name of Jesus? Hence most, if not all, of our liturgical set prayers end with “Through Jesus Christ Our Lord” or such like expressions.

I would like therefore to look more closely at this pattern prayer and analyse it, hoping that by doing so we can all pray more fervently and effectively.

We begin by addressing God as Our Father – Here we need to realize that, although God created all of us, He is only Father to those He has remade in Christ.

Which art in Heaven – He is seated far above all His created order – this universe and millions of galaxies of stars beyond and in whose sight this tiny planet is but a pin prick. That is who we can approach through the mediatorship of Jesus Christ.

Hallowed be thy name – It is tragic but true that His name and His Son’s name are often used as swear words – but His Son is the One before whom “every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord” (Phil 2:10-11). His name is not only profaned through our speech but also when our behaviour is inconsistent with our

beliefs, and when we refer to Him as Father and then disobey Him or else be filled with all sorts of doubts and anxieties.

Thy Kingdom come – On another occasion, again recorded by Luke, Jesus said, this time to a number of Pharisees, that “the Kingdom of God is in you” (Luke 17:21), and only when the Lord Jesus rules in the hearts of men and women will the Kingdom come and this is the way to pray for its coming.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven – I once heard a little song that says “there’s a work for Jesus none but you can do.” Every one of us is unique in some way and designed to fulfil God’s purpose for each of our lives. When we seek that and do it this petition reaches its consummation.



Give us this day our daily bread – God undertakes to supply our need – not our greed (Phil 4:19). Although we need to plan ahead to some degree, the normal Christian maxim is to live a day at a time (Prov 27:1) and so we ought to ask God for our daily portion of His Divine provision. This is clearly illustrated in the case of the Israelites. They were commanded that, when God provided the manna, each person was expected to gather enough for his/her needs for a day at a time, and on the sixth day they were to gather a double portion and keep the Sabbath day holy (Exodus 16:1-18).

And forgive us our trespasses – It’s so easy, when walking “the narrow way”, to be waylaid into “bypath meadows” which is dangerous ground where Satan is prowling around “seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Even as born-again Christians we are still sinners, although saved sinners, and can so easily fall victim to satanic attacks. We therefore need to keep short accounts with our Heavenly Father and seek His grace to set us on our way again.

As we forgive them that trespass against us – Our Lord Jesus makes it perfectly clear that if we fail to do this we cannot expect forgiveness of our own sins (Mark 11:25).

And lead us not into temptation – In the scriptures the word temptation is frequently used in the sense of testing, e.g. God tested Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac (Gen 22). But He does not do so beyond each of our abilities (1 Cor 10:11-14). However, James reminds us that “God cannot be tempted with evil nor will He tempt anyone but that a man is tempted when drawn by his lust and enticed” (James 1:13-15). For the Christian this would mean having to avoid certain activities or associations which would drag us down, as it were, though we must not shrink from our regular obligations, e.g. on a cold winter evening the temptation might very well be to curl up in front of “the box” instead of going to our Bible Class or prayer

meeting. My friends, we must pray for sober diligence and unremitting earnestness to firmly resist this and other similar temptations.

A good idea when faced with various temptations is to remember the three things we were taught to say from our childhood – sorry, please and thank you. So now we add a fourth – know also when to say ‘No thank you.’

But deliver us from evil – The evil here mainly refers to the evil one, Satan, but as well as that it is needful to realize that as Christians we are travelling in the opposite direction of the world and are thus surrounded by the great floodtide of evil. We could ever so easily become enmeshed in it and so it is imperative that we make this petition every day in order to secure our foothold.

We have now looked at all the things we ask for in our Lord’s Prayer but there remains the final Doxology.

For thine is the Kingdom – And as we saw earlier we are even now members of that Kingdom, (Luke 17:21).

The power and the Glory – The power spoken of here is the same as that which raised our Lord Jesus from the dead and through Him is passed on to us (Eph 1:15-23). What an amazing contemplation! The Glory must always and continually be given to Our Father and He will not share this with any other (Isa 42:8).

Forever and ever, Amen – The hymn “when all thy mercies O my God” concludes with these stirring words:

“Through all Eternity To Thee

A joyful song I’ll raise

For O Eternity’s too short

To utter all Thy Praise.”

I don’t really think this needs any further comment.

I trust this brief survey of the pattern prayer will enable all readers to pray more fervently and thoughtfully and in accordance with our Lord’s own teaching on the subject.

Quite often at services or other devotional gatherings all those attending are invited to sum up their prayers by saying the Lord’s prayer together – i.e. at the conclusion of the meeting – but, all things considered, I would respectfully suggest that it would be more appropriate at the beginning. You may or may not agree, but I leave it to your own judgement. Amen.