



*<sup>9</sup> After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. <sup>10</sup> Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*  
(Matt 6:9-13)

This is a prayer that can be recited alone, or in communion with other worshippers. It is a model prayer that asks for no fortune or special favors - only daily bread, protection from evil, and grace of forgiveness. It is the prayer that our Lord taught us to say, yet it is disallowed in the worship of a great many churches today. Why, you ask? Because it is WRITTEN down. That is true, reader. I agree that this is a ridiculous prohibition but true. Most Baptists and others only believe in spontaneous prayers, so I suppose they cannot pray words that are written in Scripture?

As in all Godly prayers, the focus should be on our need of God in our hearts and thoughts more than for any personal gain of riches. Though appropriate for the farmer to pray for rain, and the Seafarer for following winds, these things should be hoped for only insofar as they might bring us nearer to God in Spirit and Truth. It has been true with many that prosperity has blinded them of their need for God. If the prosperity of America could be traded for a return to godliness, would we not opt for the latter? As has been pointed out recently by Godly ministers of the Anglican Orthodox Church, we need to pray in at least three ways: personally, communally and collectively as a national people. The Lord's Prayer calls us to that prayer attitude always counseled in Scripture.

Preliminary to our prayers is the preparation of our souls and spirits to the matter. Jesus provides that 'attitude adjustment' in the four verses just preceding the Prayer He taught us to say: *<sup>5</sup> And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. <sup>6</sup> But thou, when thou prayest,*

*enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.* (Matt 6:5-8) When we search for impressive phrases and words in our public praying, God does not heed the prayer. Our reward is the false impression of piety that we evoke in the hearts of the listeners. The ministers of that day, and of ours, were notable for making prayers for the benefit of impressing those around them. Hear the words of woe Jesus uttered to the Scribes and Pharisees, and coincidentally (?) missing in most modern versions of the Bible: *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.* (Matt 23:14-15) Watch out, Hinn, Hickey, Crouch and Osteen!

Our private prayers of special petition are made between the believer and God alone. No fancy phrases or made-up dialogue - they are simple words of the heart. Communal prayers are prayers that all believers can say without exception. They have a common application. But private prayers are not to be made standing publicly in church for the purpose of impressing others.

Christ is about to provide us a perfect example of prayer: *9 After this manner therefore pray ye.* Note every element that Christ provides for our learning. He begins with *Our Father*. Every message must have an addressee. This message is directed to the Father and, not only A Father, but OUR Father. This establishes the Lord's Prayer as a prayer to be spoken Communally. And to which address may the message be sent to reach the addressee? *Who art in Heaven.* The world cannot contain God though He is Creator of it and is aware of every atom and atomic particle of it. Should not every letter addressed to a Sovereign have a salutation? *Hallowed be thy name.* Thy name, O Lord, is Holy and Hallowed. Then appropriately follows good wishes for the soon appearing of our Father whom we miss day by day: *Thy kingdom come.* Do we earnestly pray and hope for the soon coming of God's Kingdom on earth? Do we live our lives in such a manner that such an aspiration is evidenced in it? Do we strive in our daily living to hasten the soon coming of God's Kingdom? *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.* While our Father is in Heaven do we strive our utmost to insure His will is done in our lives, in the lives of our loved ones, in the life of our nation, and in the world?

Here follows the first petition of this simple prayer: *11 Give us this day our daily bread.* We are not to ask for wealth and treasure, but the simple needs of the day - our daily bread - both temporal and spiritual. The second petition: *12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* Be careful in your asking of this favor of God. We are asking God to forgive us our sins and trespasses in the very SAME way we forgive others who have offended us. As we go to God seeking forgiveness, we must not omit to forgive those who come earnestly seeking our forgiveness.

The third petition: *13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.* Keep our hearts stayed on Thee, Father, that we may not aimlessly drift into temptation often of our own doing. When we do foolishly fall into temptation and evil follows, deliver us therefrom even as a mother delivers her disobedient youth from the fire he has caused by playing with matches. Finally, comes the benedictory. We recognize in our closing the greatness and majesty of God our Father. The Kingdom is His because He is the King of Kings. He has ALL power and Glory, and He has it forever and without end.

The Lord's Prayers, addressed to God as a letter, might appear as below:

Name: Dear Father (*Our Father*)  
Address: *Who art in Heaven:*  
Greeting & Salutation: *Hallowed be thy name.* (You are Holy)  
Opening best wishes: *Thy Kingdom Come, They will be Done, on earth as it is in Heaven*  
The Body: *Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*  
Benedictory remark: *Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever*  
The 'Yours truly:' *AMEN*

Simple and honest, isn't it?

<sup>14</sup> *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*  
<sup>15</sup> *But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* God does not expect us to go about willy-nilly forgiving offenses unrepented of no more than He will forgive our own sins unrepented of, but He does expect us to forgive every man his offenses against us when there is a sincere expression of repentance or apology. Do we practice this counsel?

We have, in the Lord's Prayer, a perfect model prayer for our corporate worship. Not a line of it is exclusive to the individual human heart, but has equal application to each one of us. When we repeat it, let us not say the words in vain.