



“Divine Dialogue” Pt 7 ***Patterns of Prayer***

- I. PERSPECTIVE ON PRAYER -- What is prayer?**
- II. PURPOSE OF PRAYER – Why Pray?**
- III. PREREQUISITES FOR PRAYER – Who can pray?**
- IV. PROMISES REGARDING PRAYER – What does God promise to do?**
- V. PURPOSES FOR UNANSWERED PRAYER – Why doesn’t God answer?**
- VI. POSTURES IN PRAYER – What should I do with my body?**
- VII. PASSION OF PRAYER – What priority should I give to prayer?**
- VIII. PATTERNS OF PRAYER – What should I pray?**

After all this information concerning prayer in general we have not actually discussed the content of our prayer or what should I pray? If prayer at its simplest form is dialogue with God, then the content of my dialogue will depend on the relationship and what happens to be on my heart. The content of my prayer will depend on my need at the moment or the purpose of my dialogue.

I may want to express my appreciation for His past and present lovingkindness.

I may want to express my admiration of His majesty and character.

I may want to express my love and commitment to Him.

I may want to cry out to Him in my desperate need.

I may want to intercede on behalf of those close to me.

I may want to ask for wisdom or direction.

I may want to affirm my commitment to His will for my life.

We can find inspiration in our dialogue with God from the dialogue of others. The Bible records numerous examples of the prayers of others. The book of Psalms contains numerous recorded prayers to God. I am not aware of any place where the Bible prescribes any particular wording in regard to prayer except the prayer Jesus recommended the disciples.

A. The Disciples Model Prayer

Jesus offered a model prayer when they asked Jesus to teach them to pray. Both Matthew and Luke included this prayer in their historical account. They did not record identical examples. Luke’s version is shorter. We generally focus on Matthew’s longer version. I believe Jesus gave this prayer as a pattern or model of prayer. Given the fact He prayed all night at times, I am sure His conversation with God exceeded the boundaries found in this prayer. His longest recorded prayer in John 17 doesn’t resemble this prayer either. Since this prayer was prescribed by Jesus, it would benefit us to study it.

OVERVIEW

It begins with an address.

It presents six petitions.

Three of them focus on God’s glory

Three of them focus on man’s need

It concludes with a stirring affirmation of the ultimate reason for our petitions.

The Address -- “Our Father in the heavens”

This addresses the question as to whom we should address our petitions. If we consider this prescriptive, we should address our prayers to the Father. There are other passages that instruct us to focus our prayer on the Father.

Let your requests be made known unto God Phil 4

Let him ask of God the Father of lights James 1

Giving thanks unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus

Pray the Lord of the harvest Matt 9:37

In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Joh 16:23

If we consider the descriptive passages of the Bible the options expand.

There is precedence for conversation with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament God followers addressed God by a number of names.

Yahweh God, God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said, Yahweh, O God, O Lord my God, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, God of my righteousness, my King and my God, O Yahweh our Lord, ah Lord.

Jesus used O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, Father, O my Father, My God, My God.

New **Testament followers used, Father, Our Father which art in heaven, Lord, Abba Father**, God and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, God of all comfort, God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, My God, God, God of peace, God of all grace

We have learned that through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. In the model, Jesus taught them to address their Father in the heavens. This would have been revolutionary to the Jewish audience whose perception of God rarely included that of a loving Father.

The Old Testament seemed to view Him as the all-powerful One.

The New Testament focuses on God as the loving parent.

Implications of God as Father

Viewing God as Father implies many things. He is the source of life. Personal relationship. His love and care for us. Our dependence on Him. His authority.

The Father’s location

Our Father in the heavens lifts Him far above earth's limitations, changes, and imperfections. It pictures Him above all that is earthly. We focus on the eternal invisible rather than the earthly visible.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. Col 3:3

Even though God is not limited to a specific location, He has chosen to centralize our connection to Him in the heavens. God may choose to express His presence in a specific place or manner just as air, though invisible, manifests in a specific manner and place.

The corporate nature

It seems evident that Jesus intended this prayer to be prayed in a public setting. It is a prayer for the children to offer their petitions to the Father with a unified voice evidence by the use of "Our" "We" "us".

The Six petitions found in this prayer may be divided into two parts.

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The glory of God first

The needs of man second

I should always be His glory before our needs or wants. Only after we have first focused on the concerns of the kingdom should we move on to our needs.

FOCUS ON THE FATHER'S GLORY

HIS NAME "Let Your name be revered (holy)"

This petition affirms a desired that the Father's name be held in high regard, that it be special, that it would be revered.

"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Exo 20:7

Together we affirm our desire that our heavenly Father's name be glorified.

Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." Joh 12:28

A person's name reflects of their character. We desire God's name to be held in honor because He is holy and to be honored when we come before Him. We affirm our desired that not only we, but others treat our Father's name, therefore our Father, with the highest respect and recognize the majesty and glory of His name. Implied here is that if our Father's name is special so are the children of the Father.

I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. Eph 3:15

This petition encourages us to focus on how special our Father is. It cries that the majesty and glory of our Father's name be proclaimed and realized through all the earth. This petition causes us to be conscious of His holiness.

HIS KINGDOM "Let Your kingdom come"

The concept of the kingdom is not an easy one to always sort out in Scripture.

It is eternal yet revealed in time, ever here but ever coming, ever coming but never come on earth, but entered when we go yonder, ruling us man by man, inward, spiritual, unseen, and yet molding nations and institutions, outward, and visible, compelling sight and filling all the earth. Maclaren

The Jews looked for the establishment of a worldwide kingdom. John said that the kingdom of God is at hand. In one sense Jesus taught that the kingdom was at hand and indeed had already come in Him. He also taught that the kingdom of God was within them. This is the kingdom of Grace, representing the Father's authority in the heart of believers. Jesus also taught there was a future and tangible aspect to the kingdom when what is true in principle will be visible in practice throughout the whole earth.

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Hab 2:14

This is the kingdom of glory to be revealed at Christ's return. By means of this petition give attention to the culmination of the kingdom of God when Christ will be revealed and we also will be revealed with Him in glory. A kingdom of peace and righteousness. A kingdom ruled perfectly by the King of Kings in absolute justice.

We are taught to look to this coming day and keep our behavior appropriate in light of that day.

It (Gospel) teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, Tit 2:12-13

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Rev 22:20

This petition causes us to be conscious of future glory.

HIS WILL "Let Your will be done"

When His kingdom comes, His will will most certainly be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Then comes the end, when Jesus delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

The implications of this petition are obvious. We are asking that God's will be done.

Qualification:

"on earth as it is in heaven"

This possibly applies to all three requests.

Let Your name be revered as it is in heaven.

Let Your Kingdom come on earth as it exists in heaven.

Let Your will be done as it is currently carried out in heaven.

How is His will done in heaven?

It is absolute obedience. It is willful obedience. It is joyful obedience. It is continual obedience.

This petition keeps our focus on God's will NOW! How can we pray for God's will to be accomplished on earth and turn around and consciously violate that will in my own life? If I am truly aware of what I pray, I will be conscious of God's program here on this earth, not only for my life, but for the church and for the world as well. This can be expanded upon as we become more and more absorbed in His will and understand His ways.

Paul prayed for the Colossians.

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, Colossians 1:9

This petition keeps us conscious of God's will not our whims.

Now with a focus on God's will we can address our needs.

FOCUS ON THE OUR NEEDS

OUR MATERIAL NEEDS "give us today our needful bread"

God concentrates on daily provision. God builds our faith by supplying when needed. God Taught the Israelites with the daily manna in the wilderness. Beware lest when you have abundance, you forget from where it came. Jesus instructed His disciples not to take anything on their mission trip but depend on the Lord to supply along the way. Concentrate on the here and now. Tomorrow has enough trouble of its own. Included in this prayer is petition for what is needed, not necessarily what is wanted. We are not asking of a stockpile but what we need today. Paul said be content with what you have, having food and clothes therewith be content. Paul trusted the Lord to provide whatever was needed for the day. Look to Him for daily needs of ourselves and the body.

OUR CLEANSING NEEDS "forgive us our debts"

Just as we have need for God to supply daily bread for our physical wellbeing, we need God to provide daily cleansing for our conscious transgressions. We need forgiveness. We need freedom from the weight of guilt brought on by sin. This is the daily cleansing related to our fellowship, not the redemptive forgiveness related to our union. We need deliverance from guilt but also from bitterness. Guilt comes from not receiving God's forgiveness. Bitterness come from not reciprocating God's forgiveness.

Qualification:

"As we have forgiven our debtors"

This is a most difficult passage. For those who have withheld forgiveness, it becomes a request for God not to forgive them. The "as" in this request forces us to evaluate our heart toward others. God instructs us in the New Testament to forgive AS Christ forgave. This prayer asks God to forgive us AS we have forgiven others.

A heart fully aware of their forgiveness enables a heart willing to forgive others. Failure to forgive others turns us into prison guards. The Lord's parable shared later in Matt 18 clearly illustrates this principle. Hopefully we are following the way Jesus forgave us. Does this teach that forgiving others is a condition of salvation? The New Testament is clear that the work of Christ is the basis of our salvation and forgiveness not a result of works.

Rather than try to somehow interpret our way out of the seriousness of forgiving others, we should take it to heart. Through this petition we acknowledge our need for daily cleansing and our need to continually forgive those who offend us. Jesus made sure Peter understood this by answering his question about how many times I should forgive with seventy times seventy.

OUR NEEDS FOR PROTECTION

"don't lead us into temptation"

"but deliver us from the evil one"

On the surface, this appears contradictory and confusing in light of James 1

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; Jam 1:13

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. The devil did the solicitation to evil, God led Jesus to the confrontation with Satan. This petition simply asks to be spared, if possible, from this grueling testing of our faith but rather experience deliverance from the evil one's schemes. Perhaps this is a request to avoid succumbing to temptation. I favor the later view in light of the parallelism used here. Avoiding falling into temptation is like deliverance from the evil one. We demonstrate our awareness of our own weakness and ask God to limit our exposure to the enemy's temptations if possible so we won't fall.

Some see this as a request to escape the coming tribulation.

Paul was clear that escaping temptation is God's will for us.

Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

God will not always answer a prayer to avoid testing all together. Sometimes such testing is necessary for our growth. Jesus informed Peter that Satan had demanded to throw Peter into a threshing machine and He was going to let him. The focus here is on deliverance from the attacks from the evil one who would throw his fiery darts our way.

"I write you young men because you have overcome the evil one."

It is a focus on dependence on God for victory over evil in our life. This petition causes us to be conscious of the continual battle against sin.

THE AFFIRMATION

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever AMEN!

This affirmation is not found in the Luke account and is not found in most of the early manuscripts before the fifth century. Many of the modern translation include it only in the margins or place brackets around it indicating its absence from early copies.

King David uttered a similar exaltation to the majesty of God.

David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. 1 Chronicles 29:10-13

The focus is on the capability of our heavenly Father to carry out these petitions. The use of the word "for" indicates this tribute to God's power and glory affirms that we can expect God to answer because ALL power and authority rest with Him. It's all about Your Kingdom. You have all power. You are the all glorious One.

We present our petitions to the all-powerful glorious King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is His power that will be the means of victory. It is His might that protects His name, establishes His kingdom, accomplishes His will, provides for our needs, forgives our sin, is able to spare us from testing, delivers us from the evil one.