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# The Model Prayer

## By Bryan Hodge

Jesus set forth a model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). It is brief, consisting of a mere sixty-six words in the New King James Version. Yet, it is rich. Note: Great prayers do not have to be long prayers.

Let us notice:

### 1. "Our Father in heaven"

We are to pray as children of God. He cares for us. "What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? On the other hand, if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?" (Matthew 7:9-11).

### 2. "Our Father in heaven"

He did not say, "My Father," but "Our Father." Physically God is the Father of all. Spiritually He has a family (Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 2:19 cf. 4:4-6). We are to pray as part of a family. We are to be mindful of others (cf. Romans 1:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Ephesians 1:15-16; Philippians 1:3-4; Colossians 1:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:3; Philemon 4-5; 3 John 2). We should also remember that one cannot be successful in his prayer life and mistreat others (1 Peter 3:7; Matthew 5:23-24).

### 3. "Hallowed by Your name"

The term "hallowed" means "to render or acknowledge to be venerable" (Thayer). God is to be approached with respect. Think of how God is approached in the prayers of the Bible: "Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, Our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours" (1 Chronicles 29:10-11); "LORD God of Israel, there is no God in heaven or on earth like You" (2 Chronicles 6:14); "O LORD My God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty who cover with light as with a garment, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain" (Psalm 104:1-2); "O LORD God of Israel, the one who dwells between Cherubim, You are God, You alone... You have made heaven and earth" (2 Kings 19:15); "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for you" (Jeremiah 32:17); "Lord, You are God, Who made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them" (Acts 4:24).

### 4. "Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The Kingdom, as used here, refers to the church (Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 9:1 cf. Acts 1:8 cf. Acts 2:4 cf. Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:6, 9). We should not pray for the kingdom to come; it has come. However, we still should be mindful of the kingdom in our prayers. We should pray for its increase. We should pray for its well-being. We should pray for its holiness. Moreover, we should ever pray for His will to be done (cf. Matthew 26:39).

### 5. "Give us this day our daily bread."

Some think this refers to spiritual bread (cf. Matthew 4:4; Job 23:12); however, hermeneutics teach, "All words are to be

understood in their literal sense, unless the evident meaning of the context forbids" (Dungan, Hermeneutics, p. 10). It is absolutely proper to pray for physical things (1 Samuel 1:10-ff; 2 Kings 20:1-ff; James 5:13-15; 5:17-18; 3 John 2). We should pray understanding how dependent we are on God (1 Timothy 4:4-5 cf. Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:17; James 1:17). Caution: this should not be viewed as a way around work (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

**6. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."**

The term "debts" refers to sins (Luke 11:4). It is proper to pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). We should understand that our forgiveness is conditional. One of the conditions is that we too are to be willing to forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:15-35). We should pray understanding how dependent we are on God for our forgiveness.

**7. "Do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one."**

A common Bible idiom is The Idiom of Permission which speaks of God as doing something, when in reality he only allowed it. God does not tempt us to sin (James 1:13). However, He does allow us to live in a world in which we are tempted. We should pray to God when facing temptations for His providential help (cf. Matthew 26:41). Prayer is a part of our preparation for spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:13-20).

**8. "Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."**

The model prayer closes with more words of praise to the Father. This model prayer was not provided to give us the words to pray. These exact words are not repeated in any of the recorded prayers in the New Testament. However, this model prayer does provide us with thought about appropriate content for prayer. Notice the contents of this model prayer: two parts exaltation of God (Matthew 6:9, 13b); three parts spiritual petitions (Matthew 6:10, 12, 13a); one part physical petition (Matthew 6:11). Furthermore, it is simple. It is something we each should be able to do. May we be a people of prayer!