



PRAYER

PETITIONARY & PRAYING TOGETHER

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.”

Philippians 4:6

“

A company of praying people is a company of people equally dependent on God. But we also come to prayer with equally good help. The most eloquent giant and the most timid new believer can pray boldly together because Jesus prays for them both.

Megan Hill

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Through prayer, God is offering us fellowship with him. If we believe that God is omniscient (all knowing) and knows what we need and even want, then why do we pray and express our hearts to him? In short, it is because of our fellowship with him that we have the privilege of participating in our relationship with him, conversing with our generous and kind Father. This means that while God does know everything, he wants us to tell him anyway. In fact, through prayer, perhaps the Lord is doing more in us and our spiritual formation than we would imagine or understand. In this prayer relationship and conversation with the Lord, there is freedom, love, and kindness offered to us as children of God.

Petitionary prayer is requesting something of God. In petitionary prayer we are going boldly to the throne (Hebrew 4:16) of God and coming to him to share our needs and wants. As we come to the Lord with our petitions, we can share with him what is on our hearts as he is a God who bends down to listen (Psalm 116:2). In Scripture, Jesus teaches us how to pray through the Lord's Prayer and this continues to be a crucial component of our prayer life. When you enter into petitionary prayer and make your requests to the Lord, it can be helpful to enter into more of a reflective mode as well and allow the Lord's prayer to condition it. For example, "Lord, may your Kingdom come and will be done in my current circumstances and relationships."

As you pray the Lord's prayer, it can be hopeful to consider a few things: what is motivating my prayer? What is moving my petition? Are my prayers just motivated by worry and fear? In fact, as I pray are my worries and fears just increasing? Are my petitions motivated by anger? Is part of the motivation a desire to manipulate and coerce God? Am I talking to my earthly dad or my heavenly Dad?

While praying alone is important and impacts our souls in formative ways over time, there is also benefit in praying with others. Praying together offers a space for our stories and requests to be held and supported by others, but also unifies us as disciples of Jesus. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, "united in love for our common Savior, joined in his common cause of prayer for both friends and enemies, [where] we find our affections kindled and our hearts warmed toward one another" (Megan Hill). May you be blessed as you pray alone with the Father as well as with your community of fellow believers.

PRAYER & PRACTICE

Choose 3 days this week to pray this petitionary prayer for 15 minutes.

- *Each time, for the first 5 minutes, begin with the Lord's prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13.*
- *Open to: what is Jesus asking? What is he doing?*
- *For the next 5 minutes, take something you desire, something you have been requesting of the Lord and pray it, request it to him.*
- *For the next 5 minutes pray that prayer in light of the Lord's prayer. Consider, how would praying the Lord's prayer condition my request to the Lord?*

In praying the Lord's prayer, the following are some helpful points to pray through. Take about 15 more minutes to pray through these:

- *Lord, how do I tend to talk to you, my Father in heaven? Is it similar to how I talk to my own dad?*
- *Lord, what is the relationship of my petition and the thought that your name should be hallowed/holy?*
- *Lord, what does my prayer request have to do with your Kingdom come?*