

January 24, 2026

Dear Brethren,

In the model prayer that Jesus Christ taught us, He draws focus to several aspects of our Christian life that are important for us to pray about. In reviewing the set of things that I normally pray about personally, I realize that even my longest prayers frequently omit many of the things that Jesus instructs us to include. Of course, we understand that the model prayer gives us a pattern to follow, not a rote chant to utter. Even so, it is good to review the outline that He gives us, so we can fill in the details with our personal concerns. Consider how comprehensive it is!

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (Matthew 6:9-13).

From this, we see that a complete prayer acknowledges the glory and supreme power of God the Father. In this model prayer, Jesus includes this acknowledgement at the beginning and the end of the prayer. How often do we give honor to God the Father like this when we pray? Do we more frequently dive right in without glorifying God and begin asking for handouts, as if interacting with an ATM machine dispensing cash? We are fortunate enough to have access to God the Father through Jesus Christ, but that does not dispense with the need to come to Him in humble reverence when we pray.

What we are to actually pray for is what I find most enlightening.

We are to pray for God's Kingdom to come. Jesus positions this as the very first item of concern. Recall, He also instructs us, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). Prioritizing the Kingdom of God in our prayers sets the right context from which we are to consider all our other concerns. Beginning with our prayers, and extending to our daily thoughts, setting our sights on the Kingdom places the substance of our prayers in the right perspective.

We are to pray for God's Will to be done. This places His desires above our own human desires. We are to put trust in God's infinite wisdom to do what is right in our lives, in our world, and in the heavenly realm. Placing our faith in God's Will above our own expresses our willingness to submit to Him, keeping our pride out of the way.

We are to pray for our daily bread. That is, we pray for God to provide us with what we need to physically thrive. This is much different than praying for an abundance of excess that we are convinced we need. This is perhaps the most common place for humans to focus the content of their prayers. Jesus makes a clear provision to pray for help in sustaining our physical needs. But it is useful to remember that those things are smaller in priority as compared to the Kingdom of God and submitting to His divine Will.

We are to pray for forgiveness. This aspect of prayer reminds us that as much as we try to live in righteous obedience to God, we will continue to stumble and sin. Here too, we can see the need for humility in coming to God, pleading for Him to have mercy on us. We need forgiveness for ourselves. And Jesus also reminds us that He expects us to demonstrate love for others by forgiving

them when we are wronged. Forgiveness plays a central role in the relationship we have with God the Father and Jesus Christ, as well as our fellow neighbors.

We are to pray for protection against the temptations of Satan and sin. Even though we have the privilege to come to God for forgiveness, it is better to prevent sin before we commit it! The strength of God is there to work in our lives if we need it. But if we neglect to ask God for His help to guard us from sin, we are missing out on an opportunity.

This forms quite a checklist! Taking the time to periodically audit how well we follow this model will help us to maintain a healthy relationship with God. He opens the door of communication for us through prayer because He loves us and wants us to build a relationship with Him.

While the model prayer gives us a pattern to follow, the Bible also instructs us that there is much more we may request in our prayers (compare Matthew 7:7). We are to pray for wisdom (compare James 1:5), for the well-being of one another (compare 1 Timothy 1:1-2), for healing (compare James 5:16), for our enemies (compare Luke 6:27-28), for the ministry to do the Work of the Church (compare Colossians 4:3-4), and to offer thanks (compare Philippians 4:6). These are just a few examples that can inspire the substance of our prayers. As long as we maintain our humility, submitting to God's Will with a reverent attitude, and prioritize His Kingdom in our lives first, God will hear our prayers.

By following the model that Jesus taught us more closely when we pray, we may be surprised at how the quality of our prayers improves. It may seem like a frivolous thing to structure our prayers like this. However, the impact that it has on our frame of mind can have far-reaching effects. Indeed, if we come to God with the right attitude and substance in our prayers, He will be much more willing to answer. The contrary is also true, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3). If we work on the health of our prayers, we will find tremendous benefits in our daily lives, but even more importantly, we will find ourselves drawing closer to God.

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Rank". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "R".

Eric Rank