

Learning to Pray

“God, are you there? It’s me, Margaret.”

“Communion with God is a staggering thought. God created billions of galaxies and calls every star by name (Isa. 40:26; 42:5). He never had a beginning and will never have an end (Ps. 90:2). His ways are inscrutable and his judgments unsearchable (Rom. 11:33). If that were not enough to make communion with God unthinkable, consider that all of us are naturally rebellious against him. We are by nature hostile to God and do not submit to his law (Rom. 8:7) How then can there be any thought of communion with God?”¹

Prayer is God’s invitation to commune with him and know his heart.

Many Christians can attest to this reality; we “pray badly yet long to connect with our heavenly Father.”²

“Pray then like this:

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 also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” – Matthew 6:9-15

I. The Six Petitions of Jesus

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and

¹ ESV Study Bible

² Paul Miler, A Praying Life

with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” – Matthew 22:36-40

1. Jesus’ First Prayer Petition: “Hallow” the name of our Father in heaven.

2. Jesus’ Second Prayer Petition: Your kingdom come.

“Repent, for the *kingdom of heaven* is at hand.” – Matthew 4:17

The kingdom is *God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule.*³

3. Jesus’ Third Prayer Petition: Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

“Jesus declares: ‘The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand’ (Mark 1:14). He thus introduces the gospel as the bringing-near of the Kingdom. What it means for the Kingdom to be ‘at hand’ rather than fulfilled emerges as the New Testament expounds the gospel. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises, *but at this stage*, the fact that God’s kingdom *will triumph* can only be received by faith. The New Testament describes in various places the future consummation of the Kingdom where the people know God fully and by sight which they now only have by faith. When Christ appears at his second coming, the saints of God will appear with him and the eternal Kingdom will be made plain.”⁴

4. Jesus’ Fourth Prayer Petition: Give us this day our daily bread.

5. Jesus’ Fifth Prayer Petition: Forgive us our debts.

6. Jesus’ Sixth Prayer Petition: Lead us not into temptation.

“Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.” – 1 Corinthians 10:12

II. The “Assurance” of the Lord’s Prayer

³ Graham Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, pg. 120

⁴ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, pg. 56