

Matthew 6:11
Our Daily Bread
Sunday August 9th, 2015

Today we are going to explore intercessory prayer and prayers of petition in the context of the 3rd phrase in the Lord's Prayer: "Give us today our daily bread."

Prayers of petition concern our own immediate interests. Intercessory prayer is asking God to intervene in events or situations in the world beyond our immediate interests. It is to ask that God incline his attention to a situation or event where we want to see God's Kingdom become present. We see or hear of a war and so we pray concerning that war, "God, in terms of that war, your kingdom come your will be done."

In terms prayers of petition (concerning our own immediate interest) we've all prayed them. Some are long, but in Tucson traffic some are really short, "Please God!" "Oh Jesus let me stop!!" And sometimes all the farther we get is "JESUS!"

Now some of the best and most innocent prayers of petition we get are from children. And remember petition prayers are concerned with our immediate interests.



A story is told of a little girl, who dressed in her Sunday best, was running to church as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Sunday School.

As she ran she prayed, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!" (Which is a great petition prayer.)

While she was running and praying, she tripped and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again.

And as she ran she again began to pray, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!.... But please don't push me again either!" (That last prayer is a combination of "Give us this day our daily bread" and "do not bring us to a time of trial.")

Remember in my first message on the Lord's Prayer I spoke of it as being a framework or outline on which we hang our prayers. It is through the Lord's Prayer our minds and hearts are directed at the things to remember and pray for when we pray. It is a guide to 4 types of prayer of which today we look at intercession and petition. The first Sunday we looked at meditative prayer.

Matthew 6:25 says, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear."

Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them."



We are told not to worry, but we do, so Jesus' words here encourage us. They encourage us to remember God loves us like a good father. They encourage us that when we pursue the Kingdom of God, God will provide.



Verses 31 & 32 say, "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"

for the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

There is a deep consistency in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount that we see here and in the Lord’s Prayer. Jesus continues to refer to God as Father to remind us that God, though in heaven, cares for us more deeply than an earthly father. Jesus also calls us to Kingdom living. Remember the 2nd phrase “Your Kingdom come your will be done.” We pray to be a part of the present and future Kingdom of God and we do this by righteous living in the present.

Last week I spoke of Brother Lawrence and of how he made his life a living prayer before God by, as the title of his book says, “Practicing the Presence of God.” Here following is a video clip of a woman doing just that. She is bringing her cares and worries to God in a whole series of petitions as she goes about her daily task.

Part of being faithful and not worrying is to bring those things that do worry you before the throne of God in prayer. In fact one pastor wrote that if you can worry you can do meditative prayer. You go over and over again with God the things that worry you until you find direction or peace. And to remember, like this woman does, to be thankful for what God has given you more than worrying over what possibly may be missing.

ROLL CLIP “HARD TO LIVE BY FAITH”

These were big issues that this woman brought before God in prayer, but God also wants to hear the little things. Often in lifting up the little things all through the day we begin to truly practice the presence of God. Now through the years I have met people who will not petition God with their needs. Some believe they are not worthy of God’s attention. Some have said, “God has bigger things to deal with than my little problems.” But God wants

to hear from us. God wants to provide and for us to realize that it is God who provides and this we find through prayer.

In Matthew 7:7-11 Jesus says, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.



Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!!”

We are to ask! We are to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Which covers the simple things like let me get to church on time; to please God, don’t let the cancer come back. God wants to hear our prayers and answer.

In fact to obey God we need to ask! James 4:2b-3 says, “You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” The Lord’s Prayer keeps us on track when we petition God. The second phrase, “Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” reminds us to pray for things in our lives that help us advance the Kingdom of God here on earth. We pray for things that help self, neighbor and God.

When the sole purpose of our prayers is led by jealousy of others, coveting, and envy; God is probably not going to say yes to our desires. But if it is to meet our basic needs God will say yes and lead us to what we need.

A pastor told the story of when he was starting out in ministry his income was so low that buying coats for his children for winter was quite a challenge. So he prayed to his Father in heaven to provide. He then found out about the great bargains and good quality to be found at places like Good Will. There he found all they needed for winter.



And if anyone asked, “Hey, where’d you get the great coats?” He would simply reply, **“My Father gave them to me.”** That is the attitude we need to have for all that we receive in life. The attitude of thanksgiving that the young woman in the video clip had for the things she did have in life.

God says ‘yes’ to most of our needs and many of our wants. God sometimes gives an emphatic ‘no’ as he did to Jesus and his petitions to escape the tortures of Holy Week. And God also sometimes says wait. But we need to keep praying and giving thanks in all circumstances.

Now as to intercessory prayer, and the Lord’s Prayer, pray that God’s kingdom comes in the situations of the world. In the wars, and famines, in the divorces and sicknesses of others, pray that God’s will, God’s kingdom and the things of God’s Kingdom become present in those circumstances. In places of the oppression of people and Christians pray that God’s Spirit becomes present for the Bible says, **“Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.”**

In terms of intercession and making your life a living prayer, have situations become inspirations to pray. In the Upper Room there was a story of a woman who took up the practice of praying every time she heard an emergency siren. She would pray for the emergency personal, the situation they were headed to and the people involved.



Bicycle riders are cause for me to pray. When I see one I pray they get home or to wherever they are going safely. I was involved in 3 bad bike wrecks as a youth, one of which put me in the hospital; so I pray when I see bicyclists.



Now as we move into a time of prayer one question most don't ask but many often think about, "What do you do with your body when you pray?" In the early Christian Church they often prayed with their arms lifted up to God like a small child lifting his/her arms up to a loving Father to pick them up.



Many Christians prayed with their arms outstretched like they were being crucified as they faced towards Jerusalem.



Praying with your arms outstretched makes for shorter prayers.

We today mostly pray with our eyes closed and heads bowed, because of the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. In that parable the Pharisee strode into worship proudly with head and eyes lifted up to God. The Tax Collector would not even look up to God. So we today often pray in the same posture giving greater deference to God.



Most pray with hands folded together. Some pray with arms crossed and some with hands lifted up. Some stand, some kneel, some sit. Some lie on the floor. All bring glory and honor to God as they pray.

We are going to move into a time of intercession and prayers of petition now.

James 5:16 says, **“The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.”** We are going to practice that now together. And remember any of us are righteous only in that God through His Son Jesus has made us righteous.

Here is what we are going to do: in a moment I am going to invite you to come forward with your prayers of intercession and petition. I have assembled several pastors and Stephen ministers to pray for you and your concern. We will pray for you and anoint you with olive oil and the spices of myrrh and frankincense.

We will start by singing “O Lord Hear Our Prayer”. I will then read the prayers from the Prayer Book and then if you want to come forward to pray to lay your petitions and intercessions before God here at God’s altar; we will pray with you.

If you need prayers of healing for body soul or mind come forward. If you need prayers of intercession for a loved one come down. No prayer is too small or too large for God. So come let us sing “O Lord Hear our Prayer”. I have seen God say yes and heal people. I have seen God say “no” and even “wait”. But today you won’t know unless you come forward for prayer.

Jesus says to you today, **“Come to me all who are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest.”**