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The Lord's Prayer

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Many of us are gardening this summer and the rewards are now starting to show. The beautiful and diverse gardens around the Island have reminded me of the incredible diversity in the Garden of Prayer that our Lord Jesus taught us through the familiar words of the Lord's Prayer. Let us walk through this Prayer and observe the diversity we are called to have in our prayer lives.

Our Father – These words of preface are a reminder of the old Methodist preacher, Billy Bray, who often was heard to say, “I must talk to the Father about that.” We approach a loving and inviting Father as we pray.

Hallowed be Thy Name – This first formal petition is really in line with the third commandment about not misusing God's name (Exodus 20:7). We respect the name and character of those we love. “Lord as I pray today remind me to respect you, to show love to you.”

Thy Kingdom Come – This second petition is really about Matthew 28:19-20, The Great Commission. This commission has not ended. We are to pray that Jesus Christ the Saviour and the Lord will be known and embraced by many. So Jesus teaches us to pray for the expansion of the kingdom.

Thy Will be Done – Submission is a difficult petition to pray, yet this is exactly the next petition which Jesus teaches us to pray. We would rather do our own thing, have our own way. But Jesus knows that we must pray for divine grace to submit to God's will as revealed in the sacred Scriptures. Jesus showed us this petition at the Mount of Olives when He submitted to the cup of the cross (see Luke 22:41-42).

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread – Yes, we are all in need of basic necessities for living. We all have bodily needs. What a realistic prayer. Jesus is reminding us of the value of contentment not covetousness (see Exodus 20:17). This petition is about provision for the day and contentment with necessities not luxuries – a very challenging petition for all of us.

Forgive Us Our Debts, as We Forgive Our Debtors – The fifth petition reminds us that if we have been forgiven by the Lord, then we must bear that fruit of repentance in our lives by forgiving others from our hearts. Matthew 18:35 “... unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

And Lead Us Not into temptation – We are very weak and vulnerable – weak in hands, weak in tongue, weak in eyes, and weak in ears. Just take one example: think of this past week. Did you find your ears were weak? Did you enjoy listening to some gossip? Jesus teaches us to watch and pray and find strength to overcome temptations as we pray the sixth petition.

For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, Forever. Amen – All prayer should include praise and wonder and thanksgiving. This conclusion is a reminder to praise the Lord in your prayers.

Just as many gardens have a rich variety of vegetables and flowers, so too in our prayer lives we are to have a rich variety or diversity. Walk through the Lord's Prayer again and consider the rich variety of full-orbed Christian prayer. Seek growth in your prayer life through such diversity. May the Lord bless you abundantly in your garden of prayer.

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