
APPENDIX C: THE LORD'S PRAYER

As the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household.‡

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that he is our true Father and that we are his true children, so that we may pray to him as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father.

THE FIRST PETITION - "HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME."

What does this mean?

God's name is certainly holy by itself, but we pray in this petition that we too may keep it holy

How is God's name kept holy?

God's name is kept holy when his Word is taught in its truth and purity and we as children of God lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But whoever teaches and lives contrary to God's Word dishonors God's name among us. Keep us from doing this, dear Father in heaven!

THE SECOND PETITION - "YOUR KINGDOM COME."

What does this mean?

God's kingdom certainly comes by itself even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us.

How does God's Kingdom come?

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy Word and lead a godly life now on earth and forever in heaven.

THE THIRD PETITION - "YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."

What does this mean?

God's good and gracious will is certainly done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done?

God's will is done when he breaks and defeats every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, which try to prevent us from keeping God's name holy and letting his kingdom come. And God's will is done when he strengthens and keeps us firm in his Word and in the faith as long as we live. This is his good and gracious will.

‡ The prayer itself, in bold font, was taught by Jesus in Matthew 6 and Luke 11. The explanations, beginning with the phrase "what does this mean?" were written by Martin Luther, to help people think more deeply on the topics this prayer contains..

THE FOURTH PETITION - "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

What does this mean?

God surely gives daily bread without our asking, even to all the wicked, but we pray in this petition that he would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What, then, is meant by daily bread?

Daily bread includes everything that we need for our bodily welfare, such as food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and home, land and cattle, money and goods, a godly spouse, godly children, godly workers, godly and faithful leaders, good government, good weather, peace and order, health, a good name, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

THE FIFTH PETITION - "FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US."

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins or because of them deny our prayers; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we ask, neither have we deserved them, but we ask that he would give them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment.

So we too will forgive from the heart and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

THE SIXTH PETITION - "AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION"

What does this mean?

God surely tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory.

THE SEVENTH PETITION - "BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL"

What does this mean?

In conclusion, we pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil that threatens body and soul, property and reputation, and finally when our last hour comes, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.

THE DOXOLOGY - "FOR THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY ARE YOURS, NOW AND FOREVER. AMEN."

What does this mean?

We can be sure that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and are heard by him, for he himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us.

Therefore we say, "Amen. Yes, it shall be so."