

Give us

Introduction

As mentioned previously, “give us our daily bread” is not at the beginning of the Lord’s prayer. First comes praise and honour to God, praying for his will, and then our needs are addressed. When we pray, let us not start with asking for ourselves right away. Let us begin with adoration and thanksgiving to God. God’s will is much more important than our wants. God will supply our needs but not necessarily our wants. There is a difference. Also, let us not forget to pray for others. We pray “give us our daily bread”, not “give me my daily bread.” We are not to think only of ourselves. Compassion and a concern for others is incorporated into this prayer.

In the last discussion we observed that the prayer for daily bread is not only with regards to the physical, but the spiritual aspect is also involved. In fact, the bread that the Father in heaven gave, was the bread from heaven, which the Jews understood to be Manna (John 6:31), but Jesus interpreted it differently. Jesus in his discourse with them said: **“Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”** Then they said to Him, **“Lord, give us this bread always.”** And Jesus said to them, **“I am the bread of life.”** (John 6:32-35a) It was in this sense that the disciples came to understand what the bread of heaven was. Later, when Jesus implemented the Lord’s Supper, he gave a clearer indication of the symbolism and the sacrifice involved in being the bread of heaven.

Prayer already answered

In Isaiah 65:24 we read: **“It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.”** And indeed for us this prayer: Give us our daily bread falls into this category. For those of us living in a prosperous part of the world, God has already answered our prayer for our literal everyday bread. He has provided us with health, money, and means to obtain our daily food. It is a prayer already answered. Let us not forget to thank him for our daily bread, and continue to pray for it, remembering that it is a gift from God. As well, spiritually, the prayer for the bread from heaven has also been answered. God answered that prayer about 2000 years ago, long before we called, long before we were born. We read **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)** This bread is provided for all who come to partake of it. 1 John 1:9 shows us how we obtain spiritual life, available only because this bread was broken for us at Calvary. Not only did God answer this prayer 2000 years ago, he had the answer in mind even before the foundation of the world; **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4)**

Let us give

When we pray “Give us”, we have the confidence that God will hear our prayer, because it is according to his will. In Matthew 7:11 Jesus said: **If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**

God has given us an example. God is generous and he wants us to be generous as well. Jesus says in Matthew 5:42 **Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.**

And in 2 Corinthians 9:7 we are told that **God loves a cheerful giver.** God, who is the source of all good gifts blesses those who give. In Acts 20:35 we are reminded that **“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”**

How shall we ask?

Let us remember *Give us* is not a command but a request. When a child asks a parent for money, it may be that the parent willingly grants the request, or it may be that the parent is displeased with the request. How we ask, why we ask, out of what motivation and for what purpose we ask are all factors that come into play. When asking for that which we need and that which is the Father’s will to give us, we can obviously ask with confidence. That includes “give us this day our daily bread.” To the question: “How should we ask?”, I have five answers.

First, Jesus encourages us to ask the Father in his name. He says: **Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you (John 16:23b).** Secondly, John reminds us to ask according to God’s will. He says: **Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14).**

Thirdly, James reminds us to ask in faith. He says: **But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord (James 1:6-7).**

Four. David reminds us to ask with pure intentions. He says: **If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear. (Psalm 66:18).** But he called to God in his trouble and adds: **But certainly God has heard me; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. (Psalm 66:19).**

My fifth answer is boldly. Already in Old Testament times, David called upon the Lord and God granted him mercy. How much more can we today count on God’s mercy, because of what Jesus did for us on Calvary. **For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)**

In summary we can ask in Jesus’ name, according to the will of God, in faith, with pure intentions and boldly. That is our privilege.

Solomon’s example

In a dream, God told Solomon that he could ask for anything he wanted to.

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask! What shall I give you?” (1 Kings 3:5) He prayed:

Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” (1 Kings 3:9)

The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then God said to him: “Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. (1 Kings 3:10-13)

Remember Jesus said in Matthew 6:33 that if we put the Kingdom of God first, then the other things we need will be added unto us. That is how it was in Solomon’s case as well. And then God also promised him long life, if he would remain true to him.

So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.” (1 Kings 3:14)

Solomon’s prayer was selfless not selfish. This pleased God. May our prayers also reflect this attitude.

When can we pray?

When should we pray? We can come to God at any time and share any concerns we have with him. After all, he knows before we pray what it is that we have on our heart. Even if we cannot express it adequately in words, he knows the desire of our hearts and he knows our needs. Philippians 4:6 reminds us to **be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.**

Even the little things of life and our everyday struggles can be shared with the Lord. Have you lost your cell phone? Are you concerned about an exam? Are you not sure which choice you should make? Share it with the Lord. Sure he is the God of the universe, but he is also the God of everyday life and little matters.

And finally, in great trouble or affliction, we can cry out to God. In Psalm 50:15 we read **Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”** How often have my parents told me about how God delivered them during the war. How often have we heard testimonies of how God answered the cry for help in the day of trouble. The promise is that God will deliver us. But then let us also do our part and that is to glorify him.

Questions

1. What do the words “Give us” signify?
2. Why do these words not come right at the beginning of the Lord’s prayer?
3. Does God ever answer prayer before we pray?
4. How shall we ask in prayer? Give 5 answers from scripture.
5. Why was God pleased with Solomon’s prayer?
6. What condition did God give Solomon that would assure him of long life?
7. When can we pray?
8. What kind of things can we pray about?
9. What promise do we have if we call upon God in the day of trouble?
10. After God has answered our prayer, what are we to do?

