

Prayer: Form or Free Verse

Part 2 by John Knapp II

Praying Together As a Group

In my next-to-last article (“Part 1,” though not labeled as such) I recommended using a fixed pattern, or form, as an aid in daily talking to God, who’s encouraged us in his Word to “pray (to him) continually” (I Thess. 5:17). In that article, now in our archives, I emphasized that of the many reasons for prayer, and ways that one can pray, it’s important to realize that in approaching God no script is required.

In other words, a form or pattern is not necessary, though it can be useful—more than a crutch—for putting balance and order in all we want to say.

This time, in the space below I want to provide you with two things: (1) a *corporate* or group version of the same prayer, and (2) a brief description of why I put this prayer together as I did, with supporting passages from the Bible. As with the personal version, this corporate version can be “cleanly” downloaded on a single 8½ by 11 inch sheet of paper at RESOURCES on my website [www.johnknapp2.com].

Here’s the prayer which, of course, you can adapt, modify, or use as is. The main difference here is changing “I” to “we,” “my” to “our,” and “me” to “us” so that a group can easily pray together aloud.

(Please be aware that our updated website welcomes reaction to what we say. See the *forum* and *blog* connections. Bear with us as we adjust to our new format!)

A 21st CENTURY PRAYER

by John Knapp

II

- 1 O God, our Father,
through the power of your Holy Spirit
- 2 May we love you as we should:
- 3 May we seek you daily for what we must know.
- 4 May we understand your Word
- 5 And may Truth be our guide
with the help of,
and in spite of,
the several traditions that
bear your name.
- 6 May we share your love with those around us.
- 7 May we actively serve in your Church
wherever we live.
- 8 May we properly obey authority
wherever we go.
- 9 May our eyes open
only to what we should see;

- 10 May our ears open
only to what we should hear;
- 11 May our lips open
only to what we should say,
to what we should eat and drink.
- 12 May we dwell upon what is true,
pure, right, holy,
and proper.
- 13 May we not lie to ourselves.
- 14 May we see any sin that hides in us.
- 15 May we confess, turn from,
and be forgiven of
any sin in our lives.
- 16 May we not cause anyone to stumble;
- 17 And if we sin against others,
may we stop
to ask their forgiveness.
- 18 May we also be quick to forgive others
as you have forgiven us.
- 19 May we live to please your Spirit.

20 May we be bold at the right time
and quiet at the right time;

21 May we run when we should run,
walk when we should walk,
wait when we should wait;

22 May we follow the paths
you have pressed under our feet.

23 May we obey you in all things.

24 Thank you for all you have given us:

25 May we accept and use those special gifts
you have given us;

26 And may we give wisely and generously
to those in need.

27 May we not be dulled
by the false brightness around us;

28 May your light shine in us
the remaining minutes of our lives.

29 May your kingdom come
And your will in everything
Be done.

30 And may our lives forever rest in your hands.

31 May we be part of all you desire,

32 And may we desire what you want
every day.

33 In Jesus' name,

34 Amen.

Below are passages of Scripture that, I believe, support what I've done. They reflect seven revisions of this prayer that I've done over the years. (These are here only if any of the 34 parts—hence the numbering—raise questions.)

1 Mt. 6:9; Jn. 16:13

2 Mt. 22:37-38, I Jn. 5:3

3 Acts 17:11; Josh. 1:8

4 II Tim. 2:15; Ps. 119:105, 27, 125

5 The concerns expressed in I Cor. 1:10-17 still exist. Sincere people in Christ's Church have differed on many things—about how the Church should be run, about how to worship, how to serve, how to live, etc.—which unfortunately has led to divisions; nonetheless, we are one family and we must continue to seek out Truth and act out our faith. Eph. 6:14; II Pet. 3:15-16; 2:1-3; but also see Jude 17-19.

6 Mt. 22:39 & 28:19-20; Jas. 2:8

- 7 Heb. 10:25; Eph. 5:18; II Th. 3:11-13
- 8 Tit. 3:1-2; Rom. 13:1; I Pet. 2:13-17; Eph. 6:1-8;
but consider Acts 5:27-29
- 9 Note that while “fleeing evil” and not doing bad things is Scriptural (see #13 and Ps. 119:37) and is implied in this prayer, the focus here is upon being open to what is good and desirable. Jn. 4:35b; II Cor. 4:18; I Sam. 16:7b; Ps. 101:3
- 10 Jn. 8:47; Rm. 10:17; Mt. 11:15; II Tim. 4:3-4;
Ps. 85:8
- 11 Eph. 4:29; Ps. 51:15; Jas. 3:1-12; Dt. 23:23; I Cor. 10:31; I Cor. 6:19; I Cor. 3:16-17; Ps. 141:3
- 12 Phil. 4:8
- 13 I Cor. 3:18; Jer. 17:9; Jas. 1:27
- 14 Heb. 4:13; Ps. 19:12 & 101:4
- 15 Ps. 38:18; I Jn. 1:9
- 16 I Cor. 8:9; I Cor. 10:32-33; II Cor. 6:3
- 17 Jas. 5:16; Mt. 5:23-24; Num. 5:5-7
- 18 Col. 3:13; Mt. 6:12, 14; Eph. 4:32
- 19 Gal. 6:8-10; Eph. 5:18
- 20 Acts 4:29; Prov. 28:1; Ps. 138:3; Ecc. 3:7; Hab.

2:1; Zeph. 1:7

21 Heb. 12:1; Isa. 40:31; Ps. 40:1 & 37:7 & 46:10;
Dan. 10:1-13

22 Ps. 23:3; 119:133 & 128; Prov. 3:6

23 II Jn. 6; Jn. 14:23; Mt. 28:20

24 Ps. 100:4; 136:26; II Cor. 9:15; I Th. 5:18

25 Rm 12:6-8; I Pet. 4:10; I Cor. 12 & 14

26 I Tim 6:18; I Jn. 3:17; Prov. 22:9; Ps. 112:5;
Mt. 6:3-4; but also consider II Th. 3:10.

27 II Cor. 11:14; Mt. 7:13

28 Mt. 5:16; I Jn. 1:7; Ps. 103:15-16

29 Mt. 6:10

30 I Th. 4:16-17; Ps. 91:1 & 23:6

31 Jas. 4:13-15; Rm. 12:1-2

32 Ps. 40:8; 145:1-2 & 96:2

33 Jn. 16:24; Col. 3:17 This completes acknowledgment
of the Trinity (see #1 above).

34 Means "so be it," a word of confirmation as in
binding an oath. Ps. 41:13; Jude 25; II Pet. 3:18

A few more comments:

Our purpose: # 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 19 & 23 address the basic things God has called us to do.

Our senses: #9, 10 & 11 address our actively using our God-given senses in a positive way, getting out there and interacting with people and the world, skirting danger of course, but not succumbing to or overly dwelling upon the evil present everywhere. #12 (and Phil. 4:8) summarizes this.

Our sin: #13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18 address and deal with the sin we find in our own lives and how it affects, or could affect, others.

Our walk: #20, 21 & 23 address our posture and speed on the path we daily walk, and the range of sound—from complete silence to noise—that we make along the way.

Our thankfulness: #24 & 25 address our accepting both the ordinary and special gifts God has given us.

Our giving: Again, #25 which acknowledges our special gifting and #26 address the wise and generous sharing with others that God has allowed us the privilege of doing.

The matter of light: # 27 & 28 address the bad light that surrounds us as well as the good light that dwells inside us.

God's purpose and how we fit in: #29, 30, 31 & 32 as well as 6 address God's agenda and our desire to be part of what He's doing.

On several occasions this prayer, in both personal and

corporate versions, has been used in group praying in church worship, or church classes. If you find it useful personally or with your friends, I would be happy to hear about it. And receive questions.

You may modify what I've done without charge so long as it's offered free (except for your printing costs) to others. However, if you significantly change it, please remove my name from where it's listed at the beginning.

And remember, a form prayer is basically a way to keep balance. It's no substitute for spontaneously praying without a script.

Remember too, as I said, both the private version (given earlier) and the corporate version (given here) with the Scripture references and other info can be more easily downloaded at www.johnknapp2.com. (Click resources.) These two single sheets can easily be folded twice (into quarter size) for carrying in your Bible, or giving to those in your church or Bible study class as you study prayer and—more important—pray together.

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