# "Our Father…"

According to a Google search, "The Lord's Prayer" is the most often used prayer in the world. That didn't surprise me; I must have heard/prayed it myself 10,000 times or more over my lifetime. But I recently noticed something new about it. Well, not new to the prayer but a new thought to me.

> *"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen].'" (Matthew 6:9-13)*

This is the prayer that the Lord Jesus Himself taught his disciples (thus, "The Lord's Prayer"). It's short, direct, and yet pretty all-encompassing. When I think of the individual petitions I might offer up to God on any given day, they all fit nicely inside this one prayer. God is identified and glorified. His kingdom and will are acknowledged as superior in all respects. And our own needs are covered as well: daily bread (representing all basic human needs, not just food), forgiveness from sin, guidance, and delivery from all kinds of evil.

When you need to pour your heart out to God at length, He is pleased to listen. But when time is short, The Lord's Prayer alone covers everything, especially when you consider that …*your Father knows what you need before you ask him* (Mt. 6:8). But don't pray it merely by rote; pray it purposefully, thinking about the meaning of each line.

Now what may be a new thought about this perfect model prayer that Jesus taught us. Consider the fact that it's full of plural pronouns: Our Father… Give us… Forgive us… as we… lead us… deliver us. This is no accident. Praying *we* and *our* (instead of *me* and *my*) reminds us that, as Christians, we are part of something larger: the church universal or (as it is called several places in the New Testament) *the body of Christ* – many members with different functions knit together to work as one unit. Together, we are a family of believers, millions strong throughout time and across the globe, all linked by our common faith in Jesus and our common mission to see Him known and glorified.

So when you pray "Our Father," remember those who pray it with you – in your own home, your church, and your neighborhood, but also across the globe. Love them. Honor and forgive them. Desire the best for them. Treat them as a precious part of yourself. For each one is part of Christ's body, the church, and therefore precious in *Our Father*'s sight.

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