



# CHRISTADELPHIAN ISOLATION LEAGUE

## EXHORTATION

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### SECTION LEADER:

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**Readings: 1 Samuel 17, Isaiah 61, Matthew 6**

### “Lord, teach us to pray”

Prayer is a wonderful privilege as it provides communication to the Creator, the Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the **Luke 11:1** (NKJV), one of the disciples asked Jesus a question: *“Now it came to pass, as He (Jesus) was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray”*. Consider this question for a moment. The disciples had witnessed Jesus praying, and had also seen how others prayed, such as the Scribes and the Pharisees. However, this disciple wanted guidance from the Master on how to pray.

It is an interesting question also, when we consider ourselves. How do we learn to pray? Unlike the disciples, we do not have Jesus physically here to ask; nevertheless we do have God’s Word as guidance, as well as many recorded examples of faithful prayers throughout the Old and New Testaments.

In response, to the disciples question *“Lord, teach us to pray”*, Jesus then taught his disciples what has become known as ‘the Lord’s prayer’. This of course is an extremely helpful ‘model’ and ‘a guide’ for us in our prayers to our Heavenly Father.

#### The Master’s guide on how to pray

Our New Testament reading from **Matthew 6** provides us with a similar record of the prayer that Jesus taught. **Matthew 6:9**: *“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name”*. Notice that at the start of this prayer there is a clear acknowledgement of God’s omnipotent status, along with the reverence and respect that we must always give to Him. To *“hallow”* God’s Name means ‘to hold in reverence’; to honour, glorify, and exalt Him. To do this the Word of God must influence us so that we develop Christ like qualities in our lives.

David, the man after God’s own heart, commenced his prayer in **1 Chronicles 29:10, 11** as follows:

*“Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, forever and ever. Thine O Lord is the greatness, and the power and the glory, and the victory and the majesty. For all that is in the Heaven and in the Earth is Thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all”*.

In the New Testament there are many other passages regarding our position before our Creator including **Hebrews 12:28**: *“Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear”*.

In our prayers, we must never neglect to acknowledge (with reverence) God’s greatness, recognising that He is our Heavenly Father who has made it possible for us to offer prayer.

#### Thy Kingdom come

The prayer continues: *“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”*. (**Matthew 6: 10**). So immediately after acknowledging God’s majesty, Jesus teaches us to pray for *“the Kingdom to come”*. Note how this is the very first petition, emphasising the importance of *“praying for the Kingdom to come”*, in our daily prayers. The Kingdom is of course the hope of a true and faithful servant of God. It is the ultimate hope and without it we are completely lost. It is the hope that has been made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is a hope which will bring

everlasting life in God's Kingdom which will be established on Earth so that we might live and reign with Jesus and be united with all the true and faithful servants of God throughout the ages. Keeping the vision of the Kingdom burning bright is also a great comfort for us in this world of turmoil that we live in. Our hope of the resurrection and the Kingdom is what really helps us to cope with all the difficulties and challenges in our lives. It is the same hope that the disciples of Jesus held on to (apart from Judas Iscariot).

Consider the position of Christ's disciples. They lived in the company of the Son of God, saw how he lived, witnessed what he taught, saw how he conducted himself. The disciples lived in the company of the one who was perfect in every way and altogether lovely. However, they also lived to see him suffer, be crucified and eventually leave them after his ascension. Nevertheless, Jesus had not left them without a wonderful hope, for they would be comforted in the sure knowledge that they would one day see him again in the promised Kingdom. This is our hope and comfort too brethren and sisters, which is why we must constantly pray for the Kingdom to come!

### Our Daily bread

The prayer then concentrates on a petition for *"our daily bread"*. **Matthew 6:11** records: *"Give us this day our daily bread"*. In our prayers we should also remember our daily needs. This includes our natural food (for which we should always be thankful), and also our 'spiritual food' from the Bible. Just as we require food in order to live, we also need to grow spiritually through the regular reading of the Bible which influences and enriches our hearts and minds.

### Seeking forgiveness

The prayer continues in **verse 12** where we read: *"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"*. The word *"debts"* means 'sins'. This verse underlines the importance of seeking forgiveness for the sins we commit each day. Also, we have a duty to forgive those who have sinned against us, as **verses 14 and 15** record. Jesus Christ demonstrated forgiveness to the ultimate extreme when (while nailed to the cross) he cried out to his Heavenly Father: *"Forgive them, for they know not what they do"*. (**Luke 23:34**).

### Lead us not into temptation

In **verse 13** we read: *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"*. The word *"temptation"* here means adversity or a sore trial.

But how do we overcome temptations; firstly by trying to be like Jesus, secondly by the daily reading of God's Word and finally by praying to God.

### For Thine is the kingdom

The prayer concludes in **verse 13**: *"For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever, Amen"* So having commenced the prayer with a clear acknowledgement of God's majesty, Jesus teaches us to conclude in a similar way, emphasising the power and the greatness of God. The prayer ends with the word *"Amen"* meaning "so let it be".

This prayer is therefore a 'solid foundation' for us on how Jesus teaches us to pray and how important this wonderful privilege is for a servant of God. As the privileged brethren and sisters of Christ, let us continue in prayer in the knowledge that Jesus is our High Priest and Mediator and that through Jesus we have access to our loving Heavenly Father through the wonderful privilege of prayer.

As we prepare for the emblems, let us never forget that Jesus gave His own life as a perfect example so that we might have hope of eternal life in God's coming Kingdom.