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Learning to Pray the Lord's Prayer for Spiritual Transformation at Tachikawa Church of Christ

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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes a project to lead the members of Tachikawa Church of Christ to learn and experience the power and blessings of praying the Lord's Prayer for spiritual edification and maturity. The program consisted of eight weeks of learning the meaning of the Lord's Prayer and doing spiritual exercises. To provide a theological foundation for this project, I delivered eight sermons on the Lord's Prayer with strong emphasis on the relational nature of the prayer.

Those who engaged in the spiritual exercises were given opportunities to experience joy, peace, and correction as they tried to live in harmony with the prayer. The prayer proved to be informative as well as transformative. The participants who made the prayer their own daily prayer felt closer to God and received direction to live with him and for him. There is a danger in making the Lord's Prayer a rote prayer, but being able to pray the Lord's Prayer as one's own prayer makes it a spiritual treasure. Japan is a busy and stressful society. It is like a spiritual desert. Acquiring the disciplines of relying on the Lord's Prayer can function to create a spiritual oasis wherever one is, even on a crowded commuter train in Tokyo.

Learning to Pray the Lord's Prayer for Spiritual Transformation
at Tachikawa Church of Christ

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School of Theology
Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

By
Naoyoshi Fukushima
September 28, 2017

This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry



Vice Provost

Date

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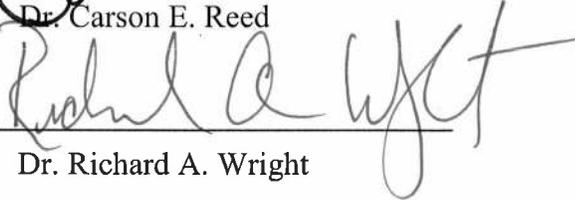
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To Noriko, my beloved wife and partner in ministry for many years, with much love, gratitude, and respect.

And to Darrel McMillen, my best friend and mentor.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Title of the Project	2
	Ministry Context	3
	Spiritual Context	4
	Statement of the Problem	8
	Statement of Purpose	9
	Delimitations	10
	Limitations	10
	Conclusion	11
II.	THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	12
	Exposition of Matt 6:9–13	16
	“ Our Father in Heaven ”	18
	“ Hallowed Be Your Name ”	24
	“ Your Kingdom Come ”	26
	“ Your Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven ”	28

	“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”	30
	“Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Also Have Forgiven Our Debtors”	32
	“Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil”	34
	“For Yours Is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory, Amen”	36
	Traditional Use of the Lord’s Prayer	37
	Conclusion	40
III.	METHODOLOGY	42
	Spiritual Formation through Spiritual Discipline	43
	Assessing the Practice of Praying the Lord’s Prayer	46
	Description of Ministry Intervention	47
	Description of the Project Sessions.....	48
	Evaluation Methodology.....	56
	Participant Observer.....	57
	Questionnaire	58
	Outside Expert	58
	Data Analysis	59
	Conclusion	60
IV.	FINDINGS AND RESULTS.....	62

Insider’s Perspective: Assignment Sheet and Questionnaire	62
Session 1: “Our Father in Heaven”	62
Session 2: “Hallowed Be Your Name”	63
Session 3: “Your Kingdom Come”	63
Session 4: “Your Will Be Done”	64
Session 5: “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”	65
Session 6: “Forgive Us Our Debts”	65
Session 7: “Lead Us Not into Temptation”	66
Session 8: “For Yours Is”	66
Researcher’s Perspective: Participant Observer	69
Discussion 1	69
Discussion 2	69
Discussion 3	70
Discussion 4	70
Outsider’s Perspective: Outside Expert	72
Conclusion	73
V. NEXT STEPS	74
BIBLIOGRAPHY	78

APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Letter	82
APPENDIX B: Weekly Checklist	83
APPENDIX C: Group Discussion Questions	84
APPENDIX D: Questionnaire	85
APPENDIX E: Sermon Sketches.....	87
APPENDIX F: Weekly Assignments (Japanese)	90
APPENDIX G: Group Discussion Questions (Japanese)	99
APPENDIX H: Questionnaire (Japanese)	100

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis addresses a project conducted at Tachikawa Church of Christ¹ to lead the members to learn and experience the power and blessing of praying the Lord's Prayer for their spiritual edification and maturity. The project intended to provide insight into the relational nature of prayer with God and the deeper sense of his presence in daily life.

Chapter 1 introduces the project, providing the historical and cultural context of Tachikawa and the clarification of the project's problem, purpose, and delimitations.

Chapter 2 outlines the theological framework of the project. Chapter 3 presents the methodological approach to the project by describing the participants, sessions, and evaluation methods. Chapter 4 evaluates the result of the project from three perspectives:

the participants' perspectives, based on the weekly assignment sheets and the questionnaires at the end of the project; my own perspective, based on my field notes taken during the group discussions; and the outside expert's perspective, based on his observation as a result of talking to the participants in a group interview. Chapter 5

1. Hereinafter called Tachikawa.

proposes the next steps toward which the project is leading Tachikawa. The project only began the process of spiritual transformation at Tachikawa.

Title of the Project

The title of the project is “Learning to Pray the Lord’s Prayer for Spiritual Transformation at Tachikawa Church of Christ.” The term “learning” acknowledges the need for regular and ongoing practice. The Lord’s Prayer is neither a quick-fix formula nor for mere mechanical repetition (Matt 6:7). Rehearsing the prayer with understanding and intentionality teaches disciples the one to whom they are to pray and what they are to pray. Thus the Lord’s Prayer becomes a model prayer that aids disciples in their growth. As Christians pray this prayer daily and as God answers the prayer, Christians are being formed as children of God into his likeness. It entails a daily practice and a gradual process. It facilitates a process of spiritual formation.² Through this prayer one yields to the will and work of God toward being formed into the likeness of his Son, Jesus Christ. It is the work of the Spirit to change and transform Christians (2 Cor 3:18). The disciplined practice of praying the Lord’s Prayer creates space in which the Spirit can do that work. This project sought to lead the participants to and through the Lord’s Prayer for

2. Dallas Willard defines spiritual formation as follows: “Spiritual formation in the tradition of Jesus Christ is the process of transformation of the inmost dimension of the human being, the heart, which is the same as the spirit or will. It is being formed (really, transformed) in such a way that its natural expression comes to be the deeds of Christ done in the power of Christ.” Dallas Willard. “Spiritual Formation: What It Is, and How It Is Done,” <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=58>.

the purpose of providing a distinct opportunity for them to learn better who they are and how they should live.

Ministry Context

In the 1950s and 1960s, many American members of Churches of Christ were stationed at Tachikawa Air Force Base in Tokyo. At first they were meeting in the base chapel for their worship but later decided to acquire their own building. They purchased a piece of land near the base and built the church building in 1961.³ Through their friendly outreach and the work of the American missionaries around the area, a small group of Japanese Christians began to meet for worship in the building. When the base was closed in 1970, the American Christians decided to entrust the building to the Japanese congregation for the furtherance of God's kingdom in Japan.⁴

The small group of Japanese Christians received the facility even though it was so large that it was difficult for them to maintain on their own. In order to conserve the utility expenses, they decided to use only a small portion of the building for their activities. When the first missionary came to Tachikawa in 1977 with American support and a working fund, the church decided to meet in the auditorium for worship. Other

3. James R. Griffith to Tachikawa Church of Christ, Tokyo. 14 June, 1993, in "History of Tachikawa Church" folder in the filing cabinet of Tachikawa church office, Tachikawa, Tokyo.

4. Mitsuru Suzuki, "Memory of Tachikawa Church" in *Taibo* (Tachikawa, Tokyo: Privately printed, 1998), 5.

missionaries also came to Tachikawa, and the church grew with the help of the missionaries as well as the supporting congregations in America. Due to a drastic change in the currency exchange rate between US dollars and Japanese yen, the last missionary at Tachikawa had to return to the States in 1986, leaving the Japanese minister with whom he had been working to labor alone.

In 1991, a section of the church property was sold to Tokyo for the construction of the monorail. It provided enough money to build a new building and provide savings for the church. The church started to support its ministers out of the church fund. As a result of the global financial crisis in 2008, the church lost its funds and could no longer support the ministers. This necessitated the move of one of the two Japanese ministers to another congregation. The remaining minister took a part-time job at night to support his family and his ministry. The church selected five “servant leaders” to share in the ministerial work. This gave an opportunity for the church to be financially responsible and to mature spiritually through the shared leadership and ministry.

Spiritual Context

In Japan secularism has dominion over most areas of modern life but not in the area of death or life after death. Japanese Buddhism has incorporated animism and especially ancestor worship in its teaching, in turn influencing common concepts of

death. A dead person is called a “Buddha” (*hotoke*). Japanese prefer to think of Buddhism not so much as a religion but as a tradition, one that many continue to retain in certain aspects of their lives. Most Japanese look at Christianity as a foreign religion. Religious Japanese feel more at home embracing some form of Buddhism or other Japanese folk religions.⁵

Japanese traditional religions have adopted materialism into their teaching and rituals. Many Japanese religions promise material prosperity through their rituals and religious commodities. Prayer is one of the rituals provided to people as a means of receiving their wishes. For many Japanese, prayers are petitions for receiving what they desire. The *Encyclopedia of Shinto*, which is prepared by Kokugakuin University in Tokyo, gives the following definition for prayer: “Kitō (prayers) are magico-religious invocations of the powers of a wide range of Shintō and Buddhist deities in hope of divine favor or protection.”⁶ There are shrines and temples that specialize in specific kinds of petitions: business success, easy and safe childbirth, matching couples, separating couples, and other conceivable needs. Some shrines have websites with forms

5. Japan Broadcasting Corporation conducted a survey in 2008, concerning religious consciousness of Japanese people. According to the survey, “Among many types of religions, Buddhism was cited by the highest percentage of the respondents (65%) as a religion they ‘feel positive about.’” “‘Something Spiritual’ Attracting the Japanese.” From ISSP Survey on Religion, May 2009. NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute. <http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/english/reports/summary/200905/05.html>.

6. Norifumi Shigematsu, “Kito,” *Encyclopedia of Shinto*, Kokugakuin University, <http://eos.kokugakuin.ac.jp/modules/xwords/search.php?type=1&term=kito&andor=AND>.

for ordering prayers that provide a checklist of petitions along with a pricelist for them.⁷

Hence, religious practices that promise wealth, health, and personal fulfillment are popular among Japanese.

Japanese, in general, have a utilitarian view of religion and prayer. People are accustomed to using religion for the purpose of achieving their desires. Prayers for them are means of self-fulfillment or self-realization. Such an outlook strongly influences Japanese Christians as well. Most of the members of Tachikawa are first generation Christians. This means they grew up knowing only Japanese secular and materialistic prayers. They have converted to Christianity, but it takes time for the understanding and practice of prayer to be converted. They have prayer models, but those tend to be Shinto and Buddhist models. A typical Shinto prayer is a petition for some benefit. A typical Buddhist prayer involves chanting Buddhist sacred texts. It is not surprising that first generation Japanese Christians would primarily tend to approach spiritual practices for the sake of receiving benefit from them rather than for the sake of honoring God and experiencing formation according to his will and purposes.

Christianity provides a model prayer from which to learn both how to pray and how to live: one that is radically different from Japanese traditional prayers. This prayer

7. "Prayer Order Form," Anyoji. <http://www.arida-net.ne.jp/~anyoji/mousikomi.html>.

helps believers experience their true identities and can impact their self-image as Christians, whose highest priority is the will of God. The prayer connects people with the Creator, who created them in his image and is therefore a relational prayer; Christians talk to their Father in heaven. It is also a formational prayer. Because its agenda is kingdom-driven, it resists allowing Christians to use or manipulate God to accomplish their own purposes. Christians pray this prayer more to align themselves with God's purpose and will in a process of spiritual formation rather than simply receiving benefit from God.

In 2007, Tachikawa started to incorporate the Lord's Prayer within the worship service every Sunday. The congregation recited the Lord's Prayer together each week. However, Tachikawa did not do any formal training as a group to learn this model prayer, opening up an opportunity to bring the congregation to a deeper and more impactful practice of the Lord's Prayer. One cannot expect a church to experience deep transformation only after several weeks of a project such as this. However, this project was an attempt to begin moving believers in the right direction and inspire them with a taste of the formative richness of this model prayer. Beyond the scope of the project itself, it has provided encouragement to continue in the learning process of allowing God to transform them through their practices.

Statement of the Problem

Tachikawa Church of Christ, like many other churches in Japan, is a small and struggling congregation. As such, it is susceptible to the temptation to think of growth mainly in terms of numerical growth. Churches seeking numerical growth look for programs that draw more people, possibly working hard to entertain and satisfy the visitors and converts. This project assumes these programs to be errant in direction.

Prayer helps Christians and the church engage with the Lord, who alone can help us grow spiritually and numerically. Churches often feel overwhelmed due to a lack of resources and discouraged due to a sense of powerlessness and insignificance. What is needed is a deeper realization of God as the true resource for growth and the only one who can bring transformation and maturity. A richer and more deeply grounded practice and expectation of prayer can help Christians find that realization.

Yet wrong assumptions about prayer exist, including the assumption that everyone knows what prayer is and how to pray. Japanese people experience prayer before they become Christians. There is a proverb that describes the understanding and practice of the common Japanese prayer style: “Kurushii toki no kamidanomi,” which can be translated: “When desperate, depend on God (a god or gods).” Japanese people may pray to and through different objects: one of many gods, Buddha, or their own

ancestors. Yet the tendency is to pray for the sake of gaining personal benefit. Although Christian prayer may entail seeking God's benefits, its deeper purposes are relationship and transformation.

When a Japanese becomes a Christian, he or she no longer prays to those objects but to the true living God of the Bible. Yet the content and even intent of the prayer often remain the same. A common expression of false prayer is one that tries to use God to accomplish one's own purposes. By contrast true Christian prayer honors God and allows God to use the person to accomplish God's purposes. As heirs to Japanese prayer traditions, the members of Tachikawa need guidance in learning anew what prayer is, how it works, and what purposes it is meant to serve. God intends for Christians to grow and to be transformed into the image of God. God commissions Christians to be his partners in accomplishing his kingdom purposes in the world. The Lord's Prayer is an excellent expression of these beliefs and values. For this reason I believe that the believers of Tachikawa will benefit greatly from deeper experience in the practice of the Lord's Prayer.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to enhance the congregation's theology of prayer in order to help the members in their pursuit of being transformed into the image of God.

The model prayer that Jesus taught could correct false concepts and practices of prayer while also connecting the praying Christians to God, who could transform them.

Therefore, to achieve this purpose, I guided the congregation through the study of the Lord's Prayer by preaching a series of eight lessons on the Lord's Prayer. These lessons were complemented experientially through the encouragement to use and apply what was being learned individually in daily prayer and also as a group through participation in group discussions lasting eight weeks. This multiprong approach created space for spiritual transformation to occur as Tachikawa seeks to engage the Lord's Prayer more deeply.

Delimitations

This project involved only those who were willing to participate at Tachikawa. If the participants are genuinely changed from inside, then those members could serve as catalysts for others to participate in the life of "our Father."

Limitations

Spiritual transformation is a lifelong process. One project on prayer alone cannot transform people fully; it can only guide them a few steps down the path. If the participants are able to begin to grasp their magnificent relationship with God, then the project has served the larger part of its purpose. I hoped that eight weeks of guided and

disciplined engagement with the Prayer would help the participants form healthier habits of daily prayer for transformation. The project was limited to these expectations.

Conclusion

A secular spirit is shaping Japanese people, and Christians are no exception. Even in Christian churches people commonly use prayer as a means of self-actualization and self-fulfillment rather than in ways that fit the expectations of Jesus's kingdom values. As a relatively young congregation of mainly first-generation Christians, Tachikawa is not immune to these problems. The short prayer that the Lord taught—when properly applied or rather when the Tachikawa church properly applies itself to it—can provide opportunities for transformation. This project facilitated deeper individual and corporate reliance on the Lord's Prayer toward that end. Such a process has begun at Tachikawa.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

There are two versions of the Lord's Prayer in the Synoptics: Lukan (Luke 1:2–4) and Matthean (Matt 6:9–13). It is difficult to determine the relationship between the two.¹ The shorter Lukan form suggests that it may be closer to the original, yet the Matthean wording seems to indicate authenticity.² Jesus probably taught this prayer as a model prayer repeatedly.³

The author of Matthew likely wrote the Lord's Prayer as he had learned it as part of his church's teaching. As *Didache's* use of a text most like that of Matthew's confirms, the Matthean form of the Lord's Prayer became the prayer of the church at a

1. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 2. 1045–46.

2. Marshall quoting Bruce Metzger in I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 454; Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 324; Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1967), 89–90.

3. Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 3. 211.

very early stage.⁴ Stevenson thinks that may be due to the popularity of Matthew's Gospel and the apostolic status given to the author.⁵

The Matthean prayer is fuller and contains all that the Lukan prayer gives. It is also the prayer that the early church chose to use liturgically. Perhaps we can even say this is the prayer that most formed the early Christians and the church spiritually. This project seeks to help Tachikawa learn and seek to receive the blessings from the Matthean form of the Lord's Prayer that has blessed Christians and the church for two thousand years.

One of the favorite Scripture passages for Japanese Christians is Matt 11:28: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."⁶ Many church buildings have these words of Jesus's invitation on their message boards. This passage may have been more influential in bringing Japanese people to Christ than any other passage in the Bible. People become Christians expecting to receive rest. Many feel refreshed and excited about their new Christian life, yet often the excitement wears out over time. They overlook the fact that Matt 11:29–30 follows 11:28: "Take my yoke

4. Kenneth W. Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer: A Text in Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 25.

5. *Ibid.*, 40.

upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Jesus invites people to take his yoke and learn from him and with him. The Lord’s Prayer is such an invitation and instruction from Jesus. Christian growth does not come automatically. Growth in prayer is no exception. The disciples of Jesus recognized it and asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). In response Jesus gave his disciples the Lord’s Prayer (Luke 11:2–4; Matt 6:9–13). Jesus expected the disciples to learn to pray from this prayer. It is the prayer-yoke that Jesus gave from which to learn to pray and to live.

At the end of the book of Matthew, Jesus told his disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19–20). The church has received this as Jesus’s enduring commission that his disciples are to make disciples of all nations. Making disciples consists of baptizing people into Jesus and teaching them his ways. Baptism implies being born anew into one’s relationship with God. Teaching implies learning, obeying, and following Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount focuses on that part.

6. Scripture quotations are from ESV unless otherwise noted.

Alongside other crucial teachings in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7), Matthew gives a comprehensive summary of Jesus’s teaching on how his disciples should live.

The heart of Jesus’s teaching focuses on the hearts of people. God must rule the hearts of people as their King. The Sermon on the Mount teaches who Jesus’s disciples are and how they should live as people whose hearts are ruled by God. The Lord’s Prayer is located in the middle of that sermon. Though traditionally named “the Lord’s Prayer” in much of English-speaking Christianity, Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, so it is actually the Disciples’ Prayer.⁷ This prayer connects the disciples with God, with each other, and with the other practices Jesus discusses in the Sermon on the Mount. This is a prayer for spiritual formation.

In Matt 6:5–8 Jesus warned the disciples that they should not pray to impress people or try to manipulate God to fulfill their selfish desires by piling up words. Magical prayers can be very appealing, but true prayer is not magic. The Father hears the prayers of his children. Jesus intercedes and the Holy Spirit prays with them (Rom 8:26–27). God works in and through the prayers of Christians. Through prayer God invites his children

7. Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, trans. John Bowden, Christoph Burchard, and John Reumann (London: SCM, 1967), 96.

to work with him.⁸ He also works in them to transform them into the image of his Son (Rom 8:28–30). However, Christian prayer cannot be considered magical. This is seen clearly when we attend to the content and thrust of the Lord’s Prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer is located in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:9–13). The main message of the sermon addresses kingdom living. It teaches the disciples who they are and how they should live. It is the “Kingdom Manifesto.” It contains a revolutionary message, but the kingdom revolution does not come by force or violence. It changes people from the inside out by the power and love of God, who is the King. The Lord’s Prayer is one of the resources that God has placed in the hands of his disciples so that they may join him in the work of bringing about this revolution. Yet the power is in God who works in the Lord’s Prayer, and it serves the purposes of the kingdom that the sermon proclaims.⁹

Exposition of Matt 6:9–13

In order to equip Tachikawa for deeper engagement with the Lord’s Prayer, it is necessary to meditate closely on what it says. Although the broader context of the

8. William H. Willimon, Stanley Hauerwas, and Scott C. Saye, *Lord, Teach Us: The Lord’s Prayer and the Christian Life* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996, Kindle), 50; Karl Barth et al., *Prayer* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.), 21.

9. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7): Christian Counter-Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 147.

Sermon on the Mount and the Gospel will not be ignored, the function of this exposition is not strictly exegetical. The purpose is to identify and amplify the parts of the prayer that can enrich the relational and transformative impact of the Lord's Prayer. The following exposition works through the Lord's Prayer as it occurs in Matt 6:9–13, line by line, seeking to explain the meaning of each part in its context. However, these are some of the most heavily interpreted passages of Scripture, and it will not be possible to explore every part fully or to give attention to the many different interpretive problems they pose. Instead, the following exposition is guided by the aims of this project, seeking to highlight those parts and those insights that will yield the most important results for Tachikawa's exploration and practice of the Lord's Prayer for spiritual formation.

The Lord's Prayer has two sections: the first is about God (Matt 6:9–10) and the second is about us (Matt 6:11–13).¹⁰ The order of the Lord's Prayer is similar to that of the Ten Commandments: the first part concerns people's relationship with God and the second part concerns people (Exod 20:1–17). God introduces himself as the deliverer who rescued the Israelites out of Egypt in Exod 20:2. In Matthew Jesus introduces God as the Father who is willing to adopt people as his children through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, his Son.

10. Kenneth Stevenson, *Abba Father: Understanding and Using the Lord's Prayer* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2000), 34.

“Our Father in Heaven”

Jesus taught his disciples to pray “Our Father” (Matt 6:9). Jesus always addressed God as “Father,” or “Abba” in Aramaic, when he prayed (Mark 14:36). According to Jeremias, “*Abba* was an everyday word, a homely family-word.”¹¹ “He spoke to God like a child to its father, simply, inwardly, confidently. Jesus’s use of *abba* in addressing God reveals the heart of his relationship with God.”¹² Although the concept of God as father was present in Jewish thought (e.g., Deut 32:7; Ps 103:13; Isa 63:16; Hos 11:1; Mal 2:10), Jesus’s personal and intimate approach was radically new.¹³ Such familiarity and intimacy was offensive to many Jews and seemed blasphemous (John 5:18).

First-century Judaism and Christianity both used the term “our Father” to address God. The striking difference, however, was “that in early Christian worship *πατήρ* is preferred to Yahweh, *adonai*, *kurios* or *theos*.”¹⁴ The NT use of “Father” is based on the relationship between God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Forms of address in contemporary Judaism were formal and ritualistic. Jesus taught and offered a living and

11. Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 97.

12. Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 62.

13. Gerhard Kittel, “ἄββᾶ,” *TDNT* 1:6.

14. Gottlob Schrenk, “Πατήρ,” *TDNT* 5:996.

loving relationship with God the Father. Jesus invited his disciples to a relational life of faith, advocating religion that went beyond ritualism.

When Jesus tells his disciples to address God as “our Father in heaven,” he is inviting them to an intimate personal relationship. This ties in with God’s basic purpose: Jesus, the Son of God, came to reconcile people into a blessed relationship with God. N. T. Wright points out that “the Lord’s Prayer grows directly out of the life and work of the Lord himself.”¹⁵ Jesus was willing to become the elder brother to offer this intimate relationship with the Father (Rom 8:14–15; Heb 2:10–11).¹⁶ He has opened the way, and believers can now come into God’s presence with boldness (Heb 4:16, 10:19).

The Lord’s Prayer is a child’s prayer. It is also a humbling prayer. It is a prayer of a humble person who accepts God’s revelation and submits to his will. Only those who accept Jesus as the Son of God can enjoy God as “our Father.” Jeremias stresses the importance of having a childlike attitude to enter the kingdom of God. “Only he who, through Jesus, lets himself be given the childlike trust which resides in the word *abba* finds his way into the kingdom of God.”¹⁷

15. N. T. Wright, *The Lord and His Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 13.

16. *Ibid.*, 13.

17. Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 97.

Karl Barth suggests that Jesus's permission to pray "our Father" is to pray beside him and with him.¹⁸ Christians place themselves at God's side as he invites them to participate in his work.¹⁹ He invites his followers to pray with him and to live with him. God wants to be with people. Jesus is Immanuel: God with us. When Christians pray, Jesus intercedes for them and the Spirit prays within them (Rom 8:26–27, 34). Shrenk comments: "Accumulated terms for God give way to simplicity previously unknown. Whereas in Judaism awe of the Holy One led to fear of the very name of God, both cult and fear, both accumulation and concealment of names, are now overcome by the one word 'father.'"²⁰

The father concept is no longer just a religious idea; it points to a loving relationship that Jesus revealed and lived among the disciples. "It has become the characteristic use of the Christian church, which knows God through Christ the Son."²¹ To pray the "our Father" is to commit to an understanding of prayer that sees it as largely about relationship with the Father.

18. Barth, *Prayer*, 23.

19. *Ibid.*, 27.

20. Gottlob Schrenk, "Πατήρ," *TDNT* 5:996.

21. C. W. F. Smith, "Lord's Prayer," *IBD* 3:155.

Christians are born anew by God’s word and his Spirit (John 3:3–5; 1 Pet 1:22–23). In this prayer believers are adopted into the family of God (Rom 8:15; Eph 1:5). It is a gift of grace. It is the gospel. Christians now belong to him and are at home with him. One word—“Father”—encapsulates the whole gospel. Every time believers address God, “our Father,” they remind themselves not only of who God is but also who they are (Eph 5:1). The church becomes what it is when it prays this prayer.²² Therefore, it is a prayer for spiritual formation.

“Heaven” implies the sovereign rule of the Father.²³ God is not only personal and loving, but he is also all-powerful. He is immanent, yet he is also transcendent.²⁴ He is the Creator who rules all things with all authority from heaven.²⁵

To describe God as “Father in heaven” is to confess that God is superior to a father on earth. In fact, God the Father is the one who created fathers and mothers. The Japanese traditional ethical system is based largely on Confucianism. Confucius taught that parents are to be revered with highest honor. In the same vein deceased parents become the object of worship. Consequently, many Japanese think that the God of the

22. Ibid.

23. “Heaven and earth, both in their relationship and also in the superiority of heaven over earth, are a symbolical representation of the relation of God as Lord and Creator to His lordship and creation.” Helmut Traub, “Οὐρανός,” *TDNT* 5:514.

24. John M. Hicks, “Theology of the Lord’s Prayer.” Abilene Christian University, Bible Forum, February 1992. <http://johnmarkhicks.faithsite.com/content.asp?CID=46567>.

25. Stott, *The Message*, 145.

Bible is a rival to ancestral worship. The Bible also teaches us to honor our parents but never to worship them. The language of the prayer pushes us to practice an exclusive devotion to God.

Bruner reads the plural “heavens” as “skies,” and understands that God is the Father of all creatures under the skies.²⁶ He quotes Calvin, who also understands “our” to imply the whole of humanity.²⁷ Carson, on the other hand, points to Matt 5:45–48, a passage that reinforces distinction between believers and Gentiles, and thinks that “our Father” does not imply he is the Father of all people indiscriminately. He also points to the practice of the early church that forbade non-Christians from reciting this prayer, to show that early Christians emphasized exclusivity as well.²⁸ Yet even if the Lord’s Prayer is for believers, this does not exclude their recognition that God as heavenly Father loves the whole of humanity with fatherly love and invites each person into the intimate father-child relationship with him—just as he sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous (Matt 5:45). “Our Father” directs us to love one another as Christians but also to love others as the Father loves them.

26. Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Christbook: A Historical/Theological Commentary: Matthew 1–12* (Waco: Word, 1987. Kindle), on Matt 6:9.

27. *Ibid.*

28. D. A. Carson, *Matthew. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 169.

The word “our” implies that it is a community prayer. It not only teaches a vertical relationship with God but a horizontal relationship between people. Followers are adopted sons and daughters; thus, we are brothers and sisters in God’s family. The horizon expands because God seeks all people to be his children. Christians not only celebrate their salvation but seeks the salvation of others. “Our Father” points in that direction. The Lord’s Prayer is an evangelistic prayer.

In summation, the Lord’s Prayer is an invitation to share intimately in the life of God with his Son, Jesus Christ. Christians respond to the invitation by inviting God into their lives. Through this prayer Christians live in him and he lives in them. They were once alienated, but they are now at home. They were lost, but now are found. People’s search for self ends here, and their journey with God begins. This journey invites relationship not only with “our Father” but also with others who are in his family and under heaven.

In keeping with the proposal that the structure of the Lord’s Prayer is similar to that of the Ten Commandments,²⁹ the first three of those commandments are similar in content with the first petition of the Lord’s Prayer, as we have seen. Continuing with the rest of that petition, for the name of God to be hallowed, believers cannot have other gods

29. Stevenson, *Abba Father*, 34.

or idols, nor can they misuse God's name (Exod 20:3–7). The prayer is also concerned with God's sanctity.

“Hallowed Be Your Name”

A name stands for the person who bears it.³⁰ Thus God's name is God himself as he is and as he revealed himself.³¹ Jesus came to reveal God's name. When people see Jesus they see the Father (John 14:9). He glorified the name, and he continues to make it known to people (John 17:26).

Accepting the name that Jesus made known means getting rid of all things that dishallow his name. As his creature and as his children, Christians lay themselves at God's feet to be used for his glory (Matt 5:16, 34–48). Praying for the sanctity of God's name confesses that honoring God in one's life and speech will have the highest priority.

However, the passive voice means that God is active in the process. This prayer asks God to reveal himself for his glory. God himself must make his name holy.³² For example, the creation bears God's name on it because he created it. His creation displays his glory. People are also God's doing; they are his workmanship, displaying his glory and holiness. Then why pray “hallowed be your name?” Not because of God's need for

30. F. F. Bruce, “Name,” *NIDNTT* 2: 648.

31. Stott, *The Message*, 147.

32. Jan Milič Lochman, *The Lord's Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 39.

human efforts to consecrate him, but because of what such praying will do to the person who utters it often. Luz compares the contemporary Aramaic Kaddish prayer and explains that the petition involves both the person's action and God's action: "human knowledge, human action, and human experience are made possible, encouraged, and supported by God."³³ Through actions and words God's name is often not held as sacred, and it is often profaned (Ezek 36:23; Mal 1:6–8). Though love and gratitude are due him, people do not give him the honor he deserves.

The Japanese word for gratitude, "arigatai," literally means "difficult to be." Japanese people acknowledge that good things in life, things that are worthy of prompting thankfulness, are "difficult to be." However, Japanese people do not even know for whom to be thankful or who is worthy of their worship and adoration. Praise is an unfamiliar concept in Japanese Buddhism. Christians know who is worthy of our praise and gratitude. Christians praise God who created everything out of nothing and makes the impossible possible. The Lord's Prayer teaches God's sanctity and honor, focusing adoration toward him, while admitting that only he is wise and able to bring honor equal to his own name.

33. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary*. Helmut Koester, rev. ed., *Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 318.

After addressing God, “our Father,” Christians ask that his name be known and glorified. Christians are seeking to know God better. In praise, which is the acknowledgement of God’s revelation, Christians see God and reality as they are. Christians are sanctified by God’s word. People can become who they are supposed to be only by hallowing God, their Creator and Redeemer. Praise transforms people into who they truly are.³⁴

“Your Kingdom Come”

Jesus came announcing that the kingdom of God was at hand (Matt 4:7; Mark 1:15). Jews were expecting the coming of God’s kingdom, the redemption of Israel (Luke 2:25–26, 38).³⁵ Jesus did not meet their expectations for a messiah, so they rejected him and crucified him. He was resurrected, and he proclaimed that the kingdom of God had come in his death and resurrection and that he would come again at the eschaton. Jesus did not break the Roman bondage but the bondage of sin and death for humanity. The kingdom was breaking into the world even during the time of Christ’s ministry (Matt 12:28). However, it is not consummated until the end of the age (Matt 28:20). To pray

34. Walter Brueggemann, *Israel’s Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 68.

35. W. L. Liefeld, “Lord’s Prayer,” *ISBE*: 3,161.

“your kingdom come” is to ask that God’s saving, royal rule be extended throughout his creation and to ask for the consummation of the kingdom.³⁶

The verb in this petition is in the aorist tense, which usually signifies a simple action in contrast to a continuing one. In this case the petition looks for its ultimate fulfillment in the eschaton.³⁷ Just as Christians pray that God’s name be hallowed because people are not giving God the honor due him, Christians pray for God’s rule because people are allowing the gods and powers of this world to rule their lives (2 Cor 4:4; 1 John 5:19–20).

Like the first petition, this one acknowledges that the world is not as it should be. It is under the curse because of people’s rebellion and the spell of the deceiver, the Devil. Christians have been delivered out of the oppression of the darkness into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Col 1:13). However, many are still living in the domain of the darkness and even believers contend with the darkness within and between themselves as well as in the world around them. Therefore, this prayer is evangelistic. The kingdom expands with the preaching of the gospel. Though militant, it conquers people not by force but by the love of the King. This prayer implants within the believer God’s desire to

36. Carson, *Matthew*, 170.

37. W. L. Liefeld, “Lord’s Prayer,” *ISBE* 3:161.

see the kingdom spread. It prompts believers to imagine how they might be an agent of kingdom expansion. It also reminds believers that they await greater fulfillment of God's purposes soon.

God's kingdom is that realm where the King's will is done. In heaven the will of God is being done. On earth it often is not. Sin is rebellion against God and his will. The world is full of sin. The world is characterized by dishonoring God by rejecting his rule. Yet the defiance brings not happiness and peace but misery into the world (Gen 3). The world's petition is "my will be done as I wish."

The King came to deliver people out of the sin and death that dominates the kingdom of this world. He showed them the will of God and gave them the model of living by the will of God. Christ came and defeated our archenemy. Although Christ fought and won the decisive battle, the Prayer reminds Christians that they are engaged in fighting the remaining skirmishes as victors and conquerors because of the King's victory.

"Your Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven"

Jesus came to do the will of the Father (John 4:34, 6:38). He prayed this prayer in the garden of Gethsemane and gave himself up on the cross to redeem people. His prayer was "not my will but your will be done" (Matt 26:39). The seeming defeat of the cross

turned out to be glorious victory: a victory won through his surrender to his Father's will.

This part of the prayer invites one to surrender to the will of God.

Heaven is pictured as the place where God's will is being done perfectly, yet this is what Christians desire most for the earth as well. Christians must show their "heavenly" life on earth to demonstrate the blessing of the obedient life to the will of God. The church on earth must exhibit "heavenliness" to show the glory of God and to attract people to the "heavenly" living on earth. Also, the earth itself is meant to be a stage on which God's will is enacted not just in the lives and community of believers.

People are prone to compartmentalize their lives to allow God to rule only the supposedly "religious" areas of life.³⁸ This petition breaks down the barrier of the religious and the secular in individual life. It also breaks down the barrier of the social and the religious in community life. Here, the prayer seeks to make people whole and make them one: one with God and with each other. Those who pray these words are invited to imagine an earth in which the benevolent rule of God holds sway and dominates what happens. This petition has social implications that the remaining petitions expand.

38. Lochman, *The Lord's Prayer*, 79.

“Your will be done” is the third petition. A transition in focus occurs between the first three petitions and what follows in the prayer. Hicks summarizes well the connection between the first and the second three petitions: “The first three petitions proclaim our identification with God’s purposes. The final three petitions presuppose God’s identification with our needs.”³⁹ In the first half people learn who they are and what their purpose is in relationship with God. The second half of the prayer teaches them where the power is, which enables them to pursue the purpose and to become who they truly are.

“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”

The creator and redeemer is also the sustainer. Like children who are dependent on their parents, Christians are dependent on God. Children often take the blessings they enjoy for granted. Christians, too, tend to take God and all his blessings for granted. Therefore, this prayer coaches Christians to be appreciative by teaching Christians from where their bread really comes. Christians are daily dependent on God. When people have enough things or money, they tend to forget about their dependence on God (Deut 8:11–20; Prov 30:8–9; Dan 4:28–37; Luke 12:13–21). Yet everything they have comes from God (1 Cor 4:7; Jas 1:17).

39. Hicks, *Theology*.

While admitting the difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of the word “*epiousios*” (“daily” in ESV), Luz lists five possible meanings: (1) the bread that “unites with our substance” or “surpasses all substances,” (2) the bread that is “necessary for existence,” (3) the bread “for today,” (4) the bread “for the coming day,” and (5) the bread “for the future.” Luz thinks “the coming day” is most probable based on grammatical grounds and on the evidence of the *Gospel of Nazarenes* from the first half of the second century, which translates it as “our bread of tomorrow give us this day.”⁴⁰

This petition may have in mind a day laborer who needs to provide for his family enough bread to survive. In any case, the best rendering of the phrase emphasizes sustenance, sufficiency, and necessity. This petition is not for wealth but for the necessities of life.

The prayer reminds people that God is concerned about the mundane matters of life in the world such as having daily bread. Understanding this helps people to see the connection between God and their daily sustenance, but it also draws attention to the Creator’s intent to provide for all. Children can be selfish with what they have. They must learn to share. This prayer teaches people to share and to be responsible with things that are entrusted to them (Luke 12:48; Eph 4:28; 1 Pet 4:10). “Our” bread connects

40. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 319–21.

Christians to others. “When we have more than enough, then our bread becomes theirs.”⁴¹

When such sharing takes place, the gospel becomes visible, and God will be glorified.

By making a modest request for necessities, the prayer encourages the person praying to find proper satisfaction in modest amounts. Luther thought of bread as “everything necessary for the preservation of this life” and made a long list of the items necessary for living.⁴² Stott reminds Christians that “Jesus meant the necessities rather than the luxuries of life.”⁴³ This is a daily petition, and it teaches Christians that the Lord intended for us to pray the Lord’s Prayer every day.

“Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Also Have Forgiven Our Debtors”

For many this passage gives difficulty because it seems to teach that receiving forgiveness from God is conditional on forgiving others. This may seem contrary to the concept of “justification by faith alone, without works.” Randy Nelson attempts to overcome the difficulty by making two kinds of forgiveness: salvific and sanctifying.⁴⁴

The salvific forgiveness is for salvation and the sanctifying forgiveness is for

41. Bruner, *The Christbook*, on Matt 6:11.

42. “Luther’s Small Catechism,” <http://www.evangelicallutheransynod.org/beliefs/luthers-small-catechism>.

43. Stott, *The Message*, 149.

44. Randy A. Nelson, “Exegeting Forgiveness,” *American Theological Inquiry* (on line) 5, no. 2 (2012): 33.

sanctification. According to Nelson, Matt 6:12–15 is dealing with the sanctifying forgiveness, not the salvific one.⁴⁵

Arland Hultgren has another solution to the difficulty. He thinks that Matt 6:12 is a “performance utterance,” which accomplishes forgiveness by saying it is a “declaration of amnesty.”⁴⁶ He also explains Matt 6:14–15 as an exhortation: “The problem is resolved when one begins to understand that the latter passages are rhetorical units that function as parenesis (exhortation).”⁴⁷ Complex attempts to reconcile Jesus’s high standards with certain versions of the doctrine of justification by faith may be unnecessary. In the sermon Jesus has already highlighted broken human relationship as an obstacle to worship (Matt 5:23–34). It is best simply to acknowledge that Jesus plainly connected one’s relationship to God and one’s relationships with other people.

Jesus is interested in people’s hearts. Forgiveness is not so much an object or a status people can possess, but it is a restoration of relationship with God. “We owe to God not our achievements but ourselves.”⁴⁸ Christians receive God in their heart and God works in Christians so that their heart can be changed (Eph 3:14–21). This includes one’s

45. Nelson, “Exegeting Forgiveness,” 40.

46. Arland J. Hultgren, “Forgive Us, As We Forgive (Matthew 6:12).” *Word and World* 16, no. 3 (1996): 289.

47. *Ibid.*

48. Lochman, *The Lord’s Prayer*, 114.

attitude toward others. Jesus is serious about this matter of forgiving each other (Matt 6:14–15, 18:21–35). Those who ask God for forgiveness must be willing to forgive. Yet forgiving others is easier said than done. God is inside of a Christian; therefore, the Christian can forgive along with God. We identify with the father who implored Jesus, “I believe; help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24). We need to be humble and honest. “Although one does not earn the right to pray or to be forgiven, one can obstruct prayer and forgiveness by having the wrong attitude.”⁴⁹ Barth’s prayer reminds us that Christians are a new creature in Christ with the Holy Spirit dwelling in them and that Jesus is walking with them in this road of forgiveness and freedom.⁵⁰ The Lord’s Prayer helps the Christians imagine having God’s attitude toward sin and relationships, shaping them into partners with God in his saving work of reconciliation.

“Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil”

In a sense this petition relates to the last one. It deals with our sin and weakness. Both deal with our daily walk with God, and both are for spiritual formation (1 Pet 5:8–10).⁵¹

49. Liefeld, “Lord’s Prayer,” 3:162.

50. Barth, *Prayer*, 57.

51. Satan seeks to make us stumble and keep us from growing and becoming strong by God’s grace. God intends and desires us to grow (1 Pet 2:1–2).

God can work in us and transform us through these petitions. Christians must be aware of their weaknesses as well as the powerful enemy who is eager to destroy them. God does not tempt anyone to sin (cf. Jas 1:13). It is the tempter, the devil, who entices and ensnares people, corrupting their hearts and desires. Jeremias compares this petition with a very ancient Jewish evening prayer that Jesus would have known and explains that when “translated, ‘lead’ and ‘bring’ have a permissive nuance.” Thus, he thinks we should render it, “Let us not succumb to temptation.”⁵² The idea is not merely of entering temptation but of going “inside” it in the sense of falling and succumbing to it.⁵³

The devil tempted the first human couple in the garden of Eden (Gen 3:1–7). The tempter also tried to entice the second Adam in the wilderness but failed (Matt 4:1–11). Christians overcome the devil by walking in the steps of Jesus and also by walking with him (Matt 28:20; Jas 4:6–7; 1 Pet 5:8–10).

The devil will attack every aspect of life to make Christians fall. Christians must be aware of their extraordinary weakness and the extraordinary power of our enemy.⁵⁴ Christians must also remember that their Lord, who is teaching this prayer, has already defeated the devil by his death and resurrection. In spite of our failures and weaknesses,

52. Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 105.

53. Liefeld, “Lord’s Prayer,” 3:162.

54. Bruner, *The Christbook*, on Matt 6:13.

we continue to walk with the Lord daily as “more than conquerors” in his love (Rom 8:35–39).

“For Yours Is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory, Amen”

The doxology, “Yours is the kingdom, power, and glory,” is absent in early and important manuscripts.⁵⁵ It is not a part of the original text, but it is a response of the early church to the Prayer. Some form of this expression occurs at least as early as the *Didache*.⁵⁶ Metzger thinks that “it was composed in order to adapt the Prayer for liturgical use in the early church.”⁵⁷ It is liturgically fitting and theologically sound, but since it is clearly not part of the original Gospel text, it will not be considered in detail here. Yet Christians can appreciate and learn from the doxology. As the early church responded beautifully, the church today should also respond faithfully from the heart and with its own thoughts and words. The doxological addition is an example of doing so and provides an opportunity to give brief consideration to the ways in which the Lord’s Prayer has functioned in historic Christian communities. One such example in use at Tachikawa is “Our life and everything we have is yours. Please use them for your work and for your glory.” We usually pause at the closing of the prayer so that individuals can

55. Bruce A. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: American Bible Society, 1994), 17.

56. Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 106.

57. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 17.

make their own response of doxology silently. In the fifth Sunday worship each month, we take more time to pray the Lord's Prayer and thus close with the doxology before the silent reflection: "Our life and everything we have is yours. Please use them for your work and for your glory."

Traditional Use of the Lord's Prayer

One powerful testimony to the formative power of the Lord's Prayer is to be found in the story of its use in early Christianity. The disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). In response to their request, Jesus gave them the Lord's Prayer. John the Baptist likely gave his disciples a model prayer to teach them to pray. The contemporary Jews had a model prayer, the Eighteen Benedictions. The Prayer Jesus taught supersedes the earlier prayers taught by other teachers. Indeed, Jesus taught them to pray the perfect prayer.⁵⁸ Bahr thinks that "the primitive church used the Lord's Prayer in exactly the same way as the contemporary synagogue used the Eighteen Benedictions."⁵⁹

There is little information available from the primitive Christian sources as to exactly how the church used the Lord's Prayer, though it is clear that it did.⁶⁰ Bahr

58. Simon Kistemaker, "Lord's Prayer in the First Century." *JETS* 21, no. 4 (Dec.1, 1978), 328.

59. G. J. Bahr, "Use of the Lord's Prayer in the Primitive Church." *JBL* 84:2: (1965) 153.

60. Bahr, "Use of the Lord's Prayer," 153.

gathers data from the writings of Tertullian (ca. 160 – 212 CE),⁶¹ Origen (ca. 185–251 CE),⁶² and the Didache and concludes three things about its early use: the Lord’s Prayer was used as an outline or a model; it was used for communal and private prayers; and it was to be prayed three times a day.⁶³

Over the centuries the church has used the Lord’s Prayer mainly in three ways: for personal devotion, public liturgy, and instruction.⁶⁴ The Didache’s instruction to pray three times a day is for personal devotion. The early devotional use of the Lord’s Prayer developed into the fixed hours of prayers in the monasteries in an effort to follow the biblical command to “pray without ceasing.”⁶⁵ Its use also evolved into such adjoining practices as the use of prayer ropes for the Orthodox and the rosary in the Catholic tradition.⁶⁶

From the fourth century the Lord’s Prayer was also used in the public worship, especially in connection with the Eucharist.⁶⁷ The connection with the Eucharist may be

61. Everett Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: Garland, 1997), 1107.

62. *Ibid.*, 835.

63. Bahr, “Use of the Lord's Prayer,” 156.

64. Timothy N. Boyd, “The Churches’ Use of the Lord’s Prayer,” *Biblical Illustrator* 39, no. 1 (2012) 58-61.

65. Robert F. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986) 5.

66. Byron D. Stuhlman, “The Lord's Prayer in Worship.” *Word and World* 22:1 (Dec.1, 2002.) 81.

67. *Ibid.*, 80.

due to the early fathers' preference to interpret "bread" spiritually. Jerome's Latin translation of the Greek *epiousios* as *supersubstantialem* (supersubstantial bread) lent itself to such an interpretation.⁶⁸ The Lord's Prayer has been used for centuries in the communion devotion of both Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Even after the Reformation the Lutheran and Anglican traditions retained its consistent ritual use. However, some churches in the Reformed and free-church traditions have avoided using it due to their aversion to "rote" prayers.⁶⁹

The third major use is for instruction. In the primitive church the Lord's Prayer was given to a catechumen before baptism as a basic part of the curriculum.⁷⁰ Christians learned to pray the prayer and teachers explicated its meaning to them. For centuries along with the creed, Christian missionaries taught converts the Lord's Prayer as a major part of the basic instruction for worship and Christian living.

The history of its use shows that it has been a privilege for Christians to have this Prayer. The form and use of the prayer has been passed down through the ages, validating the place of the Lord's Prayer in this project on spiritual formation. However, the

68. Carson, *Matthew*, 171.

69. Stuhlman, "The Lord's Prayer," 82.

70. T. W. Manson, "The Lord's Prayer," a lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on November 10, 1954, 100.

relational aspect of the Lord's Prayer, which is the true privilege, has often been forgotten as the Lord's Prayer's use has too often disintegrated into mere forms and ritualism.

Conclusion

The Lord's Prayer has blessed and formed the church for two thousand years. It stands as the wellspring of heavenly water on earth to refresh us. We do not have to travel far to get to it. It is always within our reach and it revitalizes us.

Prayer is not intended to manipulate God, but rather is communication with God. In the Lord's Prayer, Christians find their purpose in life. We no longer pray, trying to use God to serve our purposes, but we pray to serve the purpose of God. As communication with God, the Lord's Prayer is relational. The prayer reconnects us with the Father, who restores our spirits and realigns our broken lives. The prayer serves as our spiritual rehabilitation center and school. It is God's invitation for us to become God's children and live with him in his presence. In response, through this prayer, we invite our Father, who is also our King, to rule and use us for his kingdom. This prayer forms us and guides us through our life journey with the Father and the King.

The Lord's Prayer reminds us daily who God is and who we are. Through this prayer we dedicate ourselves daily to God's kingdom and for its service. Our daily lives are lived by God's grace and because of God's love. We live to be in his service. We are

delivered from the ruler of the world, who rules the world by our greed and fear. We are ruled by God, the true king, who rules by his grace and love. Through us, his servants, God's kingdom will continue to expand by his power and love until the eschaton.

Jesus commanded his disciples: "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48). As the children of God, Christians grow to be like him as we spend time with him and as we walk and talk with him. Jesus taught people the model prayer and left his footsteps for them to follow. When Christians take this prayer seriously and commune with the Father daily, we shall be transformed into the likeness of the Father by the indwelling Holy Spirit working within us (2 Cor 3:18).

The prayer not only guides us individually but also as a body of God's people. As we pray the Lord's Prayer together, we remind ourselves that we are all together with God. We encourage ourselves to seek first and serve God's kingdom. The prayer helps us refocus on God's mission and become God's missional people. It reforms and transforms us as God's people.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The intent of this project was to enhance the prayer life of the members of the Tachikawa church in ways that would launch Tachikawa on new paths of discipleship and spiritual formation. In the past the church had not provided good training by which a new Christian could be grounded biblically and equipped to have a healthy prayer life. If the church had not taught the members to pray as the Bible taught, then the members were likely to have learned how to pray elsewhere. This project informed the members of the model prayer that the Lord taught to his disciples and reformed their practices of prayer and their expectations regarding its purpose. It also encouraged them to begin the healthy habit of daily prayer in order to mature and to be transformed as children of God into the likeness of God the Father who delights and responds to their prayers.

Spiritual Formation through Spiritual Discipline

Dallas Willard states, “Spirituality is simply the holistic quality of human life as it was meant to be, at the center of which is our relation to God.”¹ Sin broke our relation to God. Satan gained dominion over us through our sin, but God has delivered us and placed us in his kingdom (Col 1:13). We were dead in our sins, but God made us alive with Christ (Eph 2:5). We are created in the image of God, but that image is marred and twisted. Spiritual formation is God’s work of recreating us in the image of his Son, Jesus Christ (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29; Eph 4:13).

Spiritual disciplines are the means that allow us to be with God and allow God to work in us. There is no quick fix for spiritual formation. It is a process, and it takes training. Paul encourages Timothy to train for godliness as athletes train their body (1 Tim 4:8). Willard points out that “Paul did not have to explain or argue for this assumption. It was commonplace to the developing Christian church, as well in the surrounding culture, whether Jewish, Hellenistic, or Roman.”²

Disciplined prayer practice is a part of the process. The Psalms refer to people praying three times a day (Ps 55:17). Daniel prayed three times a day (Dan 6:10). Peter

1. Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 77.

2. *Ibid.*, 98.

seems to have continued such practice (Acts 3:1, 10:30). Luke tells us that Jesus prayed often and regularly (Luke 4:42, 5:16, 21:37, 22:39–40). The Didache 8:3 instructs Christians to pray the Lord’s Prayer three times a day. A regimen of organizing one’s external and interior life for the sake of humbling oneself before God in daily prayer has long stood as an expectation of disciples of God who will learn through training.

Willard points out that the robust growth of the Christians in the primitive church came from the spiritual disciplines that they practiced.³ He states that “full participation in the life of God's kingdom and in the vivid companionship of Christ comes to us only through appropriate exercise in the disciplines for life in the spirit.”⁴ He points out that what has hindered Christian growth in modern times is an erroneous theology of salvation, one that has little or no room for the practice of disciplines: “One specific errant concept has done inestimable harm to the church and God’s purposes with us and that is the concept that has restricted the Christian idea of salvation to mere forgiveness of sins.”⁵

This project assumes that praying the Lord’s Prayer is one of the spiritual disciplines that can direct Christians in their spiritual formation. The ancient repetitive

3. Ibid., 20.

4. Ibid., 26.

5. Ibid., 33.

practice of praying it three times a day enables it to become a healthy habit in which God can mold and form our character into his likeness. Reflecting on that practice by exploring the verbal content of the prayer in congregational teaching and by considering the prayer's impact over time can deepen its formative influence on the Christian and the church. Good Christian spiritual formation includes theology, practice, and reflection, both individually and communally.

As the previous chapter showed, the Lord's Prayer is a relational prayer that connects us with the Father. Every time we pray, it reminds us of God's loving presence and providence. It is also a communal prayer that connects us as brothers and sisters in God's family. It is a kingdom prayer that moves us to serve the King, to serve one another, and to serve the world. It is also our declaration of dependence. We humbly ask for daily provision and protection. Through it we acknowledge God's daily invitation to live with him, and through it we invite God daily to live in and through us. This prayer teaches us to have the attitude of praying ceaselessly.

The aforementioned principles of spiritual formation and the understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Prayer (ch.2) inform and shape the methods and expectation of this Project.

Assessing the Practice of Praying the Lord's Prayer

To assess the practice of using the Lord's Prayer as a spiritual discipline, the project utilized qualitative research.⁶ Qualitative research is well suited for this project; it seeks to understand people through close contacts with them and through observing how they think and live in their social settings. This project was also a type of participatory action research.⁷ It sought to introduce an intervention through which to lead the participants into the process of transformation.⁸ The participants learned the counter-cultural teaching⁹ of Jesus concerning prayer. They learned together by sharing their thoughts and experiences with other participants. They were encouraged to pray the Lord's Prayer daily and apply what they learned each Sunday morning for eight weeks. They had the opportunity to share their prayer experience with others in discussion groups every other Sunday. They learned and experienced the God-centered prayer that

6. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, ed. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Sage, 2005), 3–4, writes: “Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand.”

7. Denzin, 34, writes, “Action researchers literally help transform inquiry into praxis, or action. Research subjects become co-participants and stakeholders in the process of inquiry. Research becomes praxis-practical, reflective, pragmatic action-directed to solving problems in the world.”

8. Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 58, writes “The DMin project will involve a partnership with the project's participants, who will co-author the study with the DMin pastor-student.”

9. John Stott describes the message of the Sermon on the Mount as “Christian counter-culture,” as the title of his commentary indicates: *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7): Christian Counter-Culture*.

the Lord's Prayer taught as an alternative to the self-centered prayer so prevalent in Japanese culture.

Description of Ministry Intervention

During the project the average attendance of Tachikawa was twenty six. All members and seekers were encouraged to participate in this project. The congregation went through a series of eight sermons on the Lord's Prayer. The participants were encouraged to pray the Lord's Prayer three times a day during the eight weeks. They were also encouraged to keep a prayer journal for the eight weeks. I prepared a handout (an assignment sheet) for the participants each Sunday for eight weeks. It contained a checklist to use as they prayed the Prayer that week. The participants wrote down what they learned or experienced as they engaged with the Prayer during the week. They handed in the assignment sheets anonymously. The participants also had an opportunity to share what they learned during the group discussion time.

Every other Sunday during the period of the project, we had a group discussion coinciding with a communal lunch in the fellowship hall between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m. We invited everyone present to participate in the discussion. For the discussion, we asked three questions:

1. What are some of the things you learned from the lessons you heard?
2. What are some of the things that are taking place in your prayer life since we started this project?
3. In what way does our practice of praying the Lord's Prayer shape us as God's people?

Description of the Project Sessions

Each session consisted of a sermon paired with a weekly assignment. The weekly assignment consisted of a memory verse to remind participants of the teaching of the sermon along with a spiritual exercise enabling them to put into practice what they learned.

In Session 1, "Our Father in heaven," the message served as an introduction for the whole project. I began with Jesus's warning not to make prayer superficial or ritualistic (Matt 6:5–8). I emphasized the relational nature of prayer and what "our Father" signified. God is inviting us into a living and intimate relationship with him. We learn who we are from our Father and ask him to transform us to become who we truly are.

Japanese people are familiar with ancestral worship in which they try to keep a "living" relationship with deceased members of the family. Japanese are also fearful of the Buddhist law of *karma*, or the moral law of cause and effect, that can bring a curse or

misfortune to our lives. I assured them that the most awesome cause of the universe was not an impersonal or evil force but the Creator who created and ruled the universe with love. The Creator became human to reveal who the Creator God is and how much God loves us. Sin broke our relationship with God, but Jesus restores it and teaches us to call God “our Father.” Christian prayer is not a religious ritual or a magical mantra but a conversation with the Father, who was willing to send his beloved Son to die for us so that we can live with him forever. The cross of Jesus is an expression of the Father’s love. The lesson tried to convey that the name “our Father” embodied the whole gospel, as I expounded in chapter 2 above.

I assigned John 3:16 as a memory verse. I also encouraged members to practice “contemplative prayer.”¹⁰ Contemplative prayer opens our hearts to God’s presence. The Lord’s Prayer is an invitation from the Father. Contemplative prayer helps us respond to God’s invitation to rest in his presence and enjoy the relationship. This discipline helps us encounter God relationally. I encouraged the participants to contemplate the Father’s love, our relationship with him, and Jesus’s redemptive work that enables it. I hosted the first group discussion time after a communal meal.

10. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 211.

In session 2, “Hallowed be your name,” we acknowledged that God must be honored as God. We realized that in the background to the Prayer was an historical and current reality in which God is not honored. We confronted the fact that we often give the place of honor to other things such as money, pleasure, and self-fulfillment. Yet only God is worthy of our praise and worship.

We worship God in attitude and action, because he deserves it but also so that others may see God in our deeds (Matt 5:16). We also reminded ourselves that God dwells in our praise and he transforms us through our praise, as I expounded in chapter 2. When we are praising God, everything falls into its proper place; when we do not praise God, everything falls apart. Not honoring God or not thanking God is sinful. We asked ourselves if there were any parts of our lives that were not honoring God. The memory verse was Matt 22:37. During the week we practiced contemplative prayer. We focused on the expressions such as “holiness of God,” “God’s glory,” and “our being made holy.”

In session 3, “Your kingdom come,” we celebrated the fact that our King with his kingdom had already come. Yet the king conquers and expands his territory not by force but by love. God’s territory is not land but the hearts of people. Christians are people who surrendered to the love of God. By surrendering to God Christians become more than conquerors (Rom 8:37).

If Christians are included in God's kingdom, Christian living is kingdom living.

We discussed what it means to be God's project team, envisioning what might happen if we, as God's team players, each took our positions as parent, husband or wife, teacher, store keeper, doctor, policeman, company executive, or any other jobs seriously in the world and played them faithfully. The kingdom of God would make an impact on the people around us and expand from there. This Prayer is an evangelistic prayer. The life of every member of the kingdom must be in service to the King and his kingdom. By praying the Prayer daily, we ask God to rule our lives and to use us for his service so that his rule may expand in the world.

The memory verse was Matt 6:33. During the week we practiced "Breath Prayer."¹¹ Breathing is something we do unconsciously. When we pay attention to breathing, it helps us concentrate. Prayer is not just a mental exercise. Breath prayer helps us acknowledge that we worship, or love, God with our whole being. It reminds us that God breathed his life into us. We used phrases such as "Your kingdom come," "Lord, rule our life," and "Lord, come quickly." We had our second discussion time.

In session 4, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we were reminded that we were created by God's will. Peace and joy occur when God's will is obeyed. To

11. Calhoun, *Handbook*, 204.

sin is to disobey God's will. Sin brings misery and death. Yet often our sufferings are God's loving signals leading us back to him. We obey God out of our love for him. Obedience sometimes requires self-denial—a surrender of one's own will in order to see God's will done. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane before he went to the cross, "Not my will but your will be done" (Matt 26:39). The cross is central to Christian belief, and it is an expression of Jesus's love and obedience to the Father. Doing God's will was Jesus's purpose and way of living. As disciples we follow Jesus in the way of the cross and in his submission to God's will. This prayer changes us and the world through us by promoting the will of God.

The memory verse was Matt 26:39. During the week, the participants were encouraged to take ten minutes after reading the newspaper or watching the news on TV to pray for the world. We also prayed that God would use us as his instruments to do his will where we live and work. We prayed to God to transform us and the world around us.

In session 5, "Give us this day our daily bread," we were reminded that we are one hundred percent dependent on God. Everything we have comes from God and belongs to God. God is everything to us. There was a boom in Christian evangelism in Japan after WWII, when Japan was in the midst of poverty, but the boom ended quickly when the economy picked up. A false god of mammon has been ruling Japan ever since.

God expects us to manage the gifts we receive from him; therefore, I challenged the congregation to pray for those who had much less than we do.

The memory verse was Deut 8:17. During the week we practiced fasting.¹² We skipped a meal and prayed while we fasted. We thanked God for what we had and prayed for those who did not have as much. When we fast we experience weakness and acknowledge our total dependence on God. This spiritual exercise helps us become humble. We renew our gratitude to God for things we often take for granted. We had our third discussion during session 5.

In session 6, “Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors,” we were reminded that we are forgiven sinners. We were forgiven by God’s mercy so we can be merciful to others. The only way we can live is by being forgiven, and the only way we can survive together is by forgiving one another. The aim of the gospel is not merely to receive forgiveness so that we can be free of our guilt. God expects us to forgive one another like our forgiving Father. We are forgiven by God’s grace, and it is by grace that we are able to forgive others. As we are forgiven and forgive each other, the kingdom expands. This prayer transforms us into forgiving people. As Jesus says, “Blessed are peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt 5:9).

12. Calhoun, *Handbook*, 218.

The memory verse was Eph 4:32. During the week we practiced “praying Scripture.”¹³ Praying Scripture allows God’s words to lead us as we seek him and his guidance. We open our hearts to God and his words “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). It is a form of contemplative prayer where the words of Scripture guide and lead our contemplation. We confessed our sins and grudges against people. We prayed for each other. We also prayed for the peace of the world.

In session 7, “Do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one,” we were reminded that our enemy is deceptive and powerful and that we are weak. We remembered that Jesus had defeated our enemy and that we are more than conquerors in him. We observed that God can strengthen and transform us through trials. Satan can make us stumble and deform us through temptations, and although Satan is strong, God is stronger. We are strong when we admit our weaknesses and our need as the Prayer does and when we are with God in relationship, as this Prayer keeps us (2 Cor 12:10b; Phil 4:13).

The memory verse was Jas 4:7. We encouraged one another to put on God’s armor daily (Eph 6:10–18a). During the week we practiced “praying Scripture.” We used

13. Calhoun, *Handbook*, 245.

Bible passages such as Ps 139:23–24, 19:12–14, Matt 4:1–11, 1 Cor 10:1, and Jas 1:12–15. We also fasted and remembered our weaknesses and our dependence on God. We had our fourth discussion after the week.

In session 8, “For yours is” we encouraged one another to respond to the prayer with our own words rather than only repeating the doxological response of the early church that had found its way into so many ancient manuscripts. I exhorted the participants to maintain a habit of praying the Lord’s Prayer daily even after the project. I reminded them that the Lord’s Prayer was God’s invitation for us participate in God’s life, and it was also our invitation for God to rule our life. God uses the Lord’s Prayer to transform us to become like the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The memory verse was Luke 1:38. During the week, we practiced “Prayer Walking.”¹⁴ Prayer walking is praying while walking. It helps us imagine walking and talking with Jesus. Since walking is a part of our daily life, some of the participants were already practicing prayer walking regularly. We prayed that we walk with God every day, praising him and serving him for his glory.

Since the phrase “for yours is the kingdom, power and glory” does not belong to the original biblical text, the following Sunday we stopped using it in our worship

14. Calhoun, *Handbook*, 253.

service, and instead we began to pause to respond silently in our own words. It was awkward at first, and for several weeks we forgot and kept going without stopping. I also had to explain when visitors were present why we had stopped saying the familiar doxology.

Evaluation Methodology

I collected data from three different sources to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. In other words, I applied the concept of triangulation to ascertain the evaluation.¹⁵ The first source of data was the participants themselves in the form of what they wrote on the assignment sheets¹⁶ each week. They recorded how many times they prayed the Lord's Prayer each day and wrote what they had learned as they engaged with the Prayer and the assignments. They also filled out a questionnaire¹⁷ at the end of the eight-week study.

The second source was my field notes during the four group discussions we had after the communal meal on the first and third Sunday of each month. I served as a participant observer. The third source was the observation of the outside expert, Masa

15. Uwe Flick, *Managing Quality in Qualitative Research* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2007), 41, writes: "Triangulation includes researchers taking different perspectives on an issue under study or more generally in answering research questions. These perspectives can be substantiated by using several methods and/or several theoretical approaches. Both are or should be linked. Furthermore, it refers to combining different sorts of data against the background of the theoretical perspectives that are applied to the data."

16. See appendix A.

17. See appendix C.

Nonogaki,¹⁸ who conducted a group interview on the ninth Sunday after the morning service. Due to an unexpected conflict in schedule, Mr. Nonogaki could not complete the discussion on January 8. It necessitated another group interview. Mr. Nonogaki led another group interview on April 9, this time with five participants who actively participated in the project by completing the weekly assignment sheets regularly.

Participant Observer

Throughout the project I served as a participant observer. I kept the field notes on the group discussions. I took notes on the participants' answers to the following questions during the group discussions:

1. What are some of the good things you learned from the lessons you heard?
2. What are some of the good things that are taking place in your prayer life since we started this project?
3. In what way does our practice of this prayer shape us as God's people?

My field notes also included my observations and impressions of the atmosphere and the non-verbal expressions and interactions of the participants. I wrote down my initial analyses on the same day as the discussions. The protocol was the use of three

18. Masa Nonogaki serves as a minister for Yokota Church of Christ in Tokyo. He also teaches in the Japan School of Evangelism. He holds a Master of Divinity from Harding School of Theology.

columns: the participants' answers in the left column, my observations in the middle, and my initial analyses in the right column.¹⁹

Questionnaire

The participants filled out an evaluation sheet after the eight weeks of learning experience. I asked the following questions:

1. Have you become more aware of the presence of God after eight weeks of learning and living with the Lord's Prayer?
2. Has your prayer changed? If yes, then how did it change?
3. Do you pray more often?
4. Has your desire to become more like Christ (Father) increased?
5. Do you pray more for other Christians in the congregation?
6. Do you pray more for people around you and for the world?²⁰

Outside Expert

The outside expert, Masa Nonogaki, came to lead one of the group discussions.

He went over the same questions and had the members express themselves orally.²¹ Masa Nonogaki asked the following questions:

19. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 188–90.

20. See appendix D.

21. See appendix C.

1. What are some good things you learned from the messages on the Lord's Prayer?
2. What are some good things you learned from the weekly assignments?
3. What are some good influences you received on your prayer life and on your daily life?
4. It has been three months since we finished the project. Are there any good things that have remained with you?

Data Analysis

To analyze and evaluate qualitative research data can be overwhelming. Coding can help organize and evaluate the data. Saldaña defines a code as follows: “a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and /or evocative attribute for a portion of language based on visual data.”²² Coding provides help in analyzing the data to find repetitive patterns or themes.²³ I coded the data with the following four words: relation, transformation, change, and church. “Relation” refers to the relationship with God. “Transformation” indicates spiritual transformation one seeks to foster. “Change” stands for any change or no-change that is observed to be occurring during the project. “Church” is defined as the church fellowship. This was included in order to determine if the project

22. Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), 3.

23. *Ibid.*, 5.

had any impact on participants' experience of community. I used these categories with the triangulated data to evaluate and assess the intervention.

As I analyzed the data from three different angles, I looked for patterns (areas of agreement in the data), slippages (areas of disagreement in the data), and silences (gaps in the data that may prove to be significant). Where the divergent angles agree, we can have greater confidence in our observed findings. Where there are slippages, we need to interpret the differences in the findings.²⁴

This methodology allowed me to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. The goal of the project was to lead Tachikawa to experience the power of praying the Lord's Prayer for spiritual edification and maturity. The above method helped assess the effectiveness of the project.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to enhance the prayer life of the members of the Tachikawa congregation and help them grow in spiritual maturity. The project intended to accomplish this purpose by studying the Lord's Prayer and applying it personally to life. This entailed the pursuit of various avenues of approach and allowed for multiple angles from which to assess the results. It turned out to be difficult to measure the

24. Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 199–201.

outcome of the project within its time frame, but eventually the process enabled me to judge whether the participants, through daily engaging in the Lord's Prayer, had received the blessings and experienced the formation for which I had hoped by holistically tapping into the true source of our spiritual life and maturity. The next chapter represents the result of those evaluations.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the project, three data sets were created:

(1) the written responses from the participants on the weekly assignment sheet and the questionnaire, (2) my field notes based on my observation of the group discussions, and (3) the outside expert's observation of the group interview. This chapter represents the analysis of each data set as well as the triangulated data.

Insider's Perspective: Assignment Sheet and Questionnaire

The weekly assignment sheet contained a checklist for the daily praying of the Lord's Prayer, the assignment for the week, and a space to write down what they learned that week. The data was collected from their comments which they submitted weekly.

The following summary highlights key observations and reactions that participants recorded on the assignment sheets each week.

Session 1: "Our Father in Heaven"

On the weekly assignment sheet, one participant mentioned that he had been praying the Lord's Prayer almost as a rote prayer without thinking about its meaning.

Another participant mentioned that the prayer became more meaningful when she tried to pray it in her own words. Another participant mentioned that he was reminded that he had a listener when he prayed and that he was talking to God. It was this relational aspect that I wanted to convey. Another participant mentioned that to call God “Father” was a privilege, and it gave her joy and peace.

Session 2: “Hallowed Be Your Name”

On the weekly assignment sheet, one of the participants mentioned that she had been putting herself and her things first, but the lesson reminded her of the importance of putting God first and honoring him. Another participant mentioned that when he contemplated God’s holiness, he believed he received power, and he wanted to glorify God more with his whole being. He prayed that he would be used as the salt of the earth and the light of the world so that God might be glorified. Another participant commented that knowing that God delighted in our praise made her joyful.

Session 3: “Your Kingdom Come”

On the weekly assignment sheet, one participant wrote that the breath prayer was an uncomfortable exercise. She learned, however, to be thankful for air to breathe and other things we take for granted because it made her feel closer to God. For another participant, the breath prayer was helpful in situating her to trust and wait for the Lord. It

was a blessing to be able to relax in time of trouble. She expressed that she had learned to ask a question when faced with a decision: “What would a person that belonged to God’s kingdom do?” She emphasized that it became important for her to live daily with the attitude that the Lord’s Prayer taught. Another participant observed that the world did not acknowledge God’s rule and thus it became corrupt. She wanted to spread the good news of the kingdom of love and peace in the world. Another participant thought that because God ruled by love and justice, he wanted to represent God’s kingdom accordingly in his daily life.

Session 4: “Your Will Be Done”

On the weekly assignment sheet, one participant mentioned that she was learning better how to seek God’s will for herself, her family, her friends, and others. Another participant related that it was difficult to deny herself and admitted that she was still obsessed with herself. She had begun to pray, however, that God’s will be done in her life and that his purpose be accomplished through her. Another participant expressed that he now wanted to follow God’s will rather than his feelings. He knew that the world was full of problems, but he now wanted to seek and, by his grace, do God’s will before the world.

Session 5: "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"

On the weekly assignment sheet, one participant mentioned that she realized she had been taking what she had for granted and that she needed to be more thankful and humble. Another participant wrote that when she deliberately reflected on what God had provided her in the past, she was encouraged to depend on him without anxiety. One additional participant mentioned that the Prayer had been teaching her to pray for others. She also related that fasting reminded her of God's abundant blessings that we often take for granted.

Session 6: "Forgive Us Our Debts"

Most participants found this petition difficult. It was difficult to face the need to forgive others. There were people whom we found difficult to forgive. Participants admitted that this prayer makes us humble. One participant wrote, "It is difficult but with God's help I shall be able to forgive. God, grant me a loving heart like yours." Another participant commented that she forgave a person by God's grace that week and that she received strength by forgiving.

Session 7: "Lead Us Not into Temptation"

On the assignment sheet that week, one participant mentioned that he had been reminded that week of the fact that our own evil desires could bring death. Another

participant related that he sought God's help while in trouble that week and by God's grace he overcame the trouble.

Session 8: "For Yours Is"

One participant shared that because of this project he had become more aware of the blessings of being God's child and had learned to make the Lord's Prayer his own prayer. Another participant commented that he believed he had learned the deep meaning of the Lord's Prayer. Another participant expressed the thought that the Lord's Prayer was fundamental to Christian life and that it contained everything. Yet another participant mentioned that in her estimation it was a perfect prayer and that she had memorized it and as a result praying had become more natural and enjoyable. Another participant said that although praying the Lord's Prayer had seemed ritualistic before, now he was praying with understanding.

There was a recurring theme of change in understanding of the Lord's Prayer.

One participant mentioned that he had been praying the Lord's Prayer without understanding but now with understanding and this seemed to be important. The data also indicate that a change in understanding brought about a change in thinking (repentance) and a change in praying. Several participants commented that their prayers were self-

centered before, but after having been corrected by the teaching of the Lord's Prayer, they believed their prayers were becoming more God-centered.

The data also suggest that the change in prayer relates to the change in attitude and disposition. One participant expressed that he thought he was becoming humbler and gentler as he engaged in the Lord's Prayer. The change was not only cognitive and behavioral but also emotional. One participant described that she was now enjoying praying more. The ritualistic prayer had become more personal and relational for her.

The Lord's Prayer comes from Jesus, who desires to connect us with his Father as our Father. The data from the assignment sheet demonstrate the theme of relationship with God and show that the project impacted the participants in their relationship with God. Several participants commented that they felt closer to the Father and that their relationship had been deepened. The data also indicate that their gratitude and sense of dependence had grown. During the project participants reported that they experienced God's help in confronting temptation. One participant mentioned that her relationship with God as experienced in the project had an influence on her relationship with other people. She now wanted to share the gospel, trusting God with gratitude, hope, and generosity.

Another theme that emerged from the data was transformation. The participants' desire to grow increased during the project. Several participants felt a need to be more forgiving and trusting. Another participant expressed the desire to become holier and more loving. Several participants commented on the growth in their intent to pray "God's will be done" more authentically and to seek "kingdom living" in service to the King and for people. A number of the participants mentioned that they believed their hearts were becoming humbler and more forgiving as they prayed the Lord's Prayer daily.

In the last questionnaire participants indicated that the project impacted certain key areas. A major emphasis during the project was that the Lord's Prayer teaches that the focus of the prayer is not on us but God. God must be first. Prayer is not magic. One participant wrote, "Prayer is not to control God, nor to manipulate, nor to instruct God, but it is to submit ourselves to God." Appreciation for the relational foundation of prayer also appears to have grown. The Lord's Prayer connects us first to God and then to others. The participants' comments indicate that there was a growing realization that being forgiven is not the goal of our salvation but repaired relationship is. God is serious about our forgiving one another. The participants learned that forgiving others required God's help and thus more praying.

Researcher's Perspective: Participant Observer

We had our discussion meeting on the first, third, fifth, and seventh Sundays of the project. I served as participant observer and took notes on people's comments.

Discussion 1

The first group discussion took place only an hour after hearing the first message on the Lord's Prayer. Several participants indicated that they had been reminded anew that prayer was talking to someone and that someone was God. Others acknowledged that the Father we addressed in the Lord's Prayer was the Father who sent Jesus to die on the cross for us. They all seemed to acknowledge the relational aspect of the prayer.

Discussion 2

One participant expressed that he thought the image of surrendering to God was powerful. Other participants commented that previously they had thought of the kingdom of heaven or heaven as a place to which they went after they died. They were reminded that they were already in the kingdom and that they needed to be involved in kingdom business. Another participant observed that once he memorized the Lord's Prayer, he could pray it anywhere and anytime.

Discussion 3

We were five weeks into the project when discussion 3 took place. The participants noticeably began to share the changes that were taking place in their prayer and their daily lives. A couple of the participants reported that they had started to use their time commuting on the train for prayer and Bible study. Another participant mentioned that he felt closer to God and that he was learning to put God and his kingdom first. Another participant shared that he experienced the power of the Lord's Prayer to correct his thoughts and actions.

Discussion 4

One participant mentioned that he was learning through praying that to believe is to obey. Another participant shared that it was difficult to forgive others, but she was reminded of Jesus's prayer on the cross (Luke 23:34). Another participant mentioned that he started to see the connection between prayer and daily life. Another participant commented that her relationship with God had deepened.

The theme of change was present in all the discussion meetings. In the first discussion, the change the participants discussed was mostly about new insights they had acquired from the first message. It signaled mostly cognitive change. During the second and third discussions, the participants started to share what they were experiencing as

they had been praying the Lord's Prayer regularly and engaging in the other weekly assignments. They observed some changes in their attitudes and behaviors. They indicated that they had begun experiencing the directive and corrective power from living with the Lord's Prayer. During the fourth discussion more participants discussed the connection between prayer and life. Some shared stories of behavioral changes that they had experienced during the week. The data from this angle indicate that the participants experienced some of the transformation as a result of their involvement in the project.

The above two angles demonstrate a gradual change during the process from the cognitive to the emotional and behavioral areas. The result affirmed for me that the Lord's Prayer has transforming power for those who engage with the Prayer daily.

Some participants did not actively engage in the weekly assignments but only participated by listening to the messages on the Lord's Prayer. Their comments stayed focused on the content of the messages throughout the project. One participant questioned the validity of the project. He was concerned that repeating the Lord's Prayer would make it a rote prayer. He did not engage in the assignments and reported that he had not been changed during the project.

Outsider's Perspective: Outside Expert

From the group interview Masa Nonogaki reported the following comments of the participants. The group interview was also recorded with a digital recorder, and I was able to review the interview afterwards.

One participant had started to pray daily for the kingdom and for what he could do to serve the kingdom. One day he was challenged to take a certain action to help an employee in his company and thought God was glorified in the outcome. Another participant shared that the exercises from the assignments had enriched her devotional life, Bible reading, and daily life. Another participant was a Sunday school teacher and taught the children what she was learning about the Lord's Prayer. The children were able to memorize the Prayer, and in her opinion, they were starting to put God first in their prayers rather than their own wishes. For another participant the Lord's Prayer had been a rote prayer before, but it was now a meaningful and relational prayer.

Mr. Nonogaki observed that the project had a positive influence for all five participants. He thought that they had learned the Lord's Prayer as the model prayer and had a good grasp of the meaning of each petition of the Prayer. In his estimation they were applying themselves to the Prayer; it was changing them. From the outside expert's

perspective, the Lord's Prayer project had the desired transforming influence on the participants.

Conclusion

This thesis records the efforts of my project to enhance the prayer life of the Tachikawa church. Everyone who attended the worship service regularly during the project participated by listening to the series of eight messages on the Lord's Prayer. About half of them participated in the discussion groups, and about one-fourth of them participated in the weekly assignments. Those who actively engaged with the weekly assignments experienced both the blessings and the transforming power of the Lord's Prayer, and the evaluations show that the prayer lives of many were enhanced even within the limited time of the project. For a significant number of people at Tachikawa, the Lord's Prayer has become a model prayer in their prayer lives, and it continues to bless and transform them.

CHAPTER V

NEXT STEPS

I wish I could report that through this project the prayer lives of all the members of the Tachikawa church were enhanced, but the data would not allow that conclusion. We have a praise worship service every fifth Sunday in which one member shares a testimony with the congregation. In one praise worship after the project, one participant shared as a testimony with the congregation how the Lord's Prayer had enhanced her life. Her prayer became more God-centered and more intimate. This in turn changed her life to become more God conscious and joyful.

In the next praise service, another participant shared his testimony of how the Lord's Prayer had impacted him and his life, especially at his work place. He prayed, "Your Kingdom come and your will be done," applying it to a problem situation at work. He thought God blessed his prayer and God was glorified in the outcome. Perhaps their excitement may serve as a catalyst for others. Also, one may extrapolate from these testimonies and expect that others who participated in the project were similarly affected. More significantly, for all those who engaged in the project, continued growth and

transformation may be expected as a result of the seeds planted by the project. The result of the teaching, preaching, regular prayer, and other spiritual practices as well as the communal discussion undoubtedly will produce fruit in the lives of those participants in years to come. That, in turn, will bless Tachikawa as a whole and will extend the rule of God through those participants' lives. Intentionality on my part regarding the ongoing practice of the Prayer will help ensure more long-term impact.

In the most recent praise worship mentioned above, I led the congregation through the Lord's Prayer, pausing briefly after the initial address, the seven petitions, and the doxology. I encouraged the participants to pray in their own words silently as we paused. I made short comments during the pauses to direct their thoughts and help them pray. We ended the Prayer with the doxology: "Our life and everything we have is yours. Please use them for your work and for your glory." I will continue to be creative in introducing and practicing the Lord's Prayer.

Since we pray the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of our worship service every Sunday, I make a short comment to remind the congregation about important aspects of the prayer that we learned during the project. We remind ourselves of the relational, missional, eschatological, and transformative aspects of the prayer. This focused attention waters the seeds we have planted in deliberate ways; it also helps us guard against letting

the practice of praying the Lord's Prayer become ritualistic, keeping it vital and relational.

As a specific follow-up, I intend to prepare a program to teach new converts to pray by leading them through the Lord's Prayer. I intend to prepare a workbook utilizing the material from the project. We hope to share such a workbook with other congregations. I also intend to share the material of the project with other small, struggling congregations for their edification and encouragement by holding a special seminar for them and recording it to make the material available for those who may not be able to attend the seminar. I would like to invite as many people to a praying course over the Lord's Prayer where the Lord himself is the instructor and the intercessor.

The Lord's Prayer is a powerful resource to help us grow and be transformed by God's grace. Its words are familiar, but its power is not often experienced. This prayer helps us align ourselves with the will of God. Most Japanese churches are small and struggling. We are often overwhelmed with the sight of our insignificance and become discouraged. The Lord's Prayer helps us acknowledge our true identity and significance in relation to our Father in heaven. The prayer connects us with the Father and each other as God's people and also with the world through our work of evangelism. We pray daily

for the coming of the kingdom as we dedicate ourselves to serve God and seek to save people whom he loves.

Jesus still invites us: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt 11:28–30). The Lord’s Prayer contains inexhaustible love and power. It is the easy yoke¹ that the Lord is offering for those who are weary and who wish to be transformed into his likeness.

1. Willard, *The Spirit*, 10.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885



August 26, 2016

Mr. Nao Fukushima
Graduate School of Theology
ACU Box # 29442
Abilene Christian University

Dear Mr. Fukushima,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled **Learning to pray the Lord's Prayer for spiritual transformation at Tachikawa Church of Christ**

(IRB# 16-066) is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects as:

- Non-research (45 CFR 46.102(d))
- Non-human research (45 CFR 46.102(f))

Based on:

The study is a quality improvement project designed to evaluate spiritual leadership in a single congregation. The insights gained from the project will be used to improve spiritual leadership within the single congregation. It is not intended to be used to contribute to the body of generalizable scientific knowledge.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX B

Weekly Checklist

1. How many times did you pray the Lord's Prayer today?

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Date	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Prayed	times	times	times	times	times	times	times

Let's keep a daily prayer journal.

2. What are some of the good things you learned or experienced this week? (Review your daily prayer journal)

APPENDIX C

Group Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the good things you learned from the lessons you heard?
2. What are some of the good things that are taking place in your prayer life since we started this project?
3. In what way does our practice of this prayer shape us as God's people?

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this study of the Lord's Prayer. Please answer the six questions below to help evaluate the process.

1. Have you become more aware of the presence of God after eight weeks of the study on the Lord's Prayer?
2. Has your prayer changed? If yes, then how did it change?
3. Do you pray more often?

APPENDIX E

Sermon Sketches

Sermon 1: “Our Father in Heaven”—Matt 6:5–13

1. Learning to pray from the Lord—Matt 6:5–8; Luke 11:1
 - 1.1 Prayer is not to show off
 - 1.2 Prayer is not a magical chanting
2. Privilege of calling God “Our Father”—John 3:16; 1:12; 3:3, 5
 - 2.1 We derive our identity from God who loves us—Phil 1:6; Heb 2:11–12; John 20:17
 - 2.2 “Cause and effect” that we should know and fear

This prayer is an invitation from God and our invitation to God. It teaches us who we are and how we should live.

Memory Verse—John 3:16

Sermon 2: “Hallowed Be Your Name”—Matt 6:9–13

1. Honor God as God
 - 1.1 Fear God—Prov 1:7; 9:10; Eccl 12:13; Rev 4:11
 - 1.2 Thank the Lord—Ps 139:14; 1Thess 5:12–18
2. Sin is not honoring God
 - 2.1 The world does not honor God—Rom 1:20–25; 2 Tim 3:1–5; Num 20:12–13
 - 2.2 Sanctify God and we are sanctified—Ps 22:3; Matt 7:13–14; Rom 12:1–2; Deut 10:12–14; Matt 11:28–30; 5:16

Is our life honoring and glorifying God? Is there any part of our life that is not honoring God?

Memory Verse—Matt 22:38–37

Sermon 3: “Your Kingdom Come”—Matt 6:9–13

1. The King and the Kingdom came
 - 1.1 Christ is the promised King (the Messiah)—Matt 1:1

- 1.2 The Church is the promised kingdom—Dan 2:44; Luke 17:21; John 18:36
 - 2. The King reigns with truth and love
 - 2.1 The King’s reign of love—John 12:32; 2 Cor 10:4–6; Gal 5:23
 - 2.2 The way the King’s servants live—Matt 6:33
- Rule us and use us for your kingdom.
Memory Verse—Matt 6:33

Sermon 4: “Your Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven”—Matt 6:9–13

- 1. May your will be done through me
 - 1.1 We are made of God’s will—Rev 4:11; Col 1:16–17; 1 Cor 4:7
 - 1.2 Sin resists, rebels against God’s will—Acts 26:14; Matt 11:28–30; John 14:23–24; 15:9–10
 - 1.3 To obey is to deny yourself—Matt 26:39, 42; 1 Pet 2:1–2; 2 Tim 3:15–4:5; Ps 139:23–24; 19:12–14
- 2. May your will be done on earth
 - 2.1 This prayer changes us and the world—Matt 5:16; Phil 2:15–16
 - 2.2 Do not forget the mission of the church—Deut 4:6–8; Eph 1:10–11; 2:10

This prayer is about the kingdom; May your will be done.

Memory Verse—Matt 26:39

Sermon 5: “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”—Matt 6:9–13

- 1. God who gives grace (Gracious God)
 - 1.1 God gives us life—Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 4:7; Jas 4:13–15; Luke 12:13–21
 - 1.2 God gives us everything we need to live—Ps 103:2; Deut 8:11–18
- 2. Share God’s grace to each other
 - 2.1 Pay attention to the key word “our”
 - 2.2 Manage God’s gracious gifts. 1 Pet 4:7–11; Rom 12:3–8; Ps 127:1–2

Christian life is a life of grace. We humbly depend on God’s grace, and we share God’s grace with each other with joy and gratitude.

Memory Verse—Deut 8:17

Sermon 6: “Forgive Us Our Debts, as We Also Have Forgiven Our Debtors”—Matt 6:9–13

- 1. To be forgiven
 - 1.1 We had debts—Rom 4:4; Luke 11:4
 - 1.2 God paid our debts and redeemed us—Acts 20:28; Isa 59:1–2; 1 John 1:5–10

2. To forgive

2.1 To forgive is not the ultimate purpose—Eph 3:14–21

2.2 We cannot forgive—Matt 6:14–15; 18:21–35; Mark 9:4

God's forgiveness makes us forgiving people. God's grace changes us.

Memory Verse—Eph 4:32

Sermon 7: “Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil”—Matt 6:9–13

1. Help us in time of temptation.

1.1 There are trials—Jas 1:12–15; 2 Cor 7:10

1.2 There are temptations—Phil 3:19; 1 John 2:15–17; Jas 4:4

2. Protect us from the evil one (Satan)

2.1 Satan is strong—1 Pet 5:8; 1 John 5:19; Eph 6:13–18

2.2 Satan is weak (God is stronger)—Jas 4:7; 2:19; Rev 12:7-9; 20

We live in the world where Satan rules, but God can protect us from his temptations and snares. We must be sanctified and strengthened to live for God's kingdom.

Memory Verse—Jas 4:7

Sermon 8: “God's Invitation to Us and Our Invitation to God”—Matt 6:9–13

1. God's invitation—Matt 6:9

1.1 Relational prayer and non-relational prayer

1.2 God's aid for prayer—Rom 8:26–27; 8:31–34

2. Our invitation—Luke 1:38

2.1 Our daily prayer—1Thess 5:17

2.2 This prayer molds us—2 Cor 3:18

When we take this prayer seriously and have fellowship with the Father daily, we shall be transformed by the indwelling Spirit of God into the image of his likeness.

Memory Verse—Luke 1:38

APPENDIX F

Weekly Assignment (Japanese)

日々「主の祈り」と共に歩む 第1週目

1. 今日「主の祈り」を（何度）祈りましたか？

（一日に3回ほど、主の祈りを祈りながら神様のご臨在りんざいを覚えましょう。）

	日曜日	月曜日	火曜日	水曜日	木曜日	金曜日	土曜日
日付	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
回数	回	回	回	回	回	回	回

祈りの日記（メモ）をつけてみましょう。

2. 今週の祈りと歩みの中でどういことを学びましたか？

（祈りの日記を読み返して見ましょう。）

日々「主の祈り」と共に歩む 第2週目

1. 今日「主の祈り」を（何度）祈りましたか？

（一日に3回ほど、主の祈りを祈りながら神様のご臨在りんざいを覚えましょう。）

	日曜日	月曜日	火曜日	水曜日	木曜日	金曜日	土曜日
日付	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
回数	回	回	回	回	回	回	回

祈りの日記（メモ）をつけてみましょう。

御名があがめられますように。

「私の中にあなたをあがめていないところがあったら、お示してください。また、それを改める恵みをお与えください。」

2. 今週の祈りと歩みの中でどういうことを学びましたか？

（祈りの日記を読み返して見ましょう。）

日々「主の祈り」と共に歩む 第3週目

1. 今日「主の祈り」を（何度）祈りましたか？

（一日に何度か主の祈りを祈りながら神様のご臨在りんざいを覚えましょう。）

	日曜日	月曜日	火曜日	水曜日	木曜日	金曜日	土曜日
日付	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
回数	回	回	回	回	回	回	回

祈りの日記（メモ）をつけてみましょう。

「呼吸の祈り」をやってみましょう。（リラックスして）

息を吸いながら「御国が来ますように。」

息を吐きながら「私を治めてください。」あるいは「私を用いてください」

今週の暗唱聖句

だから、神の国とその義とをまず第一に求めなさい。そうすれば、それに加えて、これらのものはすべて与えられます。マタイ6:33

2. 今週の祈りと歩みの中でどういうことを学びましたか？

（祈りの日記を読み返して見ましょう。）

日々「主の祈り」と共に歩む 第4週目

1. 今日「主の祈り」を（何度）祈りましたか？

（一日に何度か主の祈りを祈りながら神様のご臨在りんざいを覚えましょう。）

	日曜日	月曜日	火曜日	水曜日	木曜日	金曜日	土曜日
日付	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
回数	回	回	回	回	回	回	回

祈りの日記（メモ）をつけてみましょう。

テレビのニュースを見た後で、あるいは新聞を読んだ後で、課題を一つ選び祈りましょう。

詩 139:24-25、19:12-14 を自分の祈りとして祈りましょう。

今週の暗唱聖句

「わが父よ。できますならば、この杯をわたしから過ぎ去らせてください。しかし、わたしの願うようにではなく、あなたのみこころのように、なさってください。」マタイ 26:39

2. 今週の祈りと歩みの中でどういうことを学びましたか？

（祈りの日記を読み返して見ましょう。）

日々「主の祈り」と共に歩む 第5週目

1. 今日「主の祈り」を（何度）祈りましたか？

（一日に何度か主の祈りを祈りながら神様のご臨在りんざいを覚えましょう。）

	日曜日	月曜日	火曜日	水曜日	木曜日	金曜日	土曜日
日付	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
回数	回	回	回	回	回	回	回

祈りの日記（メモ）をつけてみましょう。

今週は何度か(一回でも)断食(食事をスキップ)してみましょう。その時間を祈りに用いて、私たちが生かし、すべてを与え、支えて下さっている神に感謝しましょう。自分たちより恵まれていない人々のために祈りましょう。

今週の暗唱聖句

あなたは心のうちで、「この私の力、私の手の力が、この富を築き上げたのだ」と言わないように気をつけなさい。申命 8:17

2. 今週の祈りと歩みの中でどういうことを学びましたか？

（祈りの日記を読み返して見ましょう。）

日々「主の祈り」と共に歩む 第6週目

1. 今日は「主の祈り」を（何度）祈りましたか？

（一日に何度か主の祈りを祈りながら神様のご臨在りんざいを覚えましょう。）

	日曜日	月曜日	火曜日	水曜日	木曜日	金曜日	土曜日
日付	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
回数	回	回	回	回	回	回	回

祈りの日記（メモ）をつけてみましょう。

自分の心にある人に対する恨みや自分の赦せない心について告白し（認め）ましょう。

赦すことができるように主の恵みを求めましょう。

自分の人間関係(平和、平安)のために、また世界の平和のために祈りましょう。

今週の暗唱聖句

お互いに親切にし、心の優しい人となり、神がキリストにおいてあなたがたを赦してくださったように、互いに赦し合いなさい。エペソ4:32

2. 今週の祈りと歩みの中でどういうことを学びましたか？

（祈りの日記を読み返して見ましょう。）

日々「主の祈り」と共に歩む 第7週目

1. 今日は「主の祈り」を（何度）祈りましたか？

（一日に何度か主の祈りを祈りながら神様のご臨在^{りんざい}を覚えましょう。）

	日曜日	月曜日	火曜日	水曜日	木曜日	金曜日	土曜日
日付	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
回数	回	回	回	回	回	回	回

祈りの日記（メモ）をつけてみましょう。

毎朝、祈りながら神の武具を身につけましょう。

終わりに言います。主にあって、その大能の力によって強められなさい。悪魔の策略に対して立ち向かうことができるために、神のすべての武具を身に着けなさい。私たちの格闘は血肉に対するものではなく、主権、力、この暗やみの世界の支配者たち、また、天にいるもろもろの悪霊に対するものです。ですから、邪悪な日に際して対抗できるように、また、いっさいを成し遂げて、堅く立つことができるように、神のすべての武具をとりなさい。では、しっかりと立ちなさい。腰には真理の帯を締め、胸には正義の胸当てを着け、足には平和の福音の備えをはきなさい。これらすべてのものの上に、信仰の大盾を取りなさい。それによって、悪い者が放つ火矢を、みな消すことができます。救いのかぶとをかぶり、また御霊の与える剣である、神のことばを受け取りなさい。すべての祈りと願いを用いて、どんなときにも御霊によって祈りなさい。そのためには絶えず目をさまして、すべての聖徒のために、忍耐の限りを尽くし、また祈りなさい。

エペソ6:10-18

（オプションとしての課題 断食をして自分の欲と弱さを考え、主に委ねましょう。）

今週の暗唱聖句

ですから、神に従いなさい。そして、悪魔に立ち向かいなさい。そうすれば、悪魔はあなたがたから逃げ去ります。ヤコブ 4:7

2. 今週の祈りと歩みの中でどういうことを学びましたか？

（祈りの日記を読み返して見ましょう。）

日々「主の祈り」と共に歩む 第8週目

1. 今日は「主の祈り」を（何度）祈りましたか？

（一日に何度か主の祈りを祈りながら神様のご臨在りんざいを覚えましょう。）

	日曜日	月曜日	火曜日	水曜日	木曜日	金曜日	土曜日
日付	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
回数	回	回	回	回	回	回	回

祈りの日記（メモ）をつけてみましょう。

歩きながらの祈り（散歩、ジョギング、通勤、買い物など。くれぐれも車などに気を付けて。）をやってみましょう。

今回は「父の心」についてのメッセージでしたが、この祈りの学びを始めてから、父なる神への親しみ(父との関係)は深まりましたか？

2. 今週の祈りと歩みの中でどういうことを学びましたか？

（祈りの日記を読み返して見ましょう。）

日々「主の祈り」と共に歩む 第9週目

1. これまで学んだものを生かして、自由に「主の祈り」を自分の祈りとして祈りましょう。

あなたにとって、日々の生活の中で最も主のご臨在を覚えることのできる祈り方を使って祈りましょう。あなたにとってそれはどの祈りの方法ですか？(黙想的祈り、呼吸の祈り、歩きながらの祈り、、、など)

「国と力と栄はとこしえにあなたのもものだからです。アーメン」は古代教会の主の祈りに対する応答でした。あなたの応答をあなたの言葉で表してみましょう。

暗唱聖句

マリヤは言った。「ほんとうに、私は主のはしためです。どうぞ、あなたのおことばどおりこの身になりますように。」 路 1:38

2. 9週間の「主の祈りから学ぶ」で、あなたにとって一番益となったこと(良かったこと)は何ですか？

APPENDIX H

Questionnaire (Japanese)

「主の祈りから学ぶ」に参加して下さいありがとうございます。今回の学びのプロセスを評価するために次の7つの質問に答えてください。

1. 「主の祈りから学ぶ」を8週間続けたことによって、神が共におられること（主のご臨在）を以前より意識するようになりましたか。
2. あなたの祈りは変わりましたか？もし変わったとしたら、どのように変わりましたか？
3. 以前より祈るようになりましたか？
4. キリスト（父）のようになりたいという願いはより強くなりましたか？
5. 教会の兄弟姉妹のためにもっと祈るようになりましたか？
6. あなたの周りの人々や社会（世）のためにもっと祈るようになりましたか？
7. ほかに良い変化がありましたか？

ありがとうございました。父なる神と主イエスキリストから恵みと平安があなたの上に豊かにありますように。また、主があなたの祈りと生活(人生)をますます豊かに祝福してくださいますように。

BRIEF VITA

Naoyoshi Fukushima was born in Rumoi, Hokkaido, Japan on May 29, 1956. He graduated from Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock, Texas, in 1981, and received a master of science degree in biblical and related studies from Abilene Christian University in 1996. Nao has been working as a minister for the Tachikawa Church of Christ in Tokyo since 1982, and he has served as Dean of the Japan School of Evangelism in Tokyo since 2004. Nao married Noriko Fujiwara in 1979. Together they have two daughters, Mitsuko and Naomi, and one son, Yoshiya.