The Model Prayer - Applied

Luke records a question from one of the disciples of Jesus. "Now it came to pass, as He (Jesus) was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). We are not told by Luke how long Jesus had been praying, although we know that He at times prayed long prayers (Matthew 26:36-45), and most certainly prayed often (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16). Perhaps such is why the disciple asked the question, because he witnessed the prayer habits of Jesus and wanted to know how and for what to pray - since it was a regular practice of Jesus.

Jesus responds to the question in verses 2 through 4 of Luke chapter 4 (also in Matthew 6:9-13). Either now, or at a time convenient, takes a moment to read one, or both of the passages listed and time how long it takes you to read Jesus' response. Jesus' response as recorded in Luke took me 21 seconds, His response as recorded in Matthew took me 21.2 seconds. I did not read too fast, nor too slow, I simply read with the expression of the texts. So, what is the point? Jesus is teaching just what the disciple asked, how and for what to pray, not the length of the prayer itself. Content and meaning are the important issues.

Jesus specifies in both Gospels the content and meaning necessary in our prayers. He speaks of, lists, that our prayers should consist of/exhibit five characteristics:

1. Reverence – “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.” "Hallowed" means to make holy, sanctify, or treat as sacred. We set God apart from all that is ordinary or common.

2. Loyalty – “Your kingdom come." Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” We show that God's will is more important than our own, inclusive of His ways and thoughts, and that we do not lean upon our own understanding (Luke 22:42, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 55:8-9).

3. Dependency – “Give us day by day our daily bread.” We understand that we are dependent upon God and can do nor accomplish anything without Him (John 15:5, Philippians 4:13, Psalm 20:7).

4. Forgiveness – “And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.” We exhibit that God alone can forgive our sins if we repent and seek forgiveness (1 John 1:9, Ephesians 1:3-7).

5. Trust – “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” We know that temptation to sin does not come from God. Temptation to sin comes from the devil. However, God promises us a way of escape (James 1:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13).

With these simple to understand and simple to apply principles, Jesus gives us direction so that we can pray without ceasing with perseverance and supplication (Ephesians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:17).