

1. The Lord's Prayer



Sarah and Paul MacDonald, who were twins, loved asking questions. Some of the questions they asked were very good ones. Most Sundays at church they prayed The Lord's Prayer. Like many boys and girls they knew it by heart, and sometimes Sarah and Paul prayed The Lord's Prayer at home too.

One day after they had prayed this prayer together, Sarah asked her father, 'Dad, why do we call that prayer The Lord's Prayer?'



Sarah and Paul



‘That’s an easy question to answer, Sarah,’ replied Dad. ‘It was the prayer the Lord Jesus taught to His disciples. The disciples used to watch the Lord Jesus praying.

They saw how much prayer meant to Him and they wanted to pray like the Lord Jesus; but they didn’t know how to do so.’

‘I’d like to know too,’ added Sarah.

‘Well, one day, after they had watched Jesus pray again, they went to Him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray like You.”’

Paul asked, ‘But why do we have to say that prayer so often, Dad? Why did Jesus teach only one prayer?’

Dad thought for a moment. ‘So that we would have a pattern or a model,’ he said.

‘I don’t quite understand,’ said Sarah. ‘I know about Granny’s knitting patterns. But can you have a prayer pattern?’

‘Yes, you can. When Granny does her knitting she has a pattern which tells her how



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to make the thing she wants to knit. If it's a school jumper she wants to make, she has a jumper pattern. The prayer the Lord Jesus taught His disciples is a kind of pattern too. We can pray it ourselves, but it also tells us how to make our own prayers. It is a model prayer.'

'Model prayer! I'm interested in models,' said Paul. 'Only the other day Uncle Leslie





Sarah and Paul

showed me a model of some buildings he's helping to make.'

'Yes,' replied his father. 'Often, an architect will have a model made of the building he has planned before the building itself is started, so that people can see what it's going to be like. It helps the builders to see the model too. The Lord Jesus gave us The Lord's Prayer to show us how to build our own prayers.'

'Does that mean we should pray only this prayer to God?' asked Sarah.

'Oh, no,' said her father. 'We can use this prayer ourselves, and it's good for us to pray it together because it's the family prayer in which we say not "My Father" but "Our Father". But most of all The Lord's Prayer helps us to make our own prayers.'

'How does it do that, Dad?' asked Paul.

'It explains first of all how we should come to God,' replied Dad. 'It tells us what we ought to call God when we speak to Him. It tells us too the kind of things we can ask Him for. There are some things it's quite silly to ask God for.'

'I think I know what you mean,' said Sarah.





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'I asked for a new bicycle and I didn't get one. It wasn't really the right kind of prayer because I know I was being selfish.'

'Yes, we all pray selfishly sometimes, I'm afraid,' said Dad 'and that's why the Lord Jesus gave us this model prayer to teach us to pray as God wants us to pray.'

'I do wish you would explain what the prayer really means then,' said Paul. 'I don't understand when it says, "Hallowed be Your Name". And what's "temptation"?'





Sarah and Paul



‘Look. I know what we’ll do. Every night at bedtime, before you say your own prayers, I’ll tell you about a small part of The Lord’s Prayer.

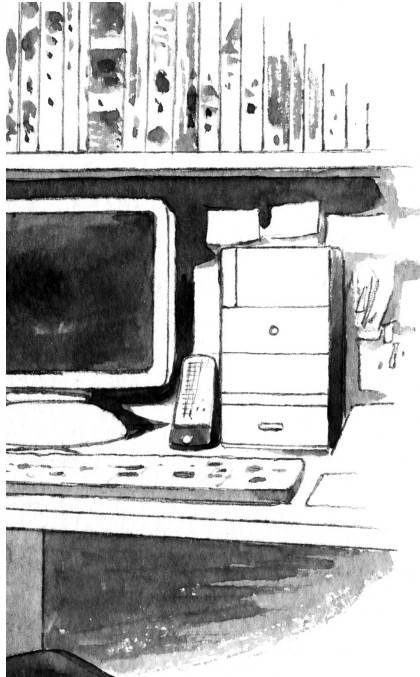
‘That will be fine,’ exclaimed Sarah.

‘Wait a moment though,’ added her father. ‘I’ve another idea too. You know how at school you sometimes have a special project. Why don’t you make a kind of scrapbook and write





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down every night the things we learn from The Lord's Prayer? Then perhaps you could make some drawings or stick in some pictures to help you remember what we say.'

'Can we start tonight?' asked Paul.

'Yes; I think you'll find two large notebooks in the centre drawer of my desk. You can use those instead of proper scrapbooks if you like.'





Sarah and Paul

In a moment Sarah and Paul had found the notebooks. They were the kind they liked because they were spiral-bound, which made it easy to turn over the pages.

'What are you going to write down first?' asked Dad. 'What have you learned tonight?'

'Well,' said Sarah, 'first of all, God wants us to talk to Him.'

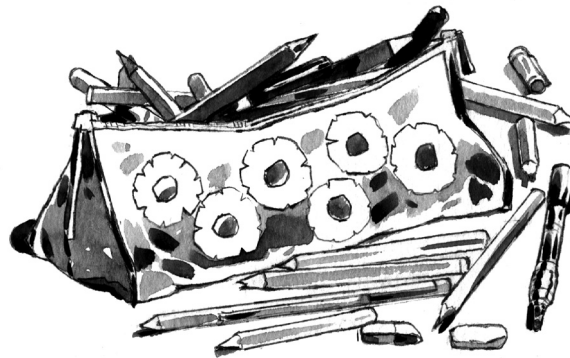
'Yes, what else?'

'The Lord Jesus taught the disciples this prayer,' said Paul.





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‘Good. And what have you learned about the prayer?’

‘Oh,’ Sarah said, ‘it’s a pattern prayer.’

‘Yes, it’s a model prayer,’ said Paul.

Dad was pleased that Sarah and Paul had remembered so much. ‘I think you’ve enough to put down in your scrapbooks now, don’t you?’

And so Sarah and Paul wrote these things in their books. They wrote three sentences:

‘God wants us to talk to Him.’





Sarah and Paul

‘The Lord Jesus taught the disciples this prayer.’

‘It is a pattern or a model prayer.’

While they were writing, Dad said to the twins, ‘Why don’t you do a drawing to go with what you’ve put down? What could you draw this evening?’

‘I think the best thing,’ suggested Sarah, ‘would be a picture of the disciples watching Jesus pray.’

‘I’m going to draw the Lord Jesus standing up and the disciples coming to ask Him to teach them to pray,’ said Paul.





Make a Scrapbook

Get Active!

Two suggestions!

1. Why not start a scrapbook like Paul and Sarah and write down the sentences they did about each part of the Lord's Prayer? A spiral notebook or a loose-leaf folder will do just as well as a scrapbook. You will need some coloured pencils, glue and scissors.

2. If you are a girl, draw the picture Sarah drew; and if you are a boy, the picture Paul drew.

