

## MAKING OUR COMMUNITY BETTER

We love Granbury and Hood County! We have lived in the northeast and all over the south and southwest. This is far and away the most pleasant place we have lived. Y'all are great folks!

One of the reasons we love living here is that this area is very *Christian friendly* and merciful. I know of no other community our size that has so many ministries that reach out and help those who are less fortunate, while showing genuine compassion. The Thanksgiving parade is Jesus-focused and events on the Square, like the Living Christmas Cards are too.

Having said that, it seems to me that the percentage of people who have chosen to put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is still very low and our area is plagued by the same problems as most all other areas – murders, thefts, vandalism, etc. And the percentage of people in some of our churches is dwindling.

How can we improve this situation? How can we make our community even better? *We can't!* But *God can* – and He will – when we seek Him as He told us to. I believe a key to this is prayer and cooperating with God in regard to what we pray. Jesus gave us the model prayer (*We often call it *The Lord's Prayer.**) in the *Bible*. (Matthew 6:9-13) He said, “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven, *hallowed be your name.*

*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

To quote my friend Pastor Mike McMahon, “To me, prayer is simply loving God. It's more about communing with Him than communicating. . .” Part of communing with God is allowing Him to bring us onto the “same page” with Him in our desires and actions so that He is exalted through our lives. Thus, I'd like to focus on the highlighted portions of the first two lines of this model prayer.

First, God wants to be recognized. He wants the people He created to praise Him and hold Him in the highest regard – to revere Him. He deserves to be exalted. He created us and maintains us. We cannot simply say good things about God and then live any way we please. Our lives, as well as our words, must exalt Him. That is what it means to “hallow” His Name.

Second, we must desire that His kingdom be established here on earth, so that earth resembles heaven because His will is being carried out here. This involves much more than wishing it were so. It requires submission of our very selves to God, cooperating with Him in what He wants to do.

God wants to improve our situation, but we must do our part. When I say “we”, I mean those of us who have put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. God says that, when *we* (not everyone) humble ourselves and pray and seek His face and turn from *our* wicked ways, He will hear us, forgive our sin and heal our land. (2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 7:14) Believers, the ball is in our court! Do we want a better community? Then we need to take God seriously, pray and change *our* ways. When we do this, God says He *will* act.

In the following articles, we will explore the “how” of this and make some applications.

- Kingdom Prayer
- The How of Kingdom Prayer
- The Bottom Line