

“Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9). One of his disciples asked Jesus how to pray and the Lord responded by teaching the Our Father.

- We pray, “thy kingdom come thy will be done.” Like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, we are taught to pray beyond our own desires to seek what God the Father wills. When we match our own desires to God’s, we are on the path to lasting joy.
- We ask for our daily bread. We should ask for what we need and be weary of asking for what we want. When we seek to satisfy an unhealthy desire, we often find we are never satisfied. Clean water satisfies a basic need and helps quench a thirst. If our desire is for a can of soda or a shot of whiskey, we often want another and another. The thirst is not quenched, but the desire grows stronger with each drink.
- We ask for the forgiveness of sins. Let us recall that Jesus suffered and died on the cross for our sins. There is a cost to what we receive, and we should bear that in mind whenever we ask for something. Jesus asks us to forgive others. This requires sacrifice on our part. We have to let go of hurts and a desire to pay someone back for an injustice. This is life giving. Sacrifice on our part helps us to better understand God’s love for us and the need to seek justice rather than vengeance.

What would you ask for if you knew this very day might be your last on earth? My father asked himself that question before a very serious surgery. Reminiscent of the Our Father, he asked for the will of our heavenly Father to be done. Mindful of his own mistakes, he asked for forgiveness of sins. He did not ask for things. Instead he asked to be able to share God’s love with his neighbor. When we ask for our daily bread, we are asking for what we need one day at a time. My father asked for the Lord to guide him through a difficult surgery that he might see another dawn and rise a better man. My father did not know it at the time, but his life was indeed holding on by a thread. If not for the hands of a skilled surgeon guided by God, my father’s earthly life would have ended within a day or two.

#### Take My Hand, Lord

Each night when I say my prayers,  
To dispel the darkness from my cares,  
I am ever so keenly aware  
Of every burden that I bear.

Though life appears to be a maze,  
I ask forgiveness for errant ways;  
And that I may sow the precious “seeds”  
That gladly serve my “neighbor’s” needs.

I know the cross you’ve given me  
Must be carried with grace and humility.  
I count my blessings, one by one,  
Mindful that “THY WILL BE DONE!”

I ask but naught for Earthly treasure,  
But your gifts of a more lasting measure.  
I seek to be human and less demanding...  
To share your love and understanding.

In your image I was fashioned and planned,  
So I ask dear Lord: “Please take my hand.”  
I know that in your infinite plan,  
That I shall rise a better man.

A Poem & a Prayer by Ezio M. Tozzi

The Lord teaches us, “ask and you will receive” (Lk 11:9a). He also teaches us that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35, Sirach 4:31). The surgery was successful. My father’s health was restored, and he lived another 17 years. With those years, his heart was more open to listening for what God wanted and trying to be the hands that helped others.