

PRAYER POINTERS

We all are subject to drifting into behavior and speech habits that convey unscriptural concepts. Sometimes such speech habits are manifest in the prayers in our assemblies. Such mistakes are doubtless made innocently, but they are mistakes, nonetheless.

When we pray we are to address **God**, our Heavenly **Father** (not His Son), **in the name of His Son** (Mat. 6:9; John 14:13–14; 15:16b; 16:23–24; Eph 5:20; Col. 3:17; et al.). This precept is often forgotten, as indicated below:

1. We sometimes hear prayers closed with the words, “In **Thy** name we pray.” Such words have the effect of addressing the prayer **to** the Father and then offering it **in the name** of the Father, instead of **in the name** of Christ. It is both contrary to Scripture and (we mean no unkindness) nonsensical to pray **to** God in the **name** of God.

2. We have heard many prayers at the Lord’s table, “**Father** we thank **Thee** for **Thy** table...,” or “We thank **Thee** for this bread which represents **Thy** body...; We thank **Thee** for this fruit of the vine which symbolizes **Thy** blood.” By such terminology the prayer leader (unwittingly, we suppose) is either addressing Christ in his prayer, or He is implying that the table is the **Father’s** instead of the **Son’s** (i.e., the **Lord’s**) and that the **Father** rather than the **Lord** sacrificed His body and blood. Likely, leaders of such prayers have simply not considered the implications of their words, but both concepts are wrong. We are not to address the **Son**, but **the Father**, in prayer (as noted above). The **Son**, **not the Father**, sacrificed His body and blood (the **Father** never had flesh and blood). The supper/table belongs peculiarly to the **Son** as a memorial to His death (1 Cor. 11:23–26). The wording of our prayers should keep these distinctions clear. The following (or similar) prayers at the table will correctly convey these concepts: “**Father**, we thank Thee for this bread, which represents the **Lord’s** body sacrificed for our

salvation.” **Father**, we thank Thee for this fruit of the vine which, symbolizes the blood of **Thy Son** poured out for our sins. In **Christ’s** name we pray, Amen.”

3. Prayer leaders occasionally address fellow-humans in prayer. Brethren leading a prayer before a “fellowship” dinner sometimes say, “We thank these ladies who have prepared this food.” We should certainly be grateful for those who thus serve, but if we mention them in prayer, let us remember we are addressing **God**. Therefore, let us thank **God** for the ladies (or for whomever we are grateful), rather than **thanking those people** directly in a prayer addressed to God.

As in all things pertaining to God, we should seek to please Him, including the wording of our prayers.

—Dub McClish

Denton, TX