



Five Simple Meditations on the GFS Prayer

O Lord, Our Heavenly Father, we beseech thee to bless us and all who belong to the Girls' Friendly Society.

It is because the Girls' Friendly Society is a *fellowship* that our prayer begins with the words "our Heavenly Father". It is as children of one Father, members of one family in Christ, all striving to be followers of him, that we ask His blessing. We pray not as individuals, but as members of this fellowship. We do not ask for personal help and strength, but for His blessing upon all GFS members. As we begin this prayer for our fellowship, we acknowledge, above all else, His fatherhood.

We remember, also those girls of other groups, other races, and other countries – girls who, like us, belong to the Girls' Friendly Society. We may pray in different languages; however, we are all in fellowship with each other. May no pride or narrowness of mind keep us from the fullness and freedom of this fellowship as we pray.

Strengthen and Protect us by Thy fatherly love and vouchsafe to us the guidance of Thy Holy Spirit.

We can only grasp at the full meaning of "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." His love for us is so great, it draws out a response from us to do something to prove ourselves worthy of such love, to follow his way in our own lives. By ourselves, we know this is an impossible task. So we ask for help and strength and guidance in the way we should go.

Help us all to bear one another's burdens and to live, not for ourselves but for others, as members of one family in Christ.

We ask God to help us forget ourselves and to remember others – not only those in our own Society, but all people we know. This means thinking especially of other girls, all over the world, who suffer because people are unkind or indifferent to their needs. It means living with open and inquiring minds – finding out about the difficulties which other girls face.

Yet "bearing one another's burdens" means more than "thinking about" other people. If we truly mean this part of our prayer, we will pledge ourselves to make an honest effort to do something to make this burden lighter. Only if we do this can we honestly pray to live "as members of one family in Christ."

Cleans us from our sins, make us holy by the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit,

Are we willing to admit that we are not perfect - that we have many sins? What do we think of as "sin" – only stealing, lying, and more recognized offenses? Or do we think of little

acts of indifference, ignorance, thoughtlessness, our failure to live up to our best in our work, friendships, or daily living? We need to take time to honestly examine our lives, to measure what we are or are not, against what we might be and to admit our failures. Then we can pray for cleansing and know the joy of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

And bring us all at last to the joy of Thy Heavenly Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is our closing petition. As we pray, we realize that the Kingdom will come only as we make it a reality in our only daily lives. As we strive to make real our fellowship of prayer, by bearing one another's burdens in the problems of everyday living and honestly working to make those burdens lighter, we turn again and again to God for help and strength and guidance. So we pray from our hearts "Thy kingdom come."