Petitionary Prayer: A Philosophical Investigation. Scott A. Davison. Abstract. This book explores the philosophical issues involved in the idea of petitionary prayer, where this is conceived as an activity designed to influence the action of the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfectly good God of traditional theism. This book explores the philosophical issues involved in the idea of petitionary prayer, where this is conceived as an activity designed to influence the action of the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfectly good God of traditional theism. New defences are also proposed, building upon a careful analysis of the shortcomings of previous proposals, clarifying the issues for future debate. There are many puzzles and paradoxes regarding “petitionary prayer,” which philosopher Eleonore Stump defines as “a request made of God for something specific believed to be good by the one praying.”… Consider the following petitionary prayer: Boshua is in a well-paying but personally unsatisfying real estate job, and he prays that a new opportunity will arise. I’ll call this a “first world prayer,” in-keeping with the well-trodden meme. Of course, like those who participate in the meme, I do not mean that “first worlders” don’t have serious problems, or that those outside the “first world” don’t sometimes have non-serious problems.