

In the HOUSE *of the* LORD



LESSON #10 – PRAYER

The worship service is a conversation between the Heavenly Father and His Children. Our Father speaks to us in the absolution, Scripture lessons, sermon and benediction. As children, we speak to our Father with our confession of sins, confession of faith, hymns and songs of praise. We also have the privilege of speaking to God in prayer.

Prayer is not about asking God for “stuff.” Prayer is not a last resort when all other plans have failed. Prayer is not a means to an end. Rather, prayer is an expression of our familial relationship with our heavenly Father, as we are brought to faith in our brother, Jesus Christ, through the adoption as sons and daughters through the Holy Spirit.

What is prayer?

- Daniel 9:3, 19 *So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. ... O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."*
- Matthew 15:8-9 *These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.° They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.*

Whose prayers does God hear?

- Isaiah 1:15 *When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen.*
- Hebrews 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*
- Isaiah 59:2 *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*
- 1 Peter 3:12 *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*
- John 16:23 *In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.*

Why pray?

- Psalm 50:15 *Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."*
- Philippians 4:6 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*
- Matthew 7:7 *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*
- James 5:16 *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

How should believers pray to God?

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 *Pray continually.*
- Ephesians 6:18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*
- Matthew 6:7-8 *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*
- James 1:5-8 *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*

What directives does God give us about prayer?

- Isaiah 59:1 *Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.*
- James 4:3 *When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*
- James 1:6-7 *But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.⁷ That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.*

What does it mean to pray according to God's will?

- 1 John 5:14 *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.*
- Luke 22:42 *Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.*

What about if we don't know what to pray for?

- Romans 8:26 *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*

How does God answer our prayers?

- James 5:17-18 *Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*

How does God answer our prayers?

- Psalm 88:14 *Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?*
- Isaiah 55:9 *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*
- Matthew 15:22-23 *A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession." Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."*
- 2 Corinthians 12:8-9 *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*
- Matthew 7:11 *If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!*

The answer to our prayers does not depend on our own righteousness. Instead, upon what do our prayers depend?

- Psalm 143:1-2 *O LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief.² Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.*

What confidence do we have when we pray?

- Romans 8:15-17 *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

A guideline for prayer:

- A _____ (we praise and worship Him in joy.)
- C _____ (we admit our sinfulness and need for forgiveness)
- T _____ (we say "thank you" for forgiveness, for blessings received, etc.)
- S _____ (we ask God for blessings both for ourselves and for others.)

Some practical notes on prayer:

- Folding hands and bowing head may help some people concentrate. So too may kneeling. Or standing. Some people prefer to pray aloud, other silently. Find out what works best for you.
- No prayer is too big - or too small - to take to the Lord.
- Although we may take prayers to God at any time/place, it may be a good idea to set aside a regular time for prayer. Maybe right after your Bible study time!
- Concentrate on praying for others. (Because of our selfish sinful nature, we don't have much problem remembering to pray for ourselves.) Pray for governmental leaders, your pastor and other pastors, your fellow Christians, unbelievers -- the list can go on and on! (1 Timothy 2:1-4)
- Vary your prayers. Sometimes pray what's in your heart, sometimes use a prayer book, sometimes use hymn verses, and sometimes pray through sections of Scripture -- especially the Psalms.
- Since prayer is a response to Bible Study, reading and studying the Word will be vital to keep your prayer life healthy.
- Remember who you are! 1 John 3:1 reminds us, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" You are God's child. He loves to hear from you!

The Prayer of the Church

What is the purpose of the Prayer of the Church?

- 1 Timothy 2:1-8 *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles. I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.*

The Prayer of the Church includes ...

- thanksgiving and praise for the blessings God gave in the Word recently heard.
- prayers for the whole Church.
- prayers for the nation.
- prayers for those in need.
- special concerns of the congregation.
- thanksgiving for the faithful departed.

What is the Church and why do we pray for her?

- 1 Corinthians 1:2 *To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours.*
- Ephesians 5:23 *Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.*
- Revelation 21:2 *I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*
- John 17:14–24 *I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*
- 1 Timothy 2:1,3–5 *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone... This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

Why do we pray for our nation?

- 1 Timothy 2:1–2 *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.*
- Romans 13:1,4,6–7 *Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God... He is God's servant to do you good... This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.*

Why do we pray thanking God for the faithful departed?

- Hebrews 13:17 *Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.*

The prayers in the Prayer of the Church generally move from the general to the specific. For example, the Prayer of the Church often begins with petitions for the Christian Church as a whole and then the congregation more specifically. Then petitions are made for our nation, leaders in the government, military, etc. Then intercessions are made specifically for people by name on behalf of the sick, hospitalized, newly born, baptized, married, dying, etc.

The Lord's Prayer

The traditional version of the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The contemporary version of the Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

How is the Lord's Prayer a model prayer?

- Matthew 6:9-13 *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. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

Let's look more closely at the petitions of the Lord's Prayer:

- The Address: God is our loving Father who tenderly invites us to ask him for blessings.
- 1st Petition: We ask God to help us to keep his name holy by teaching and living correctly.
- 2nd Petition: We ask God to give us the Holy Spirit to believe his Word and obey it.
- 3rd Petition: We ask God to defeat Satan, our sinful flesh, and the sinful world.
- 4th Petition: We ask God to lead us to receive our physical blessings with thanksgiving.
- 5th Petition: We ask God to forgive us for Jesus' sake and to lead us to forgive others.
- 6th Petition: We ask God to keep us away from anything that would harm our faith.
- 7th Petition: We ask God to keep us away from anything that would harm our life.
- The Doxology: We speak a closing word of praise and trust.

The Lord's Prayer is both a prayer to pray and a model for all our prayers. Jesus taught His disciples of all ages this specific prayer. That's why it has received the name, "The Lord's Prayer." We address this prayer to "Our Father in heaven." It is quite fitting that after we have joined our brothers and sisters in Christ in addressing our heavenly Father, we then participate together in the familial meal of the Lord's Supper.

Prayer of the Day

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: Let us pray.

The minister says the Prayer of the Day.

C: Amen.

The Prayer of the Day fits the overall theme of the worship service. The Prayer of the Day is a collection of prayers from different cultures and countries throughout the history of Christianity. Some prayers are very ancient, while others are relatively new. In a very real sense, when we pray the Prayer of the Day, we are participants with the body of Christ, which spans all ages, times and places, as we unify our prayers into one unified voice.



A hymn that teaches the faith:

Christian Worship #411 –

“What A Friend We Have In Jesus”

What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged -- Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness -- Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge -- Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield you; You will find a solace there.