

Today the vast majority of Christians continue to make faithful use of the Lord's Prayer. Ask Christians from a variety of denominations how they pray. You'll soon discover that they share a common use of the Lord's Prayer. Lutherans recite the Lord's Prayer in personal devotions and public worship.

Lutherans also use the Lord's Prayer as exciting worship of the living God and Savior as well as bold confession of faith, to teach the faith to new believers.

This study of the Lord's Prayer builds on that is in Luther's Small Catechism. Following ancient custom, Dr. Martin Luther divided the Lord's Prayer in the following way:

Introduction

Our Father who art in heaven.

Seven Petitions

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.

Conclusion

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This prayer is found Matthew 6:9–13. Luke 11:2–4

When Jesus disciples prayed to Jesus to teach them about prayer, Jesus' answer is "The Lord's Prayer." The Holy Spirit gave slightly different wordings each time it was recorded. Lutherans usually end the Lord's Prayer with the ancient doxology "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever."

For Lutherans, the Lord's Prayer highlights all the basic elements of a perfect prayer:

Praise: the introduction

Requests: the "Thy" petitions (1-3)

Thanksgiving: the first "us" petition (4)

Intercession: all of the "us" petitions (4-7)

Look how many petitions Jesus gives for "spiritual" requests from God. Only the Fourth Petition focuses on earthly goods (and only for the current day, implying daily use of the prayer). So often our prayers falter into requests for "things." As you go through this study, consider anew the spiritual blessings God wants you to have through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus. Confidently make your requests in His name.

All who worship the Holy Trinity and trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins are regarded by Lutherans as fellow Christians. We are separate from one another in this world.

God's gracious command to witness to God's true Word by publicly noting doctrinal denominational differences. God is real and we are not to pretend we believe the same if we don't really believe the same. God wants us united on His Word.

Lutheran churches first described themselves as evangelische, or evangelical, churches. Opponents of these churches called them Lutheran after Dr. Martin Luther, the sixteenth-century German church reformer.

Lutherans are not disciples of Dr. Martin Luther but rather are disciples of Jesus Christ. They accept the name Lutheran because they agree with Dr. Luther's teaching from the Bible, as summarized in Luther's Small Catechism.

Christians know that Prayer is worship of God, directly, and not through the intercession of saints. God hears and answers prayer today, according to His good and gracious will. Christians are encouraged by Scripture to "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

To prepare for "Our Father Is Holy," read Matthew 6

OUR FATHER IS HOLY

"Holy, Holy, Holy" Sing it, or read it aloud slowly, thoughtfully.
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song
shall rise to Thee. Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty! God in three
Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee, casting down their golden
crowns around the glassy sea. Cherubim and seraphim falling down
before Thee, Who was and is and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee, though the eye
made blind by sin Thy glory may not see, only Thou art holy; there is
none beside Thee, perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! All Thy works shall praise Thy
Name in earth and sky and sea. Holy, holy, holy, merciful and
mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Spend some time discussing what you hope to learn about prayer.
Write that here:

Understand that prayer is worship. It is not coins to use in a cosmic-god-gumball-machine. Prayer's purpose is to worship and glorify the heavenly Father. Jesus taught us to pray directly to God as our dear, and very near, heavenly Father for WHO-HE-IS, and for all He has done for us.

Prayer is worship in which Christians express our thanks and praise, as well as our deepest needs and anxieties. As we worship Him in prayer, we present our requests to God, and we trust that God will answer our prayers according to His will.

Our Father is Holy

Think About...

One dad tells the story of losing a contact lens on a camping trip with his family. When he suggested that they pray, his 14-year-old daughter burst into tears and said, "What good does it do? I've prayed for my sister to speak, and she isn't speaking." Her younger sister struggled with autism and developmental delay. Because of her weak fine-motor skills, she was also mute.

Prayer was no mere formality, it was not an outward show of her faith. She had taken God at His Word. In prayer she had asked that the Lord would let her sister speak. But nothing happened. The ongoing silence of her sister was witness to a silent God. Prayer, it seemed to her, doesn't "work."

Many Christians today in the pandemic upheaval ask similar difficult questions about prayer. Why pray if God knows everything anyway? Does prayer really make a difference? Does prayer change God's mind?

Ask About...

When you were growing up, how familiar were you with the Lord's Prayer? If very familiar, how did you learn it?

Write down your answers to the following questions in the space provided. It's important to write them down. We will compare those answers you write now with your answers to the same questions asked at the end of this study.

Q1. Why do you pray the Lord's Prayer?

Q2. What difference does praying the Lord's Prayer make?

Read About...

Read Matthew 6:4–13

Q3 Jesus wanted His disciples to know the importance of prayer. What does Jesus tell them?

Q4 What general themes or summaries do you see as you scan the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5–7?

Q5 How do those themes and that historical setting effect the teaching of the Lord's Prayer?

Read Matthew 6:5–8.

Q6 What was Jesus telling His disciples to avoid when they prayed?

Read Isaiah 29:13

Q7 How does Jesus' instruction on prayer in Matthew 6 compare with the prophet's words in Isaiah?

Read Romans 8:15-17

Q8 How different would the Lord's Prayer be if it had started "MY Father who art in heaven. . . ?"

Q9 What makes it possible to address God as “Our Father?”

Read Luke 11:9–13

Q10 What do we learn about God our Father?

Q11 What might we lose if we did not know the truth Jesus taught when He told us to call on God “our Father”?

Read Exodus 20:1–7

Q12 What comes to mind when you hear the word “holy”?

Q13 The First Petition states that God’s name is to be hallowed, literally, “set apart.” What do these “set apart” verses teach about God’s character?

Talk About...

Q14 How does the Second Commandment, “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God,” and the First Petition, “Hallowed be Thy Name,” connect with each other? Are there ways you dishonor God’s name in your life?

Read Philippians 2:9–11 and Acts 4:12.

Q15 What do these Bible verses say about the name of the Lord? What message does our culture send about honoring and respecting God’s name? What does it mean to keep God’s name holy in your daily life?

CATECHISM CONNECTION

Q16 In Luther’s Explanation of the Introduction to the Lord’s Prayer, he uses the following words: “With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true

children, so that we may pray to Him as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father." These words really do summarize the key thoughts of the Bible's teaching about the relationship of the believer to the living God. What difference does that make in a Christian's prayer life that the real God is really your real Father in heaven?

Q17 Do you remember what community means when praying the Lord's Prayer at home?

Q18 How could your HOME group experience "true community" more?

Q19 In Luther's Explanation of the First Petition, he explains that to hallow God's name means to hold onto this: God's Word teaches truth and since Christians have been set apart by Christ, we live in Truth. So, what does that look like in your life when you take it seriously?

Q20 How does it influence how you approach friendship, enemies, marriage, parenthood, etc.?

Q21 Human fathers may be good or bad. For children from broken or abusive homes, the term "father" may cause more anxiety than encouragement or comfort. If someone had trouble calling God "Our Father" because their earthly father abandoned or abused them, how would you respond?

Q22 In contrast to earthly fathers, God's Word reveals that the Holy Spirit teaches believers in Jesus Christ to pray to God with the Aramaic word "Abba" (i.e., "daddy"). How might the name "Abba" encourage you to pray?

Q23 When you address God with the intimate title of "Father," you are speaking to God, whose name is to be hallowed. How do you bring together these two truths?

At the beginning of this review of the Address of the Lord's Prayer, we learned the story a mute sister. The end of her story is this: through a speech computer and several years of learning to use it, she learned to speak with an electronic voice.

God answered the prayers for her to speak with a resounding YES. But the answer was united with His will of repenting, serving, managing, and waiting, trusting. This prayer, like many others, was answered in the context of the larger history that is all God's doing from beginning to end. Scan those first two questions and your answers to them

Ponder it

Q24 Jesus taught His disciples to pray but not with bragging words or long prayers to impress others. How often have you recited the Lord's Prayer without paying attention to its meaning?

Q25 What have you learned about praying from the heart as a result of this study?

Q26 What have you learned specifically about honoring your Holy Father?

Q27 What would you like to see happen in your HOME prayer life as a result of this study? As you conclude this study, it would do you well to include some of those thoughts in your prayers.

OUR DAD'S WORD AND PROMISE

"For you did not receive a spirit of slavery so that you are afraid again, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we call out, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit Himself joins our spirit in testifying that we are God's children." -Romans 8:15-16