

PART III

BELONGING  
TO CHRIST

THE LORD'S PRAYER AND  
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Gospel is God's invitation to know him, to love and serve him as members of his family, and to be transformed into his likeness. God continually calls his people to grow deeper in our relationship with him. Thus, for Christians, knowing and loving God is life's central activity, and a primary way we do this is through prayer. Prayer is the way God has given us to listen and respond to him.

The most important prayer in the Christian faith is the Lord's Prayer, so named because it is the prayer the Lord Jesus himself, the Son of the Father, taught his disciples to pray (*Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4*). It is vital for our lives as present-day disciples. It teaches us to know God as our Father, to submit our wills to his will, and to live in this world as citizens of God's kingdom, even as we await with hope the fullness of its coming. For this reason, it has been included as a prayer in both public and private Christian worship from the very beginning of the Church's life.

However, the Lord's Prayer is also a pattern by which we shape all our prayers. It teaches us different kinds of prayer, and a mature life of prayer will include them all: praise of God's glory, intercession for the needs of others, petition for our needs and protection,

and confession of our sin. While the Lord's Prayer does not include all types of prayer, it establishes a central core of prayers for our entire life in Christ. It teaches us *how* to pray and is therefore an essential aspect of Christian catechesis.

Our primary resource for prayer as Anglicans, in addition to the Scriptures, is the Book of Common Prayer. The Lord's Prayer has a central place in Prayer Book worship and is included in every service. However, beyond providing us forms of prayer, the Book of Common Prayer also gives us a *rule of prayer*—a way of ordering our lives around a daily pattern of prayer and the reading of Scripture. A well-rounded rule will include the different kinds of prayer mentioned above, in both public worship and private devotion. While the form of rule may vary from person to person, the purpose of every rule is to help us grow in prayer. As our capacity to pray increases, so our daily habits of prayer broaden to encompass the whole scope of our lives. And, little by little, we begin to understand what Saint Paul means to “pray without ceasing” (*1 Thessalonians 5:17*), for that is the goal of our life of prayer in Christ.

### *A Prayer for Spiritual Direction and Protection*

Heavenly Father, you made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you: Direct our heartfelt desires and defend us against our Enemy, that we may pray according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, world without end. **Amen.**

## C O N C E R N I N G   P R A Y E R

### 154. What is prayer?

Prayer is turning my heart toward God, to listen and to speak with him. (*Psalms 84; 123; Matthew 7:7–11; John 17:1–9*)

**155. What should you seek in prayer?**

In prayer, I should seek not only God's provision for my needs, but fellowship with God, who made me for fellowship with himself. (*Exodus 33:7-11; Psalms 27:4, 8; 42:1-2; John 14:18-23; 1 John 1:3*)

**156. How can you have fellowship with God?**

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and union with him by the Holy Spirit, I have fellowship with God as his adopted child. I experience this in prayer, worship, God's Word, the sacraments, and Christian community, as I daily follow him by faith. (*Nehemiah 9:1-8; Psalm 65:1-4; John 15:9-17; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 8:14-17; 1 John 1:3-7*)

**157. Why should you pray?**

I should pray because God calls me to do so, because I was made for fellowship with him, because I need the help of his Holy Spirit, and because he has promised to answer the prayers of his people. (*Exodus 33:7-11; Psalm 50:14-15; Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 18:1-8; Romans 8:26; 1 Timothy 2:1*)

**158. What should you pray?**

I should pray the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, the collected prayers of the Church, and my own prayers as the Spirit leads me. (*1 Samuel 2:1-10; Psalms 2; 62:8; Luke 1:46-55; 2:25-35; Acts 4:24-30; Romans 8:26-27; Revelation 4:8-11*)

**159. When should you pray?**

I should pray at regular times throughout each day, with fellow Christians for prayer and worship, and whenever I am aware of a need for God's grace. And I should learn to "pray without ceasing" (*1 Thessalonians 5:17*) as I grow in the knowledge of God's presence. (*Nehemiah 2:4; Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10; Jonah 2; Matthew 15:21-28; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Hebrews 4:16; 5:7*)

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

160. **What is the prayer our Lord Jesus taught his disciples to pray?**

The traditional version of the Lord's Prayer is this:

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,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*(Matthew 6:9-13; see also Luke 11:2-4)*

161. **Why should you learn the Lord's Prayer?**

I should learn the Lord's Prayer because Jesus taught it to his disciples as both a practice and a pattern for prayer to God the Father. *(Matthew 6:5-8; Luke 11:1, 5-13)*

162. **Why should you practice the Lord's Prayer?**

I should pray the Lord's Prayer regularly because it teaches me to pray as Jesus commanded and to desire what his Father wills. *(Psalm 34; Matthew 12:46-50; 26:36-44; 1 John 5:14-15)*