

SESSION TEN – THE LORD’S PRAYER I

1. To review: The Apostles’ Creed summarizes what the Church believes; the Ten Commandments summarize how Christians should behave or live. In this session, we begin looking at the Lord’s Prayer, which teaches us how we pray as Christians.
2. Look up the following Gospel passages: Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4. Each of these readings shows Jesus teaching his followers how to pray. In Luke, this is in response to the disciples’ request: *“Lord, teach us to pray, as John [the Baptist] taught his disciples.”*
3. The Lord’s Prayer is considered the model Christian prayer. It sets the pattern for all our prayers. We pray it in the principal Prayer Book services of the Holy Eucharist and Morning and Evening Prayer. We should all have the Lord’s Prayer memorized.
4. In the Episcopal Church, the book that contains our major church services is *The Book of Common Prayer*. The word “common” means prayers that are read “in common”—i.e., in public worship, as opposed to private or personal prayer.
5. Some Christians of other traditions say that we shouldn’t “pray out of a book” or recite “canned” prayers. They argue that true prayer is always “from the heart”—i.e., offered in our own words to express our true thoughts and feelings.
6. Our Anglican or Episcopal tradition teaches that both common prayer and private prayer are necessary for growing in our relationship with God. The prayers printed in the Prayer Book are the prayers of the whole Church. They compile the spiritual wisdom of generations of Christians who have gone before us. They teach us how to pray. They give us a language for worship and prayer that we can absorb and make our own in our private prayers.
7. An analogy is learning a musical instrument. To become proficient at an instrument, a musician must spend many hours practicing scales, exercises, and compositions by others. Learning this repertoire immerses the musician in a tradition developed by countless musicians who have gone before.
8. When musicians reach an advanced level of proficiency, they develop the ability to improvise: to play music they make up as they go along, expressing their inner feelings and moods. In the same way, regularly praying from the Prayer Book immerses us in a tradition that gradually helps us learn to pray in our own words as the Holy Spirit leads us. This is sometimes called extemporaneous prayer.
9. In next week’s session, we will look more at the different forms of private or personal prayer. For now, please read the commentary on the Lord’s Prayer on the next page.

COMMENTARY ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven

The Lord's Prayer begins by addressing God as our loving Father. God loves and cares for us as his children. But God is not an earthly father, with an earthly father's faults and imperfections. God watches over us from heaven and knows all our needs.

After this opening address, the Lord's Prayer is divided into seven petitions (requests):

(1) Hallowed be thy Name

This means "may your name be honored, revered, held holy." (This is the opposite of the misuse of God's name prohibited by the Third Commandment.)

(2) Thy Kingdom come

Acknowledging that we live in a fallen world, in rebellion against God, we pray for the coming of God's reign.

(3) Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

This petition explains more fully what we mean by the coming of God's reign. Life on earth will be restored to conformity with God's will.

(4) Give us this day our daily bread

We pray that God will give us what we need for the day: not just bread but food, clothing, shelter, and companionship. This petition teaches us not to worry about the future but to be content with having what we need for the day at hand.

(5) And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

As we pray that God will forgive our sins, we acknowledge our need to forgive those who have sinned against us if we want God to forgive us. (Easier said than done sometimes.)

(6) And lead us not into temptation

This can also be translated "do not put us to the test." We pray that God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to resist, or to be given more troubles in this life than we're able to handle with God's help.

(7) But deliver us from evil.

Here, "evil" can also be translated as "the evil one," i.e., the devil, who wants to deflect us from our heavenly goal. In this petition, we ask God to bring us to eternal salvation.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

This concluding doxology—i.e., a prayer glorifying God, from the Greek *doxa*, "glory"—expresses our confidence in God's ability to give us all that we have just asked for. "Amen" is a Hebrew word meaning "so be it" or "let it be so."

SESSION TEN – QUIZ

Fill in the blanks

1. The Lord's Prayer teaches us how we _____ as Christians.
2. The Lord's Prayer is considered the _____ Christian prayer.
3. We should have the Lord's prayer _____.
4. The prayers printed in the Prayer Book are the prayers of the whole _____.
5. Regularly praying from the Prayer Book helps us to pray in our own _____.
6. The Lord's Prayer reminds us that God loves and cares for us as his _____.
7. We pray for the coming of God's kingdom because we live in a _____ world.
8. The Lord's Prayer's fourth petition teaches us not to worry about the _____.

Multiple Choice

1. In which Gospel passage do the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray as John taught his disciples?
 - a. Matthew 6:9-13
 - b. Luke 11:1-4
 - c. Neither of the above
2. The word "common" in *The Book of Common Prayer* means:
 - a. Frequent
 - b. Ordinary
 - c. Public
3. The word "hallowed" means:
 - a. About trick or treating
 - b. Treated as holy
 - c. Hollowed out

True / False

1. The Lord's Prayer is said in the principal services in the Prayer Book. T F
2. Our Anglican tradition teaches that private prayer is unnecessary. T F
3. There are no analogies for learning to pray. T F
4. The Lord's Prayer is divided into an opening address, seven petitions, and a concluding doxology. T F
5. To ask God to forgive our sins, we need to be ready to forgive those who have sinned against us. T F