

A New Liturgy No 8:
The Lord's Prayer

*A Communal Liturgy for
Church or Living Room*

//LEADER'S GUIDE//



CALL TO WORSHIP

O Creator God, we gather in Your name

Grant us hearts to know Your will.

O Eternal Christ, we gather in Your name

Grant us feet to walk Your way.

O Holy Spirit, we gather in Your name

Grant us ears to hear Your voice.

Please teach us how to pray.

Please teach us how to pray.

(space to silently open ourselves to God)

OPENING SONG

GOSPEL READING (Matthew 6:5-9)

The words of Jesus:

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.** And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, **for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**”

“This, then, is how you should pray:

THE LORD’S PRAYER (spoken or sung)

*Our Father in Heaven
Hallowed is Your name
May Your will be done,
May Your Kingdom come
On earth as in Heaven.*

*Give us our daily bread, Lord.
And forgive our sin
As we forgive those who sin against us,
Forgive them.*

*Lead us not into trouble
Save us from evil's hand.
For Yours is the kingdom,
And the glory and the power
Amen.*

Let us enter into this prayer,
word by word, line by line.

Holy Spirit, please guide us as we pray.

“Our Father in Heaven”

Eugene Peterson wrote “With the ‘our’, Jesus puts himself in our company. With the ‘our’, we place ourselves in the company of Jesus and of all who pray.”

The Creator is not just my God or of my group. God is the Maker and Lover of every single person on earth—past, present, and future. And when we pray, we join a motley, global, diverse, historic family.

The name “Father” invites us into a relationship. God is LOVE, and wants to relate, in love, with each one of us. We should note that God is Spirit, not gendered, so the masculine word “Father” can be unhelpful for some. Especially for those who have been wounded by our earthly fathers. But even within the limits of language, the intimacy of the invitation is the point. We are deeply loved children of God.

What language best help you pray to the Creator of us all? Take a moment to articulate the words you will use today to address the God Jesus called “Our Father”.

(Holy Space)

“Our Father in Heaven”

Some scholars believe that a better translation of “Our Father, who art in Heaven” is actually “Our Father, in the Heavens.” Not far off in the distance, but fully and completely here. “Our Creator, who fills every molecule from the farthest solar system to the inside of my lungs.” Our Father, who is closer than the air we breathe.

Let us open up to God’s nearness through a practice called “breath prayer”. Please place both feet on the floor, and if you are able, open both hands. Say to God with your body what you are saying with your heart: I am here... I am open...and I believe You are here too, as close as the air I breathe.

Become aware of your breathing. Noticing the air filling and exiting your lungs. Every breath is a gift. Thank God for that gift.

And with each breath in, pray your words for “Our Father”. And with each exhale, offer an intention to God. Maybe you breathe in while saying “Loving Maker”...and breath out to say “I’m yours”. Maybe you breath in to say “Eternal Mother”...and breath out to say “Open my heart”.

Let your prayer be as simple as your breathing.

(Holy Space)

“Our Father in Heaven, hallowed is your name”

The first request of this great prayer is not for daily bread or for our advancement, but for God’s name to be honored and lifted up. As loved as we are, you and I are not at the center of the universe. God is. The One who created everything is worthy of everything. The Love who holds this world together, is worthy of our love. Worthy of our honor. Worthy to hold at the very center of our lives. Let us sing this together...

*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
Though the darkness hide Thee
Though the eye of sinful man
Thy glory may not see
Only Thou art holy
There is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, 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*

And so with God rightly at the center,
we are bold to pray:

***“May Your Kingdom come,
may Your will be done,
on Earth as Heaven”***

One of the most subversive aspects of Jesus’ life was that he only did what he saw his Father in Heaven doing. He didn’t generate a plan and ask God to bless it, as we often do. But instead he watched for the ways God was moving in the world, and joined it. He paid attention to the flow of the Eternal Current, and then humbly learned how to swim with that healing river. The invitation is participation.

Two questions for us for prayer and reflection...

First, where do you see God already working to bring the Kingdom to earth? Where do you see and long to see good news for the poor, freedom for the captives, sight for the blind, and justice for the oppressed? Try to be as specific as possible.

(Holy Space)

Second, to join this good work, is there anything you need to let go of, to de-center your will and participate in God's will? Or maybe the invitation for you is to step up into a new boldness and into humble action?

What is the next right step you sense the Spirit inviting you to take with God, for the sake of the world, as it is in Heaven?

(Holy Space)

*Take my life and let it be
Consecrated Lord to Thee
Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love
At the impulse of Thy love*

“Give us our daily bread, Lord”

Jesus' words to us, according to Matthew:

“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matt 7:7-11)

Take the next 60 seconds to ask your good, heavenly parent for exactly what you need today. Not for tomorrow or next year, but for today. Ask, seek, and knock...

(Holy Space)

O Gracious God, thank You for hearing us.

***“And forgive our sin,
As we forgive those who sin against us,
forgive them.”***

Let us embody the practice of receiving and offering forgiveness.

Please open your right hand. Invite God to gently guide your memory to a sin that you committed this week. A way that you fell short of love with a family member, neighbor, or with yourself. Let the Spirit mercifully turn the lights on so you can see more and more of reality.

(Holy Space)

Now imagine that you are holding that sin in your right hand. What does it look like? What does it feel like? Take a moment to humbly hold this reality in God’s loving presence.

(Holy Space)

Keeping your right hand open, please also open your left hand. And invite God to gently guide your memory to one person who has sinned against you. Maybe it was a small slight; maybe it was a devastating violation. Allow the Spirit to mercifully direct your attention and bring one specific person to mind.

(Holy Space)

Now imagine that you are gently holding this person who hurt you in your left hand. What is their name? What emotion do they evoke in you? Let yourself feel it. Take a moment to humbly hold this person in God's loving presence.

(Holy Space)

Finally, bring both hands together, in front of your heart. Both your sin and your neighbors. Feel the weight of the ways we have all fallen short of love. And if you're willing, repeat after me:

Most Merciful God **(repeat)**
Forgive me **(repeat)**
Forgive them **(repeat)**
Most Merciful God **(repeat)**
Forgive me **(repeat)**
As I forgive them **(repeat)**
May your mercies flow down upon me **(repeat)**
And upon them **(repeat)**
Thank you for grace **(repeat)**
Amen and Amen. **(repeat)**

***“Lead us not into trouble,
save us from evil’s hand.”***

While this prayer begins with the power and mercy of God, it ends by naming our frailty and dependence. We are finite beings who don't have the power and control that we wish we had over our lives. But rather than crush us to shame, this realization lifts us to trust. With the Psalmist we cry “O Lord, lead me to the rock that is higher than I!” For we know that our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers, principalities, and systemic evils of this world. We cannot stand alone. But thankfully, through Christ, we don't have to.

Would you place both hands over your heart, in a gesture of dependence and trust in God alone. Loving Creator, we need You...

(Holy Space)

*I need Thee every hour, O Gracious Lord
No tender voice like Thine, can peace afford*

*I need Thee, O I need Thee
Every hour I need Thee
O bless me now my Savior
I come to Thee*

*I need Thee every hour, stay Thou nearby;
Temptations lose their pow'r when Thou art nigh.*

refrain

*I need Thee every hour, in joy or pain;
Come quickly and abide, or life is vain.*

refrain

THE LORD'S PRAYER (spoken or sung)

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Hallowed is Your name
May Your will be done,
May Your Kingdom come
On earth as in Heaven.*

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And forgive our sin
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Forgive them.*

*Lead us not into trouble
Save us from evil's hand.
For Yours is the kingdom,
And the glory and the power
Amen.*

DOXOLOGY

*Praise God from whom all blessing flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Amen.*



//NOTES FOR LEADING THIS LITURGY//

The goal of this liturgy is to create as much space as possible for people to enter into The Lord's Prayer with Christ and the community.

As the leader, you play an important role to create a clear and grace-soaked pathway into practice, but your most important job is getting out of the way. You do not need to generate an experience. You simply create a holy container for people to open to the God who is already at work in every one of us.

Thank you so much for pastoring through this tender and powerful prayer.

Plain text = read by a leader

Bold text = read by the community

Italicized text = sung by the community

Please feel free to customize this liturgy in every way that serves your community. Choosing different songs are a great way to do this.

The language of the liturgy may be stretching at points, so always use music that resonates with your particular community.

Notes for the opening song: It should help us center on God--softening and opening our hearts to the way of Christ and the whispers of the Spirit. Examples: "Come Thou Fount", "Be Thou My Vision", "Here I am to Worship", "Please Speak"



//FURTHER LITURGIES & RESOURCES//

This liturgy is based on **A New Liturgy No 8: The Lord's Prayer**. (Released on 7.7.20). You can download this recorded liturgy--and a few other resources--at **www.anewliturgy.com**.

And if you want to continue exploring how to live and lead others in a more practice-based life, please visit **www.aaroniequist.com**.





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