

# TEACH US TO *Pray*

## An Order of Worship for the Home

February 21, 2021

---

*This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.*

*There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org) to give online.*

### Invocation

Reader 1: We invite you, Father,  
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.  
Reader 1: We ask you, Jesus,  
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.  
Reader 1: We desire your presence, Holy Spirit,  
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.  
Reader 1: We need you, God...  
Reader 2: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Reader 1: Teach us to pray.  
Together: Amen.

### Psalm 103:8-13

<sup>8</sup> The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup> He will not always chide,  
nor will he keep his anger forever.

- <sup>10</sup> He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- <sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
- <sup>12</sup> as far as the east is from the west,  
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
- <sup>13</sup> As a father shows compassion to his children,  
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

### **Confession & Absolution**

*Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.*

Christian Confessing: My prayers are weak and faltering. My thoughts waver and my words wander. Some days I enter prayer oblivious to my own sin and the holiness of the God I approach. Other days, I struggle to pray on account of the guilt I feel. I fail in the action of prayer. I fail in the attitude of prayer. My struggles in prayer reflect my struggles in all of life. I need forgiveness. I need faith. I need a Savior.

Christian Responding: Know for certain, that your God loves you. He meets your weak prayers with his strength. He meets your faltering prayers with the certainty of his promises. Jesus is your Savior, and he grants you forgiveness. He sends his Holy Spirit to strengthen your faith. He invites you to pray to your Father in confidence. Your heavenly Father gives good gifts to his children. You are his child, and his gifts are yours.

Together: Amen.

## Hosea 11:1-9

<sup>1</sup>When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and out of Egypt I called my son.

<sup>2</sup>The more they were called,  
the more they went away;  
they kept sacrificing to the Baals  
and burning offerings to idols.

<sup>3</sup>Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;  
I took them up by their arms,  
but they did not know that I healed them.

<sup>4</sup>I led them with cords of kindness,  
with the bands of love,  
and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws,  
and I bent down to them and fed them.

<sup>5</sup>They shall not return to the land of Egypt,  
but Assyria shall be their king,  
because they have refused to return to me.

<sup>6</sup>The sword shall rage against their cities,  
consume the bars of their gates,  
and devour them because of their own counsels.

<sup>7</sup>My people are bent on turning away from me,  
and though they call out to the Most High,  
he shall not raise them up at all.

<sup>8</sup>How can I give you up, O Ephraim?  
How can I hand you over, O Israel?  
How can I make you like Admah?  
How can I treat you like Zeboiim?  
My heart recoils within me;  
my compassion grows warm and tender.

<sup>9</sup>I will not execute my burning anger;  
I will not again destroy Ephraim;  
for I am God and not a man,

the Holy One in your midst,  
and I will not come in wrath.

### Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### Luke 15:11-24

<sup>11</sup> And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. <sup>14</sup> And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" <sup>20</sup> And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before

you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’<sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.’<sup>23</sup> And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.’<sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

## Message

### **True Father... Dear Father**

On Wednesday, I introduced our Lenten theme, The Lord’s Prayer. Each Sundays as we approach Easter we will lean into this theme, allowing Martin Luther’s explanations of The Lord’s Prayer to give us some guidance. Luther outlined The Lord’s Prayer as introduction, seven petitions, and conclusion. Today, we begin with the introduction:

#### **Our Father who art in heaven.**

*What does this mean?* With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

I want to spend some time considering what may be meant by the phrases “true Father” and “true children.” Then, we’ll be in better position to also understand their companions, “dear Father” and “dear children.”

What does it mean for God to be our true Father? If God is our true Father he is *primary*. God is before all things. He is above all things. He is bigger and better than all things.

If God is our true Father it also means he is *creator*. In philosophical terms this points to the uncaused cause. All things have a beginning, but what stands at the beginning of all things? The God who is creator.

If God is our true Father it tells us he is our *leader*. He is the King. He has rule and authority. He gives direction to our lives. He is the model to whom we look in order to understand all things.

Now, if we take just those three aspects of our God – he is primary; he is creator; he is leader – we can start to see how these also define you and I.

If God is primary, it means that you and I are secondary. We are never the most important. Our rights and privileges always give way to another. Our demands will always be subject to his decisions.

If God is Creator, then we are creatures. We are dependent, not independent. We receive life, we do not create it or rule over it.

If God is leader, we are followers. We may follow well or we may wander, but the right path is set by our God. He shows the way. We may at times lead others, but the value of our leadership is limited by how well we are following.

All this we realize in the words “true Father” and “true children.” Yet, the words “Our Father” in the Lord’s Prayer mean so much more than this. God is not only our “true Father.” He is our “dear Father.”

I want you to see the difference between those two in this way. First off, truth *is*. We see this from what we just covered. We defined God by stating what he is. He is primary. He is creator. He is leader. Subsequently, we recognized what is for us. When we recognize God as our “true Father” we’re saying something about what God is.

Luther also encourages us to know God as our “dear Father.” This points us to what God *does*. If the phrase “true Father” reminds us who God is, then the words “dear Father” point us to what God does.

To help us consider what God does, I’ve got a list for you. Your dear Father does all of these: He provides. He understands. He loves. He sacrifices. He enjoys you!

Your God is a dear Father who **provides** for you. He is not only the creator of life. He is the sustainer of life as well. Consider the clothes you're wearing right now. How did they come to you? If you paid for them, then you have income. If you have income you either have abilities and opportunity to work, or you have people who care and provide for you. Either one is a gift from God. The breath in your lungs; the sunshine on your face; the presence of a friend; these are all provided by your dear Father. Listen to these words from Jesus.

*Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>28</sup> And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (Matthew 6:26-30)*

Jesus' words remind us that our Father provides.

Your dear Father also **understands**. He knows you better than you know yourself. He knows what troubles your heart. He knows what you're celebrating today. He understands your fears, frustrations, challenges, joys, and desires. He *gets* you.

There is comfort in being understood. It means this all-powerful God is not detached from the difficulties of our lives. He's not a distant ruler manipulating his subjects like so many pawns. We can appreciate God's understanding best through the work of Jesus who took on our humanity. The Bible says this about his role,

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)*

God knows you. He knows your world. He knows weakness and temptation. He understands.

Next, know that your dear Father **loves**. So much could be said about this. Let me take you back to the verses from Hosea we read earlier:

*When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and out of Egypt I called my son.  
<sup>2</sup> The more they were called,  
the more they went away;  
they kept sacrificing to the Baals  
and burning offerings to idols. (Hosea 11:1-2)*

God remembers his love, and he remembers the rebellion of his children. Listen to the next verses as God reminisces on his role as a loving Father.

*<sup>3</sup> Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;  
I took them up by their arms,  
but they did not know that I healed them.  
<sup>4</sup> I led them with CORDS OF KINDNESS,  
with the BANDS OF LOVE,  
and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws,  
and I bent down to them and fed them. (Hosea 11:3-4)*

Next, God turns in his mind and announces judgement for his children's disobedience. He loved deeply, and the pain of rejection hurts bitterly.

*<sup>5</sup> They shall not return to the land of Egypt,  
but Assyria shall be their king,  
because they have refused to return to me.  
<sup>6</sup> The sword shall rage against their cities,  
consume the bars of their gates,  
and devour them because of their own counsels.  
<sup>7</sup> My people are bent on turning away from me,*

*and though they call out to the Most High,  
he shall not raise them up at all. (Hosea 11:5-7)*

Yet, God's love will not allow anger to be the last word. His love forces the return to a posture of mercy.

*<sup>8</sup> How can I give you up, O Ephraim?  
How can I hand you over, O Israel?  
How can I make you like Admah?  
How can I treat you like Zeboiim? (Hosea 11:8)*

The answer is "I can't." God's love won't allow him to walk away from his children.

*My heart recoils within me;  
my compassion grows warm and tender.  
<sup>9</sup> I will not execute my burning anger;  
I will not again destroy Ephraim;  
for I am God and not a man,  
the Holy One in your midst,  
and I will not come in wrath. (Hosea 11:8-9)*

True Father reminds us what God is. Dear Father reminds us what God does. So far, we've recognized that our dear Father provides, understands, and loves.

Your dear Father also **sacrifices**. You were lost to him, and he couldn't stand it. You hadn't even noticed, but his heart was broken at the thought of losing you forever. He made the greatest of all sacrifices in order to bring you back to himself.

God took on flesh so that he could die. The Father sent his only Son to do this impossible thing. Death is outside of his nature. Yet, God became man so that he could bear this trait of our brokenness.

Human beings cannot live after death. Only God can overcome the grave. That's why it was so amazing when the human body of Jesus rose on Easter morning. God raised his Son from the dead. In the death and resurrection of Jesus your God was

forever changed. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus you are forever changed as well. Jesus died your death, so that you could share his life. This is the sacrifice your God made. This is the sacrifice of your dear Father.

Finally, your dear Father **enjoys you**. He celebrates you. We read the story of the Prodigal Son today and we saw a picture of the rejoicing of your Father. The father in the story is excited to have his child back home. He throws a party and he pulls out all the stops. In the same way, your Father enjoys you!

Listen to how the prophet Zephaniah describes God as he enjoys his relationship with you.

*The Lord your God is in your midst,  
a mighty one who will save;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness;  
he will quiet you by his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)*

Your dear Father enjoys you! He provides. He understands. He loves. He sacrifices. And he enjoys you!

This is the heartbeat of God. He is not only your true Father; he is your dear Father. His heart yearns for you to know this. His heart beats in time with this truth. In fact, these five actions of God which show him as our dear Father spell the word PULSE.

As your dear Father, this is what your God does. This is his heartbeat.

**P**rovides  
**U**nderstands  
**L**oves  
**S**acrifices  
**E**njoys you!

Now, if you'll allow me, we can take this one step further. When we talked about what God is, that allowed us to define ourselves too. He is our true Father and we are his true children. Now that we've spent time considering what our God does, we

can learn something about ourselves again. He is our dear Father and we are his dear children.

Our dear Father **provides**, and in response **we share**. As we give God more and more credit for all that we have, generosity becomes easier. It's like this: If I believe I was responsible for acquiring the money, clothes, home, savings, car, gadgets, toys and everything else I own, then I put pressure on myself to hang onto it. If I grow in understanding that all these are gifts from God, that pressure begins to dissipate. As our Father provides, we learn to share.

Our Father **understands**, and as a result **we trust**. His empathy allows our vulnerability. When we are understood, we no longer fear judgement. We have a place to share our hurts. We have a place to bring our biggest questions. We have permission to doubt...within this relationship with God. Not only that, we give permission to others too. It's OK to not have all the answers, and it's OK if our brothers and sisters are struggling to find answers too.

Our Father **loves**, and in turn, **we love**. As we are loved, we learn to love our God. As we are loved, we grow in love for our neighbors.

*<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)*

As we hear the heartbeat of our dear Father we also know that he **sacrifices**, and in response **we repent**. The sacrifice of our God is the greatest gift he could give. Repentance is where we receive that gift.

When we confess our need, he has promised to always meet that need. When we confess our sin, he forgives us for the sake of Jesus' death. When we bring our hurts, he promises to heal for the sake of Jesus' resurrection. When we admit our weakness, he brings the strength which carried Jesus to death and back. That strength becomes ours as the Holy Spirit brings life to us.

Finally, your dear Father **enjoys you!** When you know that, ***you have peace.*** When you know how much he enjoys being your Father, you find happiness. When you realize how much he smiles over you, you carry an unshakable joy even in the most difficult of circumstances.

He is your true Father and you are his true children. He is your dear Father and you are his dear children. Our prayer opens on this basis. Our prayer is built on this foundation.

Our Father... Our true Father... Our dear Father...

Amen.

### Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

*Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.*

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.

### Offering Prayer

*If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.*

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.  
Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.  
Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.  
Reader 2: Receive our offerings.  
Together: Receive us as your own.

**Blessing** (*Philippians 4:4-7*)

Reader 1: The Lord is at hand;

Reader 2: do not be anxious about anything,

Reader 1: but in everything by prayer and supplication

Reader 2: with thanksgiving let our requests be made known to God.

Reader 1: And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

Reader 2: will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

Together: Amen.

*As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org). We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.*

---

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.