



CHRISTIAN
PRAYER
SAMPLER



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Illustrated, translated and edited
by
Paul C. Stratman

VaterUnser
BOOKS



Christian Prayer

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Preface

It is said that when Martin Luther was dying, a slip of paper was found in his pocket on which he had scribbled, “Truly we are all beggars.” By definition, prayer is asking or begging. In all our abundance, we are tempted to forget that—and to forget prayer altogether.

Long ago I took a class, “The Theology and Practice of Prayer,” and a native African pastor in the class asked, “Why do you need a book to pray?” No one really *needs* a book to pray. We have examples of written prayers in the Old Testament with the psalms which have been called the Bible’s song and prayer book. We have the example of Jesus himself giving the Lord’s Prayer: once saying “*Pray like this...*” (Matthew 6:9) and another time saying, “*When you pray, say ‘Our Father...*” (Luke 11:2). So there is a biblical precedent for written and memorized prayer.

This book strives to bring together the best classic prayers and rites from many sources and arranges them for personal devotion. Most of the prayers are gathered from Christians of the past as a source of prayer for Christians today. Thus, the title *Christian Prayer*.

This prayer book can also be used for group or congregational worship. The topical prayers can be used as intercessions in corporate worship. The confessions and absolutions and the litanies can be read alone, but they are printed so they can be used with a leader and group.

This book contains texts or basic outlines for the main services of the church, the Divine Service, and Matins and Vespers, along with Prime and Compline modified from our publication *The Antiphonary of Bangor and The Divine Offices of Bangor*.

The topical prayers drew from many sources, all updated in language and edited for consistency.

Seasonal Devotions and Home Liturgies are short rites can be used by families or small groups to observe days and seasons that may not always be celebrated in corporate worship, and some that may establish new traditions in the home. Lighting of an Advent Wreath, Blessing of a Nativity Scene, Chalking the Door for Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Days of Holy Week, Easter Eve and All Saints Day. As this book is being prepared, (April and May of 2020) we are being made painfully aware of the need for worship materials in the home.

Your author / editor is a confessional Lutheran, yet I see great value in understanding worship patterns and resources that come from before the Reformation, and with a discerning eye looking at prayers and resources of other Christian denominations and confessions. I need to mention some books that have been an influence on this one.

- *The Catholic Prayer Book* (1986) and *The Downside Prayerbook* (1999) gave me ideas on including material from public worship in a book of personal devotion, along with some ideas on arrangement of content.
- *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*, Revised Edition (USCCB, 2008) gave me many ideas for the home and seasonal liturgies.
- *The Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church* (1917, 1918) provided the core for the topical prayers. CSB's topical prayers were drawn from many classic sources from the early church, the time of the Reformation and from the *Book of Common Prayer*.
- *Reading the Psalms with Luther* (Concordia, 2007) gave me the idea for including a selection of psalms with psalm prayers.

In most of my books I included reference numbers after each prayer. In this book, the superscript number at the end of each prayer or rite has an endnote that documents the source.

Regarding Bible translations, I decided to be truly eclectic. I consulted various translations, NIV, ESV, NKJV, EHV, and used

whichever one seemed most natural for liturgical usage. Some shorter passages or versicles are actually amalgams of more than one translation, so I do not attribute each short passage. Longer passages do display an attribution.

Lord, teach us to pray.

Paul C. Stratman, S. T. M.
Week of Easter 4, 2020

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Morning Prayers

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. Into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen. ¹

Crucified Lord Jesus Christ, as the patient Lamb of God you suffered the most shameful death on the cross for me, and with your precious blood you redeemed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. Give me the assurance of this redemption through your Word. Govern my heart with your Holy Spirit, preserve me with your divine love, and hide me this day, both soul and body, in your holy wounds. Wash me clean from all my sins, teach me to live a life of good works, and finally lead me from this world of sorrows to your eternal joy and glory, most faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, my only Comfort, Hope, and Life. Amen. ²

Grant us, O Lord, to live this day in gladness and peace, without stumbling and without stain, that reaching the evening victorious over all temptation, we may praise you, the eternal God, for you govern all things and are praised now and forever. Amen. ³

O Lord, King of heaven and earth, order, hallow, rule and govern our hearts and bodies, and our thoughts, words and

actions according to your commandments; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. ⁴

O God, you divide the day from the night. Give us hearts and minds unshadowed by the gloom of evil, that we may continually think about things that are good and wholesome, and always be pleasing in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ⁵

Lord Jesus Christ, today and always, be the beginning of all my work. Be my comforter, my blessing, my support. Protect me and those I love from all evil, that the devil and the wicked may have no power over us. Amen. ⁶

O Lord, direct our steps this day into the way of peace, and strengthen our hearts to obey your commandments. May the Dayspring visit us from on high, and give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, that they may adore you for your mercy, follow you for your truth, desire you for your sweetness, for you are the blessed Lord God of Israel, now and forever. Amen. ⁷

We give you sincere thanks for the rest of the past night and for the gift of a new day, with its opportunities to please you. Grant that we may so pass its hours in the perfect freedom of your service, that at evening, we may again give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ⁸

O Lord, you are the Light in our darkness, Creator of all of the elements, Forgiver of sins. Your mercy is great toward those who seek you with all their heart. O Lord, we hear your mercy in the morning. Blot out our secret sins; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. ⁹

May the everlasting God bless *us* this day. May he save and defend *us* from evil and make *us* at last partakers of his heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ¹⁰

See also the Morning Suffrages on page 90.



Evening Prayers

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day. Forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. Into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen. ¹¹

O Lord Jesus Christ, patient Lamb of God, you are the holy sacrificial offering for all my sins, and not for mine only, but for the sins of the whole world. I thank you for keeping me, body and soul, under your protecting care this day. I pray, graciously pardon and forgive all my sins which I have committed this day both through the weakness of my old sinful nature and the temptations of the devil, which sorely oppress my heart and conscience. Cover me this night with the wings of your grace and grant that my body may sleep in safety while my soul watches for your glorious coming in judgment, ready to enter your blessed kingdom of glory. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of your suffering and death. Amen. ¹²

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray; and in your mercy, defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. ¹³

Yours is the day, O Lord, and yours is the night. Let your Sun of Righteousness remain in our hearts to drive away the darkness of wicked thoughts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ¹⁴

In the evening and morning and noonday we praise you, we thank you, and we pray: Master of all, let our prayers rise

before you as incense. Do not let our hearts turn away to words or thoughts of wickedness, but keep us from all things that might hurt us, for our eyes look to you, O Lord, and our hope is in you. Do not let us be ashamed, O our God, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. ¹⁵

Abide with us, Lord, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent; abide with us, and with your whole Church. Abide with us in the evening of the day, in the evening of life, in the evening of the world. Abide with us in your grace and mercy, in holy Word and Sacrament, in your comfort and your blessing. Abide with us in the night of distress and fear, in the night of doubt and temptation, in the night of bitter death, when these shall overtake us. Abide with us and with all your faithful ones, O Lord, in time and in eternity. Amen. ¹⁶

May your holy angels, O Christ, Son of living God,
guard our sleep, our rest, our shining bed.

Let them reveal true visions to us in our sleep,
O High Prince of the universe, O great King of the mysteries!

May no demons, no ill, no calamity or terrifying dreams
disturb our rest, our willing, prompt repose.

May our watch be holy, our work, our task,
our sleep, our rest without stop, without break. Amen. ¹⁷

We give you thanks, O Lord, because you have preserved us
through the day. We give you thanks because you will preserve
us through the night. Bring us in safety, O Lord, to the morning
hours, that you may receive our praise at all times; through
Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. ¹⁸

Lord God almighty, you have made one day of the evening, the
morning, and noon. You have ordered the sun in its rising and
setting. Make your way through the darkness of our hearts,
that being enlightened by you, we may know you as the true
God and our eternal light; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen. ¹⁹

See also the Evening Suffrages on page 93.



The Lord's Prayer

Preparation for Prayer

Heavenly Father, dearest God, I am an unworthy, poor sinner, not worthy to lift my eyes or hands to you or to pray. But since you have commanded us all to pray, and since you have promised to hear, and since you have taught us by word and example through your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, I come to you according to your command, obedient to you, and relying on your gracious promise, and in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, with all your holy Christians on earth, I pray as he has taught me: ²⁰

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**²¹

or:

**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.²²**

A paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer

Father, in your tranquil world above,
may your kingdom come,
reveal your nourishing light.
Let your clear will be done
on earth and in heaven.
What is needed for life today
the substance of holy bread,
provide to us soon.
Forgive countless debts of our wicked errors,
no different than we pardon our debtors.
Keep temptation of the devil far away,
and likewise raise us up from evil
to light at your right hand.²³

The Address: *Our Father in heaven*

Lord God, heavenly Father, you do not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their evil ways and live. We pray, graciously turn from us those punishments which we have deserved by our sins, and grant us grace to serve you in holiness and pureness of living; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.²⁴

Dearest Lord, I should pray and want to pray because of your command and invitation, but I can't do it well, and it does not work to pray in my name. So let it work and be right to pray in my Lord Christ's name. Amen. ²⁵

Available
in paperback
and
for Amazon
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