



New Apostolic Church USA

The power of the Lord's Prayer – Written by Apostle Earl Buehner
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*Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear.
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.*

Excerpt from *What a Friend we have in Jesus*

We are Christians living in Holy Week, recalling the greatest week in the greatest life that ever lived. We do so under circumstances that we could hardly have imagined a few weeks ago, living through a pandemic of unprecedented scope in our lifetime. Much of the news we receive is unsettling. Many are required to stay at home, and fear anxiety of a different kind - cabin fever. Others work long hours, in stressful conditions, to care for the ill and provide services essential to life. Where do we turn for peace, comfort, hope, guidance, strength?

Here, as always, we can look to Jesus Christ as our example.

The gospels note that Jesus often separated Himself from His disciples to pray to His Father in heaven. Luke in particular describes how Jesus prayed prior to decisive events in His life and for the church He established; among them are His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:41-46) and before dying on the cross (Luke 23:46). In the times of His greatest challenges and most difficult decisions, Jesus turned to His Father in prayer. He sought what He needed from His Father in order to do His Father's will.

It would be interesting to have been with the Lord after He returned from praying in solitude, looking for a change in His demeanor. Was He more at peace? Was there more "bounce" in His steps? We *don't* know that, but we *do* know that the disciples were touched by His prayers, because they asked Jesus to teach them to pray. In response, He taught them what we call *The Lord's Prayer* (Luke 11:2-4). The version of The Lord's Prayer that we pray in our divine services is found in Matthew 6:9-13.

The Lord's Prayer is unique, as it is the only prayer we pray with a fixed wording. Our Catechism analyzes each phrase of the prayer (Sections 112.1.7 et seq. and Q&A numbers 630-642), and it is worthwhile to devote time to studying those references. Most of us can recite the prayer from memory. But what are we asking when we pray The Lord's Prayer?

We may pray it *by* ourselves at times, but we never pray it only *for* ourselves. The pronouns are plural: "our" and "us". It is a prayer we pray for ourselves, and for others. We pray for others because we seek to love them as the Lord loves us (John 13:34). How wide a net does "others" cast?



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We pray to **our Father**, not a cold, impassive, arbitrary god. Jesus tells us that our Father loves us as much as the Father loves Him. (John 17:22-23). It is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom (Luke 12:32). What comfort, peace, and reassurance that provides!

God's name is **hallowed**, or *holy*, to us because there is none other like Him. We approach Him with godfear - with reverent respect, awe, wonder - because we have experienced His help and power in so many ways, at so many times in our lives. He always comes through for us, He always acts in our best interest, even though at the time we may not understand or agree. We know that we can cast all our care upon Him, for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).

We pray for **His kingdom to come**: presently, that Jesus manifests Himself in His church through the Holy Spirit, and that we feel and live in the prefiguration of the kingdom even now. We also desire for His *future* kingdom to come, at the marriage feast in heaven, and ultimately, in the new creation eternally. This reminder of the future, as well as foretaste of God's kingdom in our lives today, makes the present difficult times bearable, for we know they will not always remain so and God allows us to experience glimpses of future now.

We pray that **God's will be done on earth as it is heaven** because we have faith, trust, and confidence in Him, and in His ways. We trust His love for us. We plead for strength to do God's will completely, as it is done in heaven, because we know of our inclination to sin. We also struggle with our own will and want to deny it. *"Lord, I believe, help my unbelief"* (Mark 9:24)

We pray for our **daily bread**; that all human beings have what they need to live on this earth, for the spiritual food our soul and spirit crave, and that we soon can partake of Holy Communion, more earnestly than ever before. We pray that our conduct will be consistent with this prayer, in what and how we consume and our willingness to share with others.

We pray **to be forgiven and to forgive**, because we all are sinners. We confess our sins, and seek to be relieved of the guilt and consequence of our sin as it relates to God. We are also reminded of God's love, loyalty, patience, and grace, when we consider how much the Lord has forgiven us in the past, and how He is willing to forgive us anew. This motivates us to forgive.

Some may ask, "Why would God lead us into **temptation**?" He does not tempt us (James 1:13-15), but He does *permit* temptations in the form of trials. Even so, He will not permit temptation beyond what we are able; He will make sure we can bear it (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13). This gives comfort and reassurance in difficult times.

We pray that God **delivers us from the evil one**. Evil manifests itself as a power and as a person (e.g. the Devil) opposed to God. Sin is a product of mankind's free will and his inclination to sin. We recognize that without God's help we *will* sin, as humans are predisposed to sin. We pray that God helps us to resist sin, and that we don't do anything that would tempt our neighbor to sin.



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We conclude, as part of the prayer, ***For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.*** This is a statement of faith, acknowledgment, and submission. We acknowledge that that God is sovereign, almighty, and eternal. He has the final say over all His creation. Nothing can separate us from His love (cf. Romans 8:38) or prevent Him from completing His plan of salvation. We express our willingness to submit to His authority, now and forever more, and to live our life in a way that glorifies Him, and allows and encourages our neighbor to do likewise. It is also a plea that God will help us to that end.

At the end of the prayer we say, **amen**, which means “so be it” or “it is so”. When we conclude our prayer with our “amen”, we express our “it is so”: our Father is holy, almighty, eternal, loving, gracious, righteous, and perfect; He loves us and cares for us, now and forevermore. We express our devotion to Him, His will, and His way. We express our “so be it”: we are, with God’s help, dedicated to changing our lives to conform to the words we prayed, even when things are difficult.

To access *The Lord's Prayer Discussion and Activity Guide* as well as a video about The Lord's Prayer, visit our Coronavirus Update page on www.nac-usa.org in the **Pastoral Messages** or **Tools and Resources** sections.