



Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity*

SEGMENT 2: PRAYER

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

Prayer is our communication with God. Jesus gave his disciples the Lord's Prayer in response to their asking him to teach them how to pray. Prayer is an integral part of our rule of life. *The Book of Common Prayer*, written in the common language of the people, contains daily devotions, services and prayers that all Episcopalians and Anglicans use.

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP 231)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is prayer?

Why use written prayers?

How do you use *The Book of Common Prayer*?

Where did you first learn to pray? Who taught you?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Lord's Prayer

Prayers of Adoration

Prayers of Confession

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Prayers of Supplication or offering ourselves to God

Private Prayer and Corporate Prayer

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class all the promises are relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4. Why did Jesus teach this prayer? Why do we still teach this prayer today? How did you learn this prayer?

2. Choose either the traditional version or the contemporary version of the Lord's Prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer* to answer these questions:

Who is God to you?

Do you believe that evil exists?

How do you forgive?

What helps you feel reconciled?

What is your definition of “trespass”?

Traditional version

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. (BCP 133)

Contemporary version

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. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. (BCP 133)

3. Illustrate the Lord’s Prayer, or a specific petition.

Our work is prayer. Cooking the evening meal can be a time for offering up to God prayers for the family, the day and its concerns and blessings. Even buckling your seatbelt as you begin a drive can be a time for prayer for safe journey or other concerns. Our work as prayer can also be seen as a time to pray for those with whom we work, for situations in the workplace or job in which we would ask for God's interaction and help. Our prayers can be private or corporate. Corporate prayers are prayed in community.

Episcopalians all over the United States use *The Book of Common Prayer* and many of the prayers are similar to, if not exactly like, those used in the Anglican Communion all over the world. The larger community of faith is praying the same prayers all over the world.

Our worship is also prayer. *The Book of Common Prayer* has services or daily offices for the morning, noon, evening and night. There is a whole section of Collects ('kal-ikts), prayers said at the beginning of each service, that help us collect our thoughts and center us around the worship theme for the day. There is also a whole section on prayers for different aspects of our lives.

We can use icons, prayer beads, statues, candles, quiet music or quiet places to help us in our prayer lives. We can keep a prayer journal to help us collect our prayer requests and thoughts and to look back to see how God has answered prayers, perhaps without our knowing it. Our music can be prayer, too.

CLOSING PRAYER / HYMN

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The 1982 Hymnal

#24 - The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended

#397 - Now thank we all our God

#635 - If thou but trust in God to guide thee

#674 - Forgive our sins as we forgive

#693 - Just as I am

#698 - Eternal Spirit of the Living Christ

Wonder, Love and Praise

#812 - I the Lord of sea and sky

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#83 - Just a little talk with Jesus

