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Our prayer

Objective The confirmands examine and enrich their personal prayers.

Contents The various types of prayers.
Prayer connects us to God.

1 Lead-in

Explain

In the previous lesson we learned how we ought to pray. This was done with reference to the Lord's Prayer. We learned out how the Lord Jesus prayed by means of His intercessory prayer. In this lesson we will look at how we pray and what prayer is.

2 Our personal prayers

Ask

What does it mean to pray?

Workbook exercise B

Before the confirmands answer this question they do exercise B in their workbook. Afterwards the answers are compared and discussed. The answers to the question "What does praying do?" will probably help to answer this question. During the course of the lesson additional answers will be appropriately addressed and incorporated into the discussion of the questions.

Listen to answers and supplement

To pray means to speak with God!

Human beings possess the capability to convey to someone else everything they think, feel, or want. Likewise we can also communicate with God. If our prayer is prompted by an inner need and longing, it will be a true prayer.

To pray means to draw divine energy for ourselves!

We always want to pray to God with our whole heart. In this manner love, light, strength, peace, and comfort will flow to us.



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Ask

Why do we need to pray?

Elaborate on answers through further questions

God is pleased when we speak with Him. Parents know what their children need. Nevertheless they would like their children to be thankful, to ask them, to tell them their concerns, in other words, to speak with them. Without this relationship of trust normal development of children would be impossible. We want to confide in our heavenly Father in exactly the same way so that as His children we can develop and become worthy. It is important for us to consider what we expect from God.

Ask

How should we pray?

Listen to answers

A students reads aloud

Matthew 6: 5–7: “When you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues [the gathering place of the Jewish congregation] and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”

Explain

When we pray it does not matter whether we use many words or especially beautiful words, or even whether we construct perfect sentences.

Ask

What should be the essential elements of my prayer?

Elaborate on answers through further questions (homework) *Adoration*

– How do we begin a prayer?

When we begin a prayer we first want to give God the honour He deserves. For us He is the almighty God, Creator of the heavens and the earth. We may also address Him as “dear heavenly Father” (cf. Romans 8: 15).

– For what do we want to thank God?

Thanks

When we speak with our heavenly Father we also want to repeatedly express our gratitude to Him. This even includes what He provides for our earthly needs: our daily bread, the protection of the angels, etc. Chief Apostle Streckeisen once said that he thanks God for the sun which is still shining and the air which he is still able to breathe. Let us especially thank the Lord God for everything He does for our soul.

– For what may we ask our heavenly Father?

Petitions

We may bring all our concerns and wishes before Him. We may ask Him for everything. But let us always remember to say to Him: “Father not my will, but Your will be done!” Above all our greatest concern ought to be to ask that we become worthy and for Christ to return soon.





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– For whom do we pray?

Intercessions

- When we pray we do not only want to think of ourselves. We also want to remember others and intercede for them.
- We include our parents in our prayers (for example, we ask our heavenly Father to preserve them).
 - There are those who are ill, bereaved, alone, unemployed, refugees, people who are going through difficult trials etc.
 - We also mention God's children who have preceded us into the beyond. This is how we continue to be connected with them.
 - We intercede for the unredeemed souls in the beyond so that they may receive help.
 - We ought to especially ask God to preserve our Chief Apostle, the Apostles, and all ministers, and to give them strength for their great responsibilities, and that we may remain united with them.

Explain

Our prayer therefore comprises adoration, thanks, petitions, and intercessions. In special situations our prayer need not include all of these elements. It can simply be, "Lord, help me!"

Ask

When should we pray?

Listen to answers and supplement

- We **begin** the day with a prayer and **end** the day with a prayer.
- **Before every meal** let us pray briefly to thank God for the food and to ask Him to bless it.
- **In special situations**, such as before tests and exams at school, we may ask God for help. Let us not forget to thank Him afterwards. In addition we can turn to our bearers of blessing who **will** likewise pray for us!
- We may turn to our heavenly Father at any time, however brief.
- Let us prepare ourselves **before every divine service** by praying that we may recognise its value and that our soul may be able to assimilate as much as possible.
- **After partaking of Holy Communion** we express our personal thanks in a silent prayer.
- Let us speak with our heavenly Father whenever we **feel the need** to do so.

Summarise

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17).

The main points

I also want to **pray more and more fervently!**

Homework

- The confirmands read one of the two Bible passages which follow and prepare to retell what they have read:
- Genesis 39: 7–20, or
 - Luke 10: 25–37.

