



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

Adopted from *The Lutheran Service Book* (p. 294)

February 20th, 2022 A.D.

The 7th Sunday after Epiphany

This brief service is intended as a simple form of daily prayer for individuals and families. When more than one person is present, the Psalm and other parts of the service may be spoken responsively, with one person reading the words in regular type and the others responding with the words in bold type. The Creed and Prayers that are in bold type are to be said by all.

The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Introit

Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way.

Fret not yourself because of evildoers;

be not envious of wrongdoers!

For they will soon fade like the grass

and wither like the green herb.

Trust in the LORD, and do good;

dwelt in the land and befriend faithfulness.

Delight yourself in the LORD,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the LORD;

trust in him, and he will act.

For those with access to the internet, you may now play today's worship video, located on Bethany's website (www.bethanycr.org) under the Worship Resources tab and then continue with the Nicene Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson

(Luke 6:27-38)

²⁷[Jesus said:] "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

³²"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵But love your

enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

³⁷“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

Sermon – † *Loving Discipleship* † *(A copy is included at the end of this service.)*

The Nicene’ Creed

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life † of the world to come. Amen.**



The Lord’s Prayer



**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.**

Bethany's Prayer List

Entrusting into God's Care

- Sheila Willms & GoServ - on mission in Guatemala
- The Kroemer family as they help a friend
- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Those suffering after the storm and during the pandemic
- The homeless & the unemployed
- Workers in the Church, at Bethany and the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Doug Knutson - medical tests
- Vanny (friend of Cindy Goerd) - health issues
- Carol Grimminger - healing
- Wayne Schilling - hospice
- Emily Kroemer - recovering after surgery
- Joel Knutson - recovering after surgery
- Donna Birkicht - recovering after surgery
- Don Hein - recovering after surgery
- Elaine Cook - recovering after surgery
- Sharon Ramsey - recovering after surgery
- Ron Prescott - back pain
- Dave Christian - recovering at home after cardiac surgery
- Marlys Jaspersen - recovering after surgery
- Cindy Broadwater - recovering after surgery
- Lee Rathje - broken wrist, recovering after fall

Shut-Ins

- Nadine Wax - at home

Mourning

- Rosalie (mother of Ronda Anderson) - died 2/17
- Harlan (brother of Joann Strang) - died 2/10
- Scott (brother-in-law of Eliases) - died 2/6
- Melvin (uncle of Deb Heitland) - died 2/6

Serving Our Country

- Ben - serving in the Iowa National Guard
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - U.S. Navy
- Harrison (son of Rob & Faye Sieck) - U.S. Armed Forces

Collect of the Day

Let us pray... O God, the strength of all who put their trust in You, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Together we pray... **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

With the cost of new bicycles, team cars and buses, travel and salaries, it takes a lot of money to keep a professional cycling team up and running. So ,in 2008, the pro team CSC was excited to have a new five million dollar sponsor called IT Factory. In fact, the team was so excited that the entire team went to visit the company in Denmark. Now IT Factory had won a bunch of awards in Denmark for good business practices, so this seemed like a great opportunity for the team and its cyclists. However, once the cycling team arrived at the business that was supposed to give them so much money, their excitement soon turned to suspicion. You see, as the professional bike riders walked around, they realized that none of the workers were actually doing any work! In fact, the very next morning their suspicions were confirmed as news broke that IT Factory was actually a giant industrial Ponzi scheme, with the authorities launching an international manhunt for the CEO, Stein Bagger.

Now, it took law enforcement a while to figure all this out. But like I said, the cyclists knew something was up after just a short visit to the company because they knew that if the workers aren't actually working, then a company can't really be legitimate, let alone afford to sponsor a professional cycling team.

Many people rightfully look at the church and Christians the same way. In fact, one of the Lutheran Church's great theologians of the 20th century, Francis Pieper, said, "*God's goodness must be reflected in His children.*" What he meant was that if people look at Christians and they aren't doing anything, or if they are doing things that are contrary to God's merciful and gracious will, people will think that there is something wrong with the Church or maybe even with God Himself. They might think the whole thing is just some sort of a fraud. This happens because whether or not you like it, everyone gives a witness, not just with their words, but also with how they act. And when Christians act in ways that are not in accordance to God's will, their witness falls woefully short of what God wants.

This is why Jesus lays out how His disciples are supposed to act in our Gospel lesson today. Earlier, in what is known as the Sermon on the Plain, Jesus talks about being a disciple. Here in our text today, Jesus is talking about what disciples do and the kind of witness that their actions give. This is why He says in 6:27-28, "*...Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.*" Now Christians do these, and all of the other things that God commands for one reason – that is because of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Jesus clearly says in John 15:5, "*...Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*" And in Hebrews 11:6 we also read, "*...without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.*" Therefore, we don't live as God's children in order to be saved. We live as God's children because we already are saved through Jesus Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. And when we live as God's children, we reflect the very nature of God Himself in our lives. We are gracious and merciful. Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. We don't just love those who deserve to be loved. We love our enemies. We don't just do good to those who like us. We do good to those who hate us. And when we do these things, guess what people see. They see God's people at work! They see the true essence and nature of God Himself!

Of course, things like loving your enemies are not easy to do. This is because this type of love is not just a feeling, but an intentional act; a call to action that is an unnatural act of the will. And in fact, none of us can love this perfectly all of the time. Which is why it is so important for us to remember that living as a disciple of Christ begins with His work, His love, and His forgiveness. When we fall short of living according to God's ways; when we sin; God is always ready to forgive us our sins for Jesus' sake. As Paul says in Romans 5:2, "*God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" Christ did not wait for us to be perfect or to stop sinning. He loved us *while we were still sinners*. And this love that God shows us by forgiving us, drives us to do better in loving our enemies, doing good, lending without expecting anything in return, and being merciful, just as God is merciful to us.

As if all of this weren't enough, living according to God's will does even more that just please God and give a faithful witness to His essence. Very often it also keeps us from destroying ourselves from within. For the worst part about not having God's love and forgiveness inside of us is the anger and resentment which takes their place in our hearts. If someone were to strike us, another blow to the cheek would be preferable to having these wicked things built up inside of us! So, Jesus' teaching is intended to keep us clear of such fleshly desires.

Kent Hughes shares a story of how this works:

Several years ago one of my wife's friends took a missionary furlough with her husband and family after an unusually tiring stint of service. She had been looking forward to this time with great anticipation. For the first time she was going to have a place of her own, a new, large townhouse-styled apartment with a patio. She is very creative and made the patio the focus of her decoration. After a few months some new neighbors moved in. The best word to describe them would be coarse. There was loud music day and night along with a constant flow of obscenities. They urinated in the front yard in broad daylight. They totally disrupted her peace. She could see nothing good in them.

She asked the Lord to help her be more loving, but all she got back was disgust and rejection. The crisis came when she returned home to discover that her neighbors' children had sprayed orange paint all over her beautiful patio—the walls, the floors—everything! She was distraught and furious. She tried to pray but found herself crying out, "I cannot love them. I hate them!" Knowing she had to deal with the sin in her heart, she began to converse with the Lord in her inner being, and a Scripture came to mind: "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3: 14). In her heart she questioned, "Lord, how do I put on love?" The only way she could picture it was like putting on a coat. So that is what she determined to do— she chose to wrap herself in the love of God!

As a result she began to experience a deeper life of Christ within her. She made a list of what she would do if she really loved her exasperating neighbors, then did what she had listed. She baked cookies, she offered to babysit for free, she invited the mother over for coffee— and the most beautiful thing happened! She began to know and understand them. She began to see that they were living under tremendous pressures. She began to love her "enemies." She did good to them. She lent to them without expecting anything back. The day came when they moved— and she wept! An unnatural, unconventional love had captured her heart— a supernatural love— the love of Jesus.¹

May the love of Jesus Christ that drove Him to the cross for each one of us, not only give us the peace and joy of His forgiveness, but also move us to love, give, and be merciful just as God Himself does. May the Spirit use the Good News of Jesus to make us faithful and productive witnesses and workers in His Kingdom. Amen.

¹ Hughes, R. Kent. Luke (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition): That You May Know the Truth (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 4274-4276). Crossway. Kindle Edition.