



# Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

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

**September 10, 2023 A.D. – 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

*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 responses 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 (*He enters into*)

*From Psalm 92*

How great are your works, O LORD!

**Your thoughts are very deep!**

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,

**to sing praises to your name, O Most High;**

to declare your steadfast love in the morning,

**and your faithfulness by night,**

to the music of the lute and the harp,

**to the melody of the lyre.**

For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;

**at the works of your hands I sing for joy.**

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

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## **Scripture Lesson**

(*Matthew 18:1-20*)

<sup>1</sup>At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" <sup>2</sup>And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them <sup>3</sup>and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>5</sup>"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, <sup>6</sup>but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

<sup>7</sup>"Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! <sup>8</sup>And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin,

cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. <sup>9</sup>And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

<sup>10</sup>“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>11</sup>For the Son of Man came to save the lost. <sup>12</sup>What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? <sup>13</sup>And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. <sup>14</sup>So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

<sup>15</sup>“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup>But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

**Sermon** – † *The Humble Disciple* † (*A copy is included at the end of this service.*)

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### **Apostles' Creed**

**☩ I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; The forgiveness of sins; The resurrection of the body; And the life † everlasting. 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**

- Andrea - (relative of Steggalls) teaching in Bulgaria
- David - (friend of Angela Yuza) cancer
- Rachel - (Bethany neighbor) cancer
- Students and staff as they return to school
- Doreta Bogner - employment search
- Michelle Hedtke - employment search
- Those in nursing homes/care centers
- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

### **Healing**

- Cherie Miller - recovering after surgery
- Donna Stranathan - recovering after surgery
- Philip Hackbardt - recovering after surgery
- Dale Stonewall - recovering after fall
- Prudy Petersen - recovering at home
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment
- Tom Stock - health issues
- Doug Knutson - immunotherapy treatment
- Rick Foreman - recovering at home after fall
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Abi Clark - health issues

### **Homebound**

- Chuck Stoelting - Garnet Place

### **Mourning, friends and family of**

- Francis (friend of Larsons) - died 8/18
- Priscilla (sister of Prudy Peterson) - died 8/13

### **Serving Our Country**

- Ben (son of Kroemers) - IA National Guard
- Devin (friend of Kroemers) - IA Army National Guard
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - Army, deployed to Poland
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Harrison (son of Siecks) - US Army, stationed in TX

## Collect of the Day

Let us pray... O God, from whom all good proceeds, grant to us, Your humble servants, Your holy inspiration, that we may set our minds on the things that are right and, by Your merciful guiding, accomplish them; 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.**



✠ *The Humble Disciple* ✠

Last weekend I was able to spend a few moments watching college football. (Of course my wife will say a spent a few hours watching football, but that's beside the point.) And as I watched Colorado play TCU, I noticed a little number by TCU's name on the scoreboard, that wasn't the score. It was their ranking. Likewise, as scores from around the country popped up on screen, some of them had their rankings listed next to them. Now the coaches and players will probably say that such rankings are unimportant – that they are just concentrating on winning the game that day. But the fact is that all of them, at least at the end of the season, want to have the number “one” listed next to their name, because they all want to be the champion, the best team in the country.

I mention these rankings, that we see not only in football but also in tennis tournaments like the U.S. Open in New York and other sporting events, because they seem to be the complete opposite of what Jesus teaches about being great in the kingdom of Heaven. In our text for today, the disciples come to ask Jesus, “*Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?*” It almost seems as if they were looking for some sort of power rankings, each disciple hoping Jesus would say he was the top seed. But the fact that the disciples even ask this question, shows they don't even

understand what the Kingdom of God is and that they are thinking of the greatest according to the ways of the world.

So Jesus sets a little child in the middle of the disciples and says to be great in the kingdom of Heaven one must turn from how the world thinks about being great and humble themselves to be like this little child. A little child who cannot work or fight for the family. A child who cannot take care of himself, but must solely rely upon his or her parents and family. Adults and athletes like to think they can do things themselves. That they are important, that they are great. But no one can enter God's Kingdom by relying upon themselves. As a child relies upon its' loving parents, so we all must humbly trust in our loving God.

Now many say that humility is virtue that is often taught, but rarely practiced. But for a Christian it is essential, as it goes hand in hand with our faith. As such, it has been said that God sits upon two thrones – one in the highest of heavens, the other in the humblest of hearts. Yet many people think that God is way up high in heaven, and they must grow or climb up to reach Him. What they forget, is that God humbled Himself and came down to us. So if you want to find God or be closer to Him, we don't go up to some higher plane of knowledge or enlightenment - rather we stoop down with all Christians to where Jesus was born in a manger. We go down to where the Son of God was tempted in the wilderness, where He suffered and died for our sin. There amongst what is all too common, all too humble, not among the proud and arrogant, is where we find God, where we find our salvation, and where we find the kingdom of Heaven.

One may ask then, how do we humble ourselves? In our text Jesus tells us of the importance of welcoming little ones and keeping them from sin. We're not really sure if Jesus meant little ones as in children, or little ones in the faith, but it really makes no difference. The point that Jesus makes is that we practice God pleasing humility when we put others who may not be as powerful, or popular, or important as we are, before ourselves. We practice humility as God wants when we imitate His Son Jesus, who as God Himself, humbled Himself and died on the cross for us who are sinful human beings.

What this humility looks like is as different as the situations we find ourselves in as Christians. For those of us in school, it may be inviting a lonely classmate over to our table to eat lunch, or asking them if they would like to play with us on recess. For those of us in the workplace, our humility may come with helping our co-workers understand a project or finish their work. It may mean respecting our bosses and supervisors and not joining in on all of the latest workplace gossip. Living in a community, our Christian humility will take the form of helping our neighbors in their time of need, even though there is plenty of work to do around our homes. It may be listening to a neighbors problems and sharing the Good News of God's Word with them, even though we would rather be inside watching the football game.

Now many people will say or at least think, "*Oh Pastor, living a humble life in a culture that encourages us to glorify ourselves is too hard.*" But since when do faithful Christians shy away from what is hard or difficult in this life? Jesus knows its' hard to live according to His ways, that's why He gives us the stern hyperbole to cut off your hand or gouge out your eye rather than sin this way. But more than just warn us of the consequences, Jesus also gives us the strength to be humble as well. Yes, I said the strength to be humble, because that is what it takes in this life to put others before yourself. The world will try to fool you into thinking that humility is weakness, but God knows that it takes strength.

And the strength to be humble for all of us comes only from God. Jesus tells us of the man who rejoices that he found the one sheep that has wandered off. We find strength knowing that this one sheep that has wandered off is each one of us. And our Father in Heaven rejoices when

we return to Him. Our God is an awesome God who cares about each one of us individually and rejoices when we are brought back to Him through our faith in Christ, who died and rose for us. Knowing that we are loved this way, we do find the strength to put others before us, because we know that God has put us before His Son Jesus.

For those of us who follow sports, we all watch to find out who will be the greatest when the dust settles. But there should be no doubt in anyone's mind who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. It is the humble disciple of God who does not glorify himself, but trusts in God for salvation and lives to serve others. As hard as this is to do today, remember that it has always been difficult for God's people. And so don't look inside of yourself for the strength to live this way, but look down, at the humble Jesus who died for your sin. Amen.

