

Worship Notes- Sunday, June 19 (Father's Day)

Praying to "Our Father": The Lord's Prayer in Worship

"Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

(Mat 6:9-13 NRSV)

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

(Luke 11:1-4 NRSV)

Of the four Gospels, only Matthew and Luke include The Lord's Prayer. The oldest known versions of the prayer differ slightly; therefore, the English translations of the prayer also include different words. The meaning has remained the same since it was first taught to the disciples; however, the versions used today in Protestant worship (i.e., trespasses/debts vs sins) were influenced both by tradition and by development of the English language throughout the centuries. This model for prayer became a central piece of personal and corporate devotion very early in the history of the Christian Church. For a brief history of the Lord's Prayer in English, see:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Lord%27s_Prayer_in_English .

During the Second Century, Tertullian, known as one of the early Church Fathers, identified the Lord's Prayer as "a new form of prayer" that Christ had passed on to the church. Although the roots of the prayer are Jewish, he considered it a uniquely Christian prayer and encouraged all believers to use the Lord's Prayer daily. The importance of the prayer for personal devotion was also emphasized by *The Didache*, an early Christian instruction for believers. Cyprian, a third-century martyr, was the first to call this prayer of Jesus the "Lord's Prayer." Following Tertullian, both *The Didache* and Cyprian recommended that believers offer this prayer at least three times a day.

The emphasis on repetition of the Lord's Prayer a specific number of times daily led to the liturgical use of the prayer as monastic orders developed in the third and fourth centuries. Augustine, a fourth century priest and theologian, encouraged the association of the prayer with both the celebration of the Lord's Supper and with Holy Baptism. Pope Gregory I, known as "the Great" (540-604 A.D.) standardized the placement of the Lord's Prayer in the Mass, but he instructed that only the priest was allowed to repeat the prayer and not the congregation. In his German Mass, Martin Luther included the Lord's Prayer within the celebration of the Lord's Supper, with the prayer spoken or sung by the congregation. To this day, Lutherans and many other Protestants throughout the world speak the Lord's Prayer after the Eucharistic Prayer is said by the presiding minister.

Source: Boyd, Timothy N. The Churches' Use of the Lord's Prayer. *Biblical Illustrator*, Fall 2012.

<http://www.stjohnlutheran-elyria.org/images/10-7-Churchs%20Use%20of%20the%20Lords%20Prayer.pdf>