

Chapter 6

Christian Life: A Life of Prayer



Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home...
(Cardinal St. John Henry Newman)
How would you describe the attitude of this song?

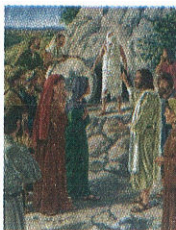
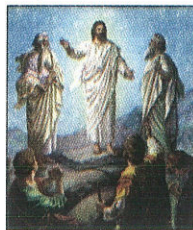
Prayer is one of the most important aspects of the life of faith. It is the main link that shows the relationship of humans with God. We see in the Holy Bible that Jesus prayed incessantly.

Christian Prayer

Mt 17:1-8

Jn 11:38-44

Lk 22:14-20



Let us discuss the following points based on the above Bible verses and pictures.



- Why did Jesus pray even though He was the Son of God?
- In what situations did Jesus pray?
- What benefits did Jesus receive by praying

Jesus prayed to know the Father's will and act accordingly. Prayer helped Jesus to overcome temptations.



To speak heart to heart with God, you must love to be with him alone
(St. Peter Celestine).

Praying means listening more than speaking. Meditation means being looked at more than looking.
(Carlo Carretto)
(YOUCAT 507)

The evangelists bear witness that Jesus regularly went to pray on the Mount of Olives. Jesus specially prayed during all the important events of his life, such as the temptation in the wilderness, choosing of disciples, performing miracles, the passion, the crucifixion etc. In the Gospels we see that God sent his angels and strengthened Jesus while he was praying.

Prayer -God's Gift

Prayer is raising the mind and heart to God. Christian prayer is the personal and active relationship of God's children with the infinitely good Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in their hearts.

St. Theresa of Avila says: "Prayer is an intimate conversation with God." By conversing with God, one realizes that they have a God to communicate with. The relationship with God enables us to walk on the path of faith, hope and love. "Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God" (CCC 2561).

Why Should We Pray?



- Do you pray?
- How do you pray?
- Why do you pray?

1. Prayer helps us to develop a strong relationship with God
2. Prayer helps us to find God's will and live a holy life accordingly
3. Prayer helps us to keep our mind and thoughts pure
4. Prayer helps us to resist temptation, realize God's will, and receive God's grace and strength
5. Prayer helps us to find answers in the midst of sufferings
6. Prayer gives us strength during the challenging moments in life



"Prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him"

CCC 2560.

Read and discuss.



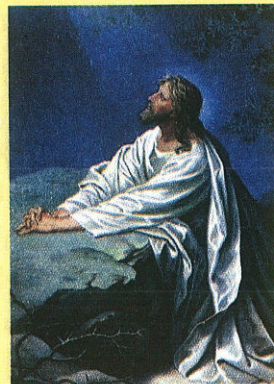
What is Christian Prayer?



Mk1:35

Jn11:41

Jn17:7



Various Forms of Christian Prayer

You regularly participate in the Holy Qurbana and various prayers. What are the different forms of prayers present in these?

Christian prayer has various forms such as adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise.

Adoration

- Adoration is the primary attitude of humanity in accepting oneself as a creation before God, the Creator.
- It glorifies the greatness of Lord who created us and the omnipotence of the Savior who delivers us from evil. Adoration is the reverence that human soul offers to God, the King of glory (Ps 24:9-10).

(Prayer of Petition)

- In prayer of petition we ask God, the source of all goodness, for the graces, blessings that we need, and seek forgiveness of sins.
- The first step of the prayer of petition is seeking forgiveness. It involves an attitude of heartfelt remorse, similar to the tax collector saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Lk18:13).
- In prayers of petition there is a priority order. First, we pray for the kingdom of God, and then we pray for our needs.

Prayer of Intercession

- Prayer of intercession involves praying to God for the well-being and protection of others.
- Only Jesus intercedes with the Father for all people, especially sinners, without any limitations.
- Our model for intercessory prayer is Jesus himself.



What are the ways in which you pray?

Why should we adore God

Every person who understands that he is God's creature will humbly recognize the Almighty and adore Him. Christian adoration, however, sees not only the greatness, omnipotence, and HOLINESS of God. It also kneels before the divine Love that became man in Jesus Christ" (YOUCAT 485).

"Why should we petition God for other people?

As Abraham intervened by his prayer for the inhabitants of Sodom, as Jesus prayed for his disciples, and as the early Christian community looked "not only to [their] own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil 2:4), so too Christians always pray for everyone - for people who are dear to their hearts, for people who are not close to them, and even for their enemies"

(YOUCAT 487).

Prayer of Thanksgiving

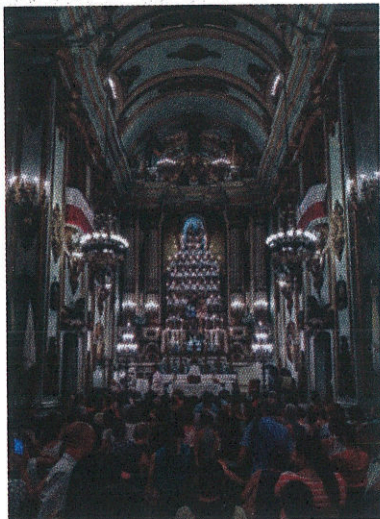
- A prayer of thanksgiving is a prayer of gratitude for the blessings and goodness that God has given and continues to give to each of us.
- Jesus himself is the model for the prayer of thanksgiving. It is by offering gratitude to God the Father, that he broke the bread and shared it. In the Holy Qurbana we repeatedly express gratitude for the blessings we received from God.
- The members of the Church express thanks along with its head, Jesus Christ.
- Prayer of praise is the act of glorifying God, for his glorious deeds and wonders of creation in the universe. In prayer of praise, we accept God as the Supreme Being. It glorifies God for he is God.
- By praising God, the Holy Spirit helps us to become the children of God. Praise embraces other forms of prayer as well.

Prayer of Praise

Holy Qurbana – The Supreme Prayer

The Holy Qurbana is the most supreme and complete prayer. The Holy Qurbana includes all forms of prayers: adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise. This is the sacramental celebration of the ultimate sacrifice offered by

Jesus to the Father. The Holy Qurbana is the power source of the Christian Life. In the Holy Qurbana, we commemorate and celebrate the mysteries of Christ, from his birth to his second coming. The Holy Qurbana is a power house that provides energy for a God-oriented and people-oriented life. We must consistently strive to nourish our spiritual life by participating in the Holy Qurbana every day and



Jn 17:20
Gen 18:22-32
Ex 17:11



Define various forms of prayer.

“Why should we thank God?”

Everything that we are and have comes from God. Paul says, “What have you that you did not receive?” (1 Cor 4:7). Being grateful to God, the giver of all good things, makes you happy” (YOUCAT 488).



St. Paul advises us in this manner: “Giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph 5:20).

integrating with its intentions. The Church where the Holy Qurbana is offered is also a sacred place for practicing prayer.

Sources & Attitudes in Prayer

Sources	Attitudes
• Word of God • Worship of the Church • Faith • Hope • Love these virtues	• With faith • With hope • With humility • With steadfastness • With togetherness • With forgiveness

We must pray with the conviction and certainty that God is omnipotent and everything is possible through him. Whatever we ask should be in accordance with God's will. "Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. **So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours**" (Mk 11:23-24).

With Faith

He who takes refuge in the presence of God should pray with the hope that God exists and rewards those who earnestly seek him. The promise of Jesus inspires us to pray with hope. "**If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it**" (Jn 14:14). Faith, Hope and Love guide us to seek refuge in God.

With Hope

We should pray with an attitude of humility like the tax collector who prayed in the temple. "**God, be merciful to me, a sinner!**" (Lk 18:13). When we pray with humility, we express our complete dependence on God.

With Humility



Holy Qurbana is the first and foremost prayer. Why?



What is the importance of church in prayer?



"Prayer is the wing wherewith the soul flies to heaven"
(St. Ambrose).

"Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer"
(Rom 12:12).

To receive an answer to prayer, one must pray with steadfastness. Sometimes, prayers may not be answered immediately and we are likely to feel disappointed. **Jesus told them the parable of the widow and the unjust judge to illustrate the need to pray always and not to lose heart (Lk 18:1-8).** Steadfast prayer means consistent and regular prayer.

With
Steadfastness

Another attitude required for prayer is mutual love among people, and between people and God. Jesus tells us, "If two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. **For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them**" (Mt 18:19-20). Like the early Christians who joined in prayer with one mind and zeal, we should join in prayer in the parish church and in the family.

With
Togetherness

Another important aspect for our prayer to be acceptable before God is forgiveness. When Jesus taught The Lord's Prayer to his disciples, he emphasised the importance of forgiveness. Jesus teaches us, "**And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us**" (Lk11:4). In accordance with this teaching of Jesus, during the Holy Qurbana we respond, "Let us be reconciled."

With
Forgiveness

Expressions of Prayer

Prayer has mainly three modes of expressions.



"Humility is the mother of all virtues. Holiness cannot be attained without humility".
(**St. Teresa of Avila**)



What are the factors that help us to grow in dependence on God?



Ps 40:2
Rom5:5



Prepare a chart containing the Bible verses reflecting the different attitudes of prayer.



Lk 18:18
Lk11:9-10

Vocal Prayer CCC 2700	Meditation CCC 2708	Contemplative Prayer CCC 2710
Through his Word, God speaks to man. Our prayers are expressed through words, whether spoken aloud or held silently in our minds. This is suitable for community prayer.	Meditation is a form of prayer which engages thoughts, imaginations, emotions, and desires. Meditation leads to assimilation and action.	Meditation is a form of prayer which engages thoughts, imaginations, emotions, and desires. Meditation leads to assimilation and action.

Prayer and Help from the Holy Spirit

Lack of concentration, reluctance to pray, challenges in integrating prayer into daily life, doubting the effectiveness of prayer and many such problems hinder us in prayer. Holy Spirit helps us to overcome these obstacles. Holy Spirit helps us to call Jesus as Lord and pray. Through prayer, the Holy Spirit enriches our lives with his gifts and fruits.

Lord's Prayer – Our Father

Jesus taught us the Lord's Prayer. He taught his disciples the prayer **"Our Father", in response to their request "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk 11:1). The Church inherited this prayer through the disciples (Lk 11:1-4).** There are seven petitions in this prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is the summary of the entire Gospel. This is the most complete prayer. This prayer teaches us not only what to ask but also in what order to ask.

Jesus Christ taught us this prayer addressing God the Father. It is the prayer of God's people who are hopefully waiting for the second coming of the Lord.

Family Prayer

Isn't it enough to pray personally and in community?
Why do we need family prayer?

The Christian family is the primary place to practice prayer.
"The family that prays together, stays together." Family



"Father, the only consolation to my heart is to gaze at the Crucified Lord, pray and shed tears"

(St. Euphrasia).



Acts 2:46



Mk 11:25-26



What are the seven petitions in the Lord's prayer?

prayer plays a significant role in making the family a place of worship. Parents and children should devote some time together before the image of Jesus. Our traditional family prayer includes praying the Liturgy of the Hours, reciting rosary, reading the Holy Bible and singing hymns. This helps to achieve togetherness, thought of God and peace in the family.

Don't interrupt the routine of family prayer even if some important guests or visitors turn up at your house at that time. It should happen at the scheduled time. (Testament of a Loving Father (Chavarul) - St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara)

Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving

Jesus teaches that prayer, fasting and almsgiving should be different aspects of spiritual life. These three practices were among the forms of devotion that Jesus embraced during his life (CCC 575). Through these practices we can please the Triune God and live in his union. These practices are part of the preparation for the Holy Qurbana. In our Holy Qurbana, we pray like this, "Open your hearts before Him. By prayer, fasting, and penance, let us find favour with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. "Prayer, fasting and almsgiving purify us; it helps to strengthen the bond between God and humanity

Prayer and Life

Prayer should guide us in every moment of our life. St. Gregory of Nazianzus says, "Remember God more often than you breathe. "In order to remain in God's love, we must continue to pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17). It is possible to pray at all times because Jesus is always with us (Mt 28:20).

St. John Chrysostom says, "It is possible to offer fervent prayer even while walking in public or strolling alone, or seated in your shop, while buying or selling, or even while cooking." Prayer is an indispensable part of Christian life. Prayer is the most effective way for the Holy Spirit to work within us. Prayer has the power to make the impossible



What are the challenges you face in leading a life of prayer? How can you overcome them?



During a journey we bow our head when we see a church? Is this a form of prayer? Why?



What is the importance of fasting and almsgiving?

possible and the difficult easy. Those who pray fervently and call upon God constantly, can stay away from sin.

Prayer and Postures

Standing in the Presence of God: It expresses reverence towards God and also vigilance and readiness.

Sitting in the Presence of God: It refers to listening to what is happening interiorly; pondering the Word in heart and meditate on it.

Kneeling in the Presence of God: It refers to a person making oneself small in the presence of God's greatness and recognizing their dependence on God's grace.

Prostrate in the Presence of God: It refers to a person adoring God through self-surrender.

Folding Hands in the Presence of God: Here a person overcomes distraction and unites himself to God. Folded hands are also the original gesture of petition (YOUCAT 486).

From the beginning of creation there is a universal call for prayer. God is constantly calling humanity to be in communion with his love. Without prayer preachings, rituals and life, lacks full meaning. Those who pray are never alone. They are with God and God is with them.



Discuss in groups a personal prayer experience and share in class.



Is it possible for a person who is away from home to participate in family prayer? How?

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26).



'It is not possible to pray all the time'- Prepare a short response.



My Convictions

1. Christian life is incomplete without prayer.
2. The Holy Qurbana is the supreme prayer.
3. My Christian life can be illumined by various forms of prayers and rituals.



Let Us Read the Word of God

The Gospel According to
Mark Chapters 6-10.



Let Us Illumine Our Hearts

"Ask, and it will be given you;
search, and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened for you"
(Mt 7:7).



My Resolution

No matter how far away I am,
I shall always participate in family
prayer and pray every day.



Discuss the
importance and
relevance of various
postures in prayer and
present in the class