

The Lord's Prayer

Today, we begin our discussion on what the *Explanation of the Small Catechism* says about the Lord's Prayer. To get us started, there are a series of 12 questions about prayer, to help us better understand prayer in general. The first thing that we learn is the importance of prayer. As the first question says, God not only commands us to pray, but He invites us to share in the privilege of prayer. Too many times, we think of prayer as a Christian duty. But it is really a privilege. It's a privilege because the prayers of a Christian are the only ones heard and answered by God. It is also a necessity. Two things every Christian should be about are prayer and Bible study. God feeds our souls and gives us strength through His Word. Prayer is how we breathe the Spirit of God. That's why Paul says to *pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)*. Prayer keeps us connected to God. To pray without ceasing is to be in a constant attitude of prayer.

There are two basic types of prayer. Private prayer, where we shut ourselves inside our "prayer closet", and corporate prayer, where we pray together as the body of Christ. Both are difficult for us today because prayer requires us to *be still and know that [He is] God (Psalm 46:10)*. In our fast-paced world, it's hard for us to slow down and take time out to concentrate on God and pray to Him.

So, I would like to encourage you, as we learn more about prayer by studying the Lord's Prayer, to make the effort to become more focused in your personal and corporate prayer life.