

Back to the Basics

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.

Most non-liturgical churches don't pray the Lord's Prayer during their worship service. Many do not use it at all. In the Lutheran church, not only is it a part of our liturgy, we pray it at the close of Bible studies and business meetings. We may pray it at mealtime, when we get up, and when we go to bed. What's the difference? Non-liturgical churches are afraid of it becoming just words if used too much. But if you know what it means and discipline yourself to *pray* it and not *recite* it, you find the richness and beauty of it. Let's take a look at the Lord's Prayer as taught in the Catechism.

The Introduction

Our Father who art in heaven

What does this mean? With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

Jesus was the first Israelite to call God His Father. He invites us to call Him "our Father" because, in Christ, we are all children of God. Because God is our Father no request is too small. He wants to hear all our needs. More than that, He wants to hear from us, period. What's a relationship with a father without communication? Because our Father is God no request is too big. Remember, God is omnipotent. He can do anything.

The 1st Petition

Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean? God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

How is God's name kept holy? God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! but anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

God is our Father, and we are His children. He wants us to "take after" Him, the way we take after our earthly fathers. Children grow up to become like their parents. This doesn't mean we can live sinless lives; we're still fallen human beings who make mistakes. This means we are to live according to God's Word because it contains His will for our lives. What God calls sin in His Word is still sin today. It doesn't

matter what the world says. When we allow our fallen nature to follow the world down this path of defining sin as it suits us, we profane His name and show that we really don't believe what He says. If we can say a part of His Word doesn't apply today, where does it stop? Help us, dear Father!