

Prayer in Orthodox Christianity

The Holy Bible records Jesus ascending into heaven, having entrusted the care of His Church into the hands of his disciples. This group of men and women would become the first church, filled with the resurrection enthusiasm of their Messiah while attempting to live out his teaching and mission in practical ways.

A large part of the private prayers of its members followed typical Hebrew format. Praying three times a day became the daily office of the person, though, instead of a community encouraged practice. This adaptation was largely due to the problem that Christianity had not yet become a country-endorsed religion. Prayer was frequently found in the gatherings of the early church, offered frequently throughout the worship service with the Lord's Prayer taking its place as the anchor - a common ritual in each gathering. This was due to the following reasons:

- * A response to the many growing heresies.
- * A summarizing of the whole New Testament just as the Ten Commandments had summarized the Old.
- * A catalyst for community intercession and connection.

Elements of the oldest Christian liturgies may be found in liturgies such as the Orthodox Divine Liturgy, the Lutheran Divine Service, and Anglican sermons. Seasonal orthodox prayers such as found in the Breviary, which provides prayer for each liturgical season including Advent, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, as well as the other parts of the liturgical year.

In Orthodox tradition, prayers of petition may be addressed to saints. It is understood that the saints answer such prayers by means of their own prayers to God on behalf of the petitioner. The help of God may be done in a form of Miracles. Orthodox Christians believe that prayers for the dead are efficacious; for this reason, requiem Masses are offered for the repose of the faithful departed. Eastern Orthodoxy rejects the notion of Purgatory, but offers prayers for the dead asking God to have mercy upon them; in particular, that tradition believes that Christians who have died remain part of the Church, and as such are both able to pray and to receive the benefits of prayer for them, whatever those may be.

There is no one prayerbook containing a set liturgy used by all Christians; however many Christian denominations have their own local prayerbooks.

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