

Directions and Explanation for Morning Prayer

Traditionally, daily prayer happens in the context of family worship. If it is practical and possible, consider letting any school-aged children take a turn leading morning prayer. However, there is no shame in praying alone if necessary or preferred. What is bolded is prayed in unison, and non-bolded text is prayed by whoever is leading.

Morning prayer begins with an **Opening Sentence**. This takes the form of a call and response taken from the Psalms. This serves several purposes: for one, it provides a clear and graceful way to start the service without resorting to sentences like, "Ok, it's time to start I guess." It also reminds us of what God we are praying to: the God who loves us, who helps us, and who is with us in good times and bad. If you're praying alone, read both parts.

Next, recite the **Apostles Creed**. If you do not know it by heart, feel free to read it. Recite or read it slowly and attentively. You will find that with daily repetition, you will need to look at the words less and less. The purpose such frequent repetition is to allow this summary of the Bible and of the Christian faith to sink into your mind and heart, so that over time your soul and life are molded by the truth it contains.

Next, we say a **Prayer for Illumination**. This is prayed to acknowledge that by our own power we are not smart or wise or righteous enough to hear God's voice in the words of the scripture. So we pray that God would help us to read the scriptures fruitfully, that the Holy Spirit would make us receptive to what God is saying to us *today*.

Having prepared ourselves by asking God to help us, we turn to the **Scripture Reading**. When possible, read an entire chapter, but let the reading of God's Word be a blessing, not a burden. Read according to your thirst, time constraints, and attention span. *Please do not start with Genesis and read straight through to Revelation.* That's a good way to get discouraged or burn out! Start with a gospel, a letter of Paul, or a narrative Old Testament book like 1 Kings. Once you've finished your first book, move on to another one - it doesn't have to be the next one you come to in your Bible. If you prefer, you might also use the lectionary found in the *Book of Common Worship*.

Having heard the words of Scripture, we respond in **Prayer**. This can be done in several ways according to the needs or preferences of those praying: by sharing requests beforehand and having the prayer lifted up by the leader, by each person praying for one other person's needs, or by each person praying for what they need in turn.

Morning Prayer ends with a **Benediction**, a blessing which we take with us into the joys and trials of our daily lives.

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

A Sample Prayer for Illumination¹

Almighty, gracious Father, grant to us hearts free from worldly things, so that we may hear and understand your holy Word with all attentiveness and faith. Through our hearing of the Scripture, enable us to truly understand your gracious will, cherish it, and live by it with all our hearts, to your praise and honor; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

¹ This was adapted from Martin Bucer's Strasbourg Liturgy of 1539.

An Order of Morning Prayer For Families and Individuals

Call: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

Response: Who has made heaven and earth.

(Psalm 124:8)

Apostle's Creed

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading

Psalm

Prayer, ending in the Lord's Prayer

(In this prayer, it is appropriate to:

- Praise God for the gift of sleep and rest and the gift of a new day
- Ask for the gift of our "Daily bread," that is, that God would provide what we truly need for the day. List any prayer requests here.
- Ask God for growth in righteousness today.)

Benediction: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

