

As Much as Any Creed, the Lord's Prayer Gives Us Our Identity as Christians And Is a Corporate Expression That Has the Power to Knit Us Together as the Body of Christ

Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them to pray. Deacon Donald Hughes said in his sermon Sunday, maybe because they experienced "the same perplexity as we do from time to time" as our desire to pray contrasts to our neglect to do so. Or maybe their reason was a desire for a distinctive form of prayer to



"I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones." As we will hear in the Gospel reading Sunday, our life does not consist in what we have—or in what we don't have. Nor does it consist in our own words or in honor given to us, "though they call the lands after their own names," as the Psalm says. Instead, as the Epistle will tell us, we should let the words of Christ dwell in us and give us the wisdom and meaning sought by the writer of the Ecclesiastes reading. And speaking of sources, the source for the image above is www.ovolopublishing.co.uk/housebuildersupdate.

mark them as a religious community.

Whatever their reason, Deacon Hughes said, Jesus gave them "the prayer that is recognized throughout all Christian time as the 'Lord's Prayer,' " albeit in abbreviated form in Luke's gospel as compared with Matthew's.

When we pray, "Father, may your name be honored," "we acknowledge God's nature," that he is "holy, just and true", Deacon Hughes said.

When we pray, "May your kingdom come soon," "we are committing ourselves to the working out of God's kingdom here and now."

Although one can "spiritualize", he said, the request that God give us our daily food, that is "best understood in a Jewish context " as a "prayer for our practical needs."

The prayer for forgiveness of our sins "as we forgive" reminds us that "as we have a daily need for food, we have a daily need for forgiveness." "Ouch!" he said. "There is no confusion here," because our forgiveness is conditional on our forgiving others.

"Don't let us yield to temptation," is our prayer "to be found faithful".

Jesus then tells the parable of the "pesky neighbor in the middle of the night" and in so doing tells his disciples—and us—to "pray with conviction and confidence", because "our prayers are heard and will be answered," Deacon Hughes said.

The absence of the singular pronoun in the Lord's Prayer shows us that it is "a corporate prayer. It is a corporate expression that has the power to knit us together as the body of Christ. It reminds us that we do nothing in isolation, not even personal prayer. As much as any creed, the Lord's Prayer gives us our identity as Christians. This is how Christians pray. . . .

"The power of the Lord's Prayer is its corporate nature. As Christians immersed in a selfish society, we easily forget the radical sense of community that Jesus calls us to. As a community, we are to come to the Father (p. 2→)

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Sundays
10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service
11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation
11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion

6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Choral Evensong

Thursdays: 5:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 6:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.

Readings, 8/5, 10 a.m.: Eccl. 1:12–2:23; Ps. 49:1–12; Col. 3:12–17; Luke 12:13–21. **8/5, 6 p.m.:** Ps. 34; 2 Sam. 6:12–23; Romans 14:7–12. **8/12:** Gen. 15:1–6; Ps. 33:12–15, 18–22; Heb. 11:1–16; Luke 12:32–40.

Prayer Emphases: Eritrea; Cumberland Presbyterian Churches; Ellwood City, PA, Free Methodist Church, and the Rev. H. Robert Mitchell, pastor; Ass'n. of Theological Schools of the U.S. and Canada; parishioners on Leisure Drive.

For the poor: Ground beef, chicken, bacon, fresh produce, canned fruits and vegetables, milk, butter, cheese, cooking oil, pancake mix, syrup, chili powder, garlic powder, diapers, baby wipes, toilet paper, hand and bath soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream.

(Sermon, cont'd.) trusting and expecting that our prayers will be answered and our needs fulfilled. As a community, we are to honor the name of the Father. As a community, we are to do the work of the kingdom. As a community, we are to ask daily for what we need. As a community, we are to ask forgiveness as we forgive. As a community, we are to ask for the strength and perseverance to withstand the pressures of the day and that we will not be found wanting."