

## **PRAYERS**

### **1. A GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS AND PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON AND ON DAYS OF FASTING AND PRAYER**

O eternal and merciful God and Father, we humble ourselves before Your great majesty, for we have frequently and grievously sinned against You. We acknowledge that if You were to enter into judgment with us, we would deserve nothing but temporal and eternal death. We are deeply conscious of the fact that we are conceived and born in sin, and that all manner of evil desires against You and our neighbour fill our hearts. We continually transgress Your commandments, failing to do what You have commanded us, and doing that which You have expressly forbidden. We all, like sheep, have gone astray and each of us has turned to his own way. We acknowledge our waywardness, and are heartily sorry for all our sins. We confess that our transgressions are innumerable, and that we have nothing with which to repay our debt. Therefore we are not worthy to be called Your children, nor to lift up our eyes to You in heaven.

Nevertheless, O Lord God and gracious Father, we know that You do not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn to You and live. We know that Your mercy toward those who turn to You is infinite; and so we take courage to call upon You from the depths of our hearts, trusting in our Mediator Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Have compassion on us and forgive us all our sins for Christ's sake. Wash us in the pure fountain of His blood, so that we may become clean and white as snow. Cover our nakedness with His righteousness, for the glory of Your Name. Free our understanding from all blindness, and our hearts from all stubbornness and rebellion.

Open now the mouth of Your servant, and fill it with Your wisdom and knowledge, that he may boldly proclaim Your Word in all its purity. Prepare our hearts to receive it, to understand it, and to preserve it. Inscribe Your law, as You have promised, on our hearts, and give us the desire and the strength to walk in the ways of Your precepts, to the praise and glory of Your Name, and to the edification of the church.

All this, gracious Father, we implore in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Or: . . . who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

### **2. A PRAYER FOR ALL THE NEEDS OF CHRISTENDOM**

Almighty and merciful God, we confess that we are unworthy to come before You in prayer. Our consciences accuse us and our sins testify against us. We also know that You are a righteous judge who punishes the sins of those who transgress Your commandments.

But You, LORD, have commanded us to call upon You in all our needs and have in mercy promised to listen to our petitions. We realize that this is not because of our merits, for we have none, but because of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom You have appointed as our Mediator and Advocate. Therefore we forsake all other help and refuse to take our refuge in anything but Your mercy alone.

Heavenly Father, You have showered upon us so many blessings that we are not able to comprehend them, much less to count them. We especially thank You that You have led us to the light of Your truth and to the knowledge of Your holy gospel. Time and again, however, we have ungratefully forgotten Your benefits, deserted You, by following the

desires of our own hearts. We have not honoured You as we should have. We have grievously sinned against You. If You were to bring us into judgment, we could expect nothing but condemnation and eternal death. But, LORD, look upon the face of Your Anointed. Hide Your eyes from our sins and remove Your wrath through His intercession. Work in us mightily by Your Spirit, that He may daily put to death our sinful nature and work the daily renewal of our life.

As it pleases You that we should pray for all mankind, we implore You, bless the spreading of Your holy gospel, that it may be proclaimed and received universally so that the whole world may know You. Enlighten the ignorant, strengthen the weak. May everyone by word and deed magnify Your holy Name. To this end send faithful servants into Your harvest and equip them to discharge the duties of their office diligently. Destroy, we pray, all false teachers, fierce wolves and hirelings who seek their own honour and profit rather than the honour of Your holy Name and the salvation of men.

Graciously preserve and govern Your Christian churches throughout the world in the unity of the true faith and in godliness of life, that Your kingdom may come day by day. Destroy the kingdom of Satan until the perfection of Your kingdom arrive when You shall be all in all.

We pray for the mission among Jews, Muslims, and heathens, who live without hope and without You in the world. Grant Your blessing upon the spreading of the gospel among those who still call themselves Christians but have deviated from Your truth in doctrine and life.

Remember all Christian instruction and all who are engaged in it. Bless all societies which, in accordance with Your holy Word, seek to hallow Your Name, to further Your kingdom, and to fulfil Your will. Be with all Christian institutions of mercy and grant those who work there the full measure of Your love.

We also pray for the civil government, for our Queen and her house, and for all national, provincial, and local authorities, whom You have set over us. Grant that they may perform their task in such a manner that the rule of the King of kings is acknowledged by them and by their subjects. May they as Your servants more and more oppose the kingdom of Satan, which is a kingdom of lawlessness. Grant that under the rule and protection of the governing authorities we may lead a quiet and peaceful life, godly and respectful in every way.

We pray for all Your children who suffer persecution for the sake of Your Name and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Comfort them with Your Holy Spirit and deliver them from the hands of their enemies. Do not permit the memory of Your Name to be removed from the earth. Do not let the enemies of Your truth have occasion to dishonour and blaspheme Your Name. But if it is Your will that persecuted Christians by their death bear witness to the truth and glorify Your Name, comfort them in their sufferings. May they accept their trials as from Your fatherly hand and remain faithful in life and death to the honour of Your Name, to the edification of the church, and to their salvation.

We remember before You all those whom You are chastening with poverty, imprisonment, physical illness, or spiritual distress. May it please You to heal the sick and to restore soundness of mind to the mentally ill. Surround those who are handicapped in body or mind with Your care and bless all that is done to help them. Lift up those who are cast down. Be a Comforter to the widowers, a Protector to the widows, a Father to the orphans. Show Your love to the lonely, Your strength to the weak, Your grace to the dying, Your sustaining power to the bereaved. Grant that all trials may yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Glorify Yourself in the faith, love, and endurance of all those whom You have called to Your eternal glory in Christ.

O LORD, take us and our dear ones into Your care and keeping. Watch over our families. Strengthen the expectant mothers and grant them a good delivery. Bless the bond between husbands and wives, and between parents and children. Be with those married couples whom You, in Your wisdom, do not give children. Bless them and cause them to be a blessing in the midst of Your household.

Help us in our daily work, and protect us when we travel. Bless our work for the promotion of Your kingdom and for the benefit of our country, or for the advancement of honourable personal interests. Bless the products of the soil and grant favourable weather and fruitful increase.

Enable us in our respective callings to live according to Your will. May we use the talents we have received from Your hand in such a way that they may not hinder but rather promote our life in Your kingdom. In all temptations strengthen us so that we fight the good fight of the faith, obtain the victory, and hereafter with Christ inherit eternal life.

We pray all this in the Name of our faithful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Or: . . . who taught us to pray, *Our Father* . . .)

### **3. A PUBLIC CONFESSION OF SINS AND PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON**

Heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God, we acknowledge and confess before Your divine majesty that we are poor wretched sinners. We were conceived and born in sin and corruption, and are inclined to all manner of evil and incapable by nature of doing any good. We also transgress Your holy commandments continually. We grieve You by our sins and bring judgment on ourselves because of them. But, LORD, we are truly sorry for our sins, by which we have provoked You to anger. Our conscience accuses us and we acknowledge that we are to blame for our sinfulness and transgressions. Yet we plead for Your mercy on the ground of the suffering of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ. Have compassion on us, gracious God and Father, and forgive us our sins for the sake of His death. Grant us also the grace of Your Holy Spirit, that He may teach us to confess our sins sincerely and to know our wretchedness. May He so lead us that we die to sin, rise up to a new life, and bring forth fruits of holiness and righteousness acceptable to You through Jesus Christ.

Make us understand Your holy Word in accordance with Your divine will, so that we may learn to put our trust in You alone and not in any creature. May our old nature with all its evil desires be put to death day by day and may we present ourselves a living sacrifice to You, to the honour of Your Name and the benefit of our neighbour.

We also implore You, gracious God, to bring back to Yourself in true repentance all who depart from Your truth, that we all with one accord may serve You through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Or: . . . who taught us to pray, *Our Father* . . .)

### **4. A PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON**

We thank You, merciful God and Father, that You have brought us to know You and Your Son by Your Spirit and Word and have caused Your Word to be proclaimed to us. Grant that we, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, may live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith, just as we were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. But since we, through ignorance, unthankfulness, and discontent, do not obey You as we

should, we implore You, O Lord, remember Your great mercy and have compassion on us. Teach us truly to know our sins, sincerely to repent, and to amend our life. Strengthen the ministers to preach Your holy Word faithfully and steadfastly. Likewise, Lord, give strength to all civil authorities, that they may use the sword entrusted to them in justice and equity.

Keep us, we implore You, from all hypocrisy and unfaithfulness, and frustrate all evil and subtle designs against Your Word and Your church. O Lord, do not withdraw from us Your Word and Spirit, but grant us a strong faith, patience, and steadfastness in all suffering and adversity. Help and sustain Your church, and deliver Your people from opposition, ridicule, and tyranny. We pray in particular for \_\_\_\_\_. Strengthen those who are weak and burdened with sorrow. Grant us Your peace through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who gave us this sure promise: *I tell You the truth, My Father will give you whatever you ask in My Name.* Amen.

(Or: and who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

### **5. A PRAYER BEFORE THE EXPLANATION OF THE CATECHISM**

Heavenly Father, Your Word is perfect, reviving the soul; Your testimony is sure, making wise the simple. Your gospel is the power unto salvation to everyone who believes. We, however, are by nature blind and incapable of doing any good. Therefore we implore You, illumine our darkened minds by Your Holy Spirit. Give us a humble heart, free from all conceit and worldly wisdom, which is enmity against You, so that, hearing Your Word, we may rightly understand it and let ourselves be governed by it. Confirm us in our catholic and undoubted Christian faith. Graciously bring back those who are leaving Your truth, that we all in unity may serve You in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. We ask these things only for the sake of Christ. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

### **6. A PRAYER AFTER THE EXPLANATION OF THE CATECHISM**

Gracious God and merciful Father, we thank You that You have established Your covenant with the believers and their children. You have not only sealed this by holy baptism, but also show it daily by preparing praise to Yourself out of the mouths of children and infants, whereby the wise and prudent of this world are put to shame. You reveal it also by teaching us Your ways and will in Christ Jesus our Lord. You gave pastors and teachers to equip the saints for serving You so that the body of Christ may be built up. We implore You to continue to work in the hearts of all the children of the covenant, both old and young, in order that we all may grow in the knowledge of Your grace in Christ until we reach complete maturity in Him. May we, by Your power, not be tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching. Bless our families and endow the parents by Your Spirit with wisdom from above, that they may bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. We pray for all teaching which is based on Your holy Word, as we have summarized it in the confessions of the church. Be with all who labour in it and provide them with knowledge and wisdom which is rooted in the fear of Your Name. Put to shame those who are high and mighty in their own eyes and in the estimation of the world. May by the godliness of Your people, the kingdom of Satan be destroyed and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in all Your churches be strengthened, to the glory of Your holy Name and unto our salvation.

All this we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ Your Son. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

### **7. A PRAYER BEFORE MEALS**

Almighty God, faithful Father, You have made the world and uphold it by Your powerful Word. You provided Israel in the desert with food from on high. Also bless us, Your humble servants, and renew our strength by these gifts, which, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we have received from Your bountiful, fatherly hand. Give that we may use them in moderation. Help us to put them to use in a life devoted to You and Your service, for we do acknowledge that You are our Father and the Source of all good things. Grant also that at all times we may long for the lasting food of Your Word. May we so be nourished to everlasting life, which You have prepared for us by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour. In His Name we pray. Amen.

### **8. THANKSGIVING AFTER MEALS**

Lord God, our heavenly Father, we thank You for the food and drink which we have enjoyed in this meal, and for all Your gracious gifts, which we continually receive out of Your hand. We thank You especially for Your divine Word which we were allowed to read together. Through it You have caused us to be born anew to a living hope, which You have revealed in the holy gospel. Merciful God and Father, we pray, let our hearts not be weighed down by the cares of this life nor become too deeply attached to earthly and perishable things. Grant us Your grace, that in our daily tasks we may seek the things which are above, expecting our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is coming on the clouds for our deliverance.

We give our thanks and submit our prayer in His Name. Amen.

### **9. A PRAYER FOR THE SICK AND THE SPIRITUALLY DISTRESSED**

Merciful God and Father, You give eternal hope and salvation to the living and eternal life to the dying. You alone have life and death in Your hands, and Christ alone has the keys of death and of the grave. All things are in Your power so that neither health nor sickness, good nor evil, life nor death can happen to us without Your will. We also know that by Your power and direction all things must serve our salvation. Gracious Father, we implore You to grant us the grace of Your Holy Spirit, that He may teach us truly to know our misery and to bear patiently with Your chastisements. If You, O Lord, kept a record of our sins these chastisements should have been ten thousand times more severe. We believe that they are not evidence of Your wrath but of Your fatherly love towards us, that we might not be condemned with the world.

LORD, strengthen our faith by Your Holy Spirit, so that we become more and more united with Christ our Head, since it is Your good pleasure to unite us to Him in both suffering and glory. Enable us to bear what is brought upon us by Your fatherly wisdom. We submit ourselves entirely to Your will, whether You leave us on earth or whether You take us home unto Yourself. We trust that with body and soul, both in life and in death, we belong to Christ, whose resurrection is the guarantee of our blessed resurrection.

Grant that we may experience the comfort of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. May His innocent blood wash away the dirt of our sins and may His righteousness cover our

unrighteousness in Your sight. Arm us with faith and hope, so that we may overcome the assaults of Satan and not be put to shame by any fear of death. When our eyes grow dim, let Your eyes be open toward us. When You take away from us the ability to speak will You then hear the sighing of our hearts. When our hands have lost their strength, continue to support and carry us on Your everlasting arms.

Father, we commit our spirit into Your hands. Deal with us according to Your promise. Never forsake us, but always be with us, even in the hour of death.

Hear and answer us for the sake of Christ, our dear Saviour. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

### **10. A PRAYER FOR THE SICK AND THE SPIRITUALLY DISTRESSED**

Righteous God and merciful Father, You are the Almighty, without whose will nothing occurs in heaven or on earth. Life and death are also in Your hand. We are not worthy to call upon You and, if You were to keep a record of our sins we could not hope that You would hear us and answer us. We pray that You will look upon us according to Your mercy in Christ Jesus, who carried our sorrows and was pierced for our transgressions. We acknowledge that of ourselves we are incapable of doing any good and are inclined to all evil. Therefore we are justly chastised and disciplined by You and yet we do not nearly receive what we deserve.

Lord, You have made us Your people and You are our God. Your mercy, which You have never withheld from those who turn to You, is our only refuge. We pray, therefore, do not hold our sins against us but impute to us the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, so that in Him we may stand before You. Graciously grant us recovery, take this suffering and sickness away from us, and bless the means of healing You have provided. If it pleases You to prolong our trial, give us patience and strength to bear it all according to Your will. You are wise and good. May whatever You decide serve the renewal of our life.

Lord, rather chastise us here than that we should perish with the world hereafter. Grant that we may forsake the world and crucify our old nature, and that we may more and more be renewed after the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us never be separated from Your love, but draw us closer to You from day to day. Grant that we with joy may fulfill our calling, which is to die with Christ, to rise with Him triumphantly, and to live with Him eternally. We believe that You will hear us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, *Our Father . . .*)

### **11. A MORNING PRAYER**

Merciful Father, we thank You that in Your great faithfulness You kept watch over us during this past night. Strengthen and guide us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may use this new day and all the days of our life in holiness and righteousness. Grant that we in all our undertakings may always have Your glory foremost in our minds. May we always work in such a manner that we expect all results and fruits of our work from Your generous hand alone.

We ask that You will graciously forgive all our sins according to Your promise, for the sake of the passion and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Your grace we are heartily sorry for all our transgressions. Illumine our hearts, that we may lay aside all works of darkness and as children of light may walk in the light and live a new life in all godliness.

Bless the proclamation of Your divine Word here and in the mission fields. Strengthen all faithful labourers in Your vineyard.

We pray for those whom You have set over us, that as servants of You, the King of kings and Lord of lords, they may rule according to the calling You give them. Give endurance to all who are persecuted because of their faith and deliver them from their enemies. Destroy all the works of the devil. Comfort the distressed. Show Your mercy and help to all who call upon Your holy Name in sickness and other trials of life. Deal with us and with all Your people according to Your grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, who assured us that You will do whatever we ask in His Name. Amen.

## **12. AN EVENING PRAYER**

Merciful God, in whom is no darkness at all, we come before You at the end of this day. We thank You that You have given us strength for our daily work, and have guided us safely through this day. Bless what was good in our labour and conduct.

Since You ordained that man should labour during the day and rest at night, we pray You to give us peaceful and undisturbed rest so that we may be able to take up our daily task again. Command Your angels to guard us and cause Your face to shine upon us. We cast all our anxieties on You, for You take care of us.

Control our sleep and rule our hearts, in order that we may not be defiled in any way but may glorify You even in our nightly rest. Defend and protect us against all assaults of the devil and take us into Your divine protection.

We confess that we did not spend this day without grievously sinning against You. In Your mercy please cover our sins as You cover the earth in the darkness of the night.

Grant comfort and rest to all who are ill, bowed down with grief, or afflicted with spiritual distress. Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not abandon the works of Your hands.

All this we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **13. AN OPENING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES**

Heavenly Father, merciful God, it has pleased You according to Your infinite wisdom and lovingkindness to gather a church unto Yourself out of the peoples of the earth. Through Your Word and Spirit, You govern her through the service of men. You have graciously called us to be office-bearers and have charged us to keep watch over ourselves and all the flock which Christ has bought with His precious blood.

In Your name we are now together to deal with matters concerning the edification and welfare of Your churches and to do so in an ecclesiastical manner. We realize that we are unworthy and unable of ourselves to think, speak, or accomplish any good. We implore You that Your Holy Spirit may govern us in our deliberations and decisions and may lead us into Your truth.

Keep all misunderstanding away from us and guard us against the sinful inclinations of our hearts. May Your Word be our only rule and standard, so that our work may glorify Your Name, serve the well-being of Your churches, and bring peace to our consciences.

We ask this in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep. Amen.

#### **14. A CLOSING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You that in the gathering and preservation of Your church in our country You are pleased to use our services. You have graciously ordered all things so that Your gospel can be preached without hindrance and we may engage in public worship and have our ecclesiastical assemblies. At the close of this meeting we humbly ask forgiveness for the shortcomings and sins which did not remain hidden from Your eyes. We bring thanks for the good we received from Your fatherly hand. Will You, O faithful God and Father, bless all decisions taken in agreement with Your holy Word. Preserve Your church by the purity of doctrine, by the proper administration and use of the sacraments, and by the faithful exercise of church discipline.

Destroy all wicked counsels conceived against Your Word and church, and strengthen the ministers to preach Your gospel boldly and steadfastly.

Give perseverance to the overseers and the deacons, that they may be a blessing to Your people through the faithful administration of their offices.

Bless our Queen and her house, that she may reign by Your wisdom. So govern the civil authorities that they may rule in justice and with wise restraint. May their rule be directed to Your supremacy as the King of both rulers and subjects. Let in this way the shameful and wicked dominion of Satan be increasingly broken down. Grant that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life, godly and respectful in every way.

Hear us, O God and Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **15. AN OPENING PRAYER FOR THE MEETINGS OF THE DEACONS**

Merciful God and Father, You have not only declared that we will always have the poor with us, but have also commanded us to support them in their need. You have ordained the service of deacons for Your church, in order that the needy members may receive the necessary support. You have called us to the office of deacon in this congregation, and we are now assembled in Your Name to deal with the matters pertaining to our office. We humbly implore You to dwell among us with the Spirit of discretion. Grant us His help, that we may be able to establish who are the ones that are truly in need. Lead us to them and help us to distribute the offerings that have been collected in a spirit of joy, fidelity, and liberality.

Kindle fervent love for the needy in the hearts of Your people, that they may generously contribute to them as Your stewards. Grant us sufficient means to bring relief to the needy. May we discharge the duties of our office as Christ's ministers of mercy.

Give us Your grace to relieve needs by means of material gifts and to instill the comfort of Your holy Word into the hearts of the afflicted, that they may put their trust in You alone. Bless, we pray, our work of mercy that we all may praise and thank You, while we await the blessed appearance of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who became poor for our sakes that He might enrich us with eternal treasures.

In His Name we pray. Amen.