

Luther Prays – Lutheran Pray

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without healing.”

“I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.”

“The fewer the words, the better the prayer.”

“No one can believe how powerful prayer is and what it can offer except those who have learned it by experience. Whoever I have prayed earnestly, I have been heard and have obtained more than I prayed for. God sometimes delays, but it always comes.”

“Pray and let God worry.”

“Prayer is a strong wall and fortress of the church; it is a Godly Christian weapon.”

“Grant that I may not pray alone with my mouth; help me that I may pray from the depths of my heart.”

“All who call on God in true faith, originally from the heart will certainly be heard and will receive what they have asked and desired.”

Martin Luther on Prayer

1. Luther’s Theology of prayer is bibliocentric. Prayer is central to Luther’s conception of the Christian life and ministry and He often uses the biblical text in his prayers in subtle ways as in a request to his friend George Spalatin to pray for him, that his faith will not fail (a verbal reference to Luke 22.32)

While prayer is connected with scripture, study of scripture is connected to prayer. (John 6.45)
The Holy Spirit uses prayer to give insights into God’s word.

Luther believed the bible was God’s word and thus prayed to God in confidence. (Psalms 62)
God’s word enabled him to pray with great faith

2. Luther’s theology of prayer recognizes the importance of prayer.

Luther in his letters showed his need for prayer.

To Melancthon, he wrote, “Only pray for me that my faith in the Lord does not fail.”

To Spalatin he wrote, “Pray that Christ does not desert me in the end.”

Luther wrote of the importance of prayer:

“There is need every hour without ceasing to pray everywhere with tears of blood to God who is terribly angry with men.”

Luther insisted prayer be carried out with great fervor even though it was hard work.

3. Luther's theology of prayer allows for the humanity of the pray-er.
 - Luther admitted to struggles in prayer – his weakness.
 - At death of his daughter, Magdalene, Luther felt he should be able to thank God that his daughter went to heaven yet he could not do so without crying and grieving. He asked a friend, "You, therefore, please give thanks to God in our stead."
4. Luther's theology of prayer is very practical.
 - Pray for my constipation
 - Headaches
 - Decisions

He was confident, "Pray confidently, for all is under control and God will help us."

- Wrote A Simple Way to Pray a letter that is a basic guide on how to pray.
Prayer, The Lord's Prayer, the 10 Commandments, and the Creed. A Letter to His Barber, Master Peter Beskendorf, Spring 1535 (You can download at BillDaschMinistries.com, under Resources for free)

Luther's Morning Prayer: "I thank You, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hand I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen."

Luther's Evening Prayer: "I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen."

Luther Prays for Healing

Martin Luther

Praying for healing at the time of the Reformation was not a usual method of healing. Luther, however, placed much importance on praying for healing. In the beginning, the early Luther dismissed praying for healing. Later, Luther came to believe that Jesus command to "preach and teach" also included Jesus command to heal. When praying for Philip Melancthon, who was very ill, he wrote:

"This time I besought the Almighty with great vigor. I attacked him with his own weapons, quoting from Scripture all the promises I could remember, that prayers should be granted, and said that he must grant my prayer, if I was henceforth to put faith in his promises."

He records that after his prayer, he also spoke:

"Be of good courage, Philip, you will not die; although the Lord might see cause to kill, yet he does not will the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn to him and live. God has called the

greatest sinners unto mercy; how much less, then, will he cast you off, my Philip, or destroy you in sin and sadness. Therefore do not give way to grief, do not become your own murderer, but trust in the Lord, who can kill and bring to life, who can strike and heal again."

Luther also claimed to be healed when people prayed for him. He wrote in a letter in 1537 after an attack of the "stone":

"I was all but dead, I had already commended you and our children to God and our Savior, in the full conviction that I should never see you again. I was greatly affected when I thought of you, thus on the brink of the tomb, as I thought myself. However, the prayers and tears of pious men who love me have found favor before God. This last night has killed my malady; I feel quite as though newborn."

He gave credit to God answering prayer. When asked what had healed him:

"Prayer, for in all Christian congregations they fervently prayed for me according to the direction of the Apostle James 5:14-15."

Others were healed as Luther prayed for them. People, like Myconius, a pastor in Gotha, told others that Luther had healed him by praying for him. In a little tract Myconius wrote that Luther's prayer for healing "...showed such a power" that he was made well.

Luther preferred his prayers to be organized rather than extemporaneous. Here is an example of this in a letter to Pastor Severin Schulze:

To Pastor Severin Schulze, Venerable Sir and pastor, the tax collector in Torgau and the councilor in Belgren have written me to ask that I offer some good advice and help for the afflicted husband of Mrs. John Korner. I know of no worldly help to give. If the physicians are at a loss to find a remedy, you may be sure that it is not a case of ordinary melancholy. . . This must be counteracted by the power of Christ and with the prayer of faith. This is what we do - and we have been accustomed to it for a cabinet-maker here was similarly afflicted with madness and we cured him by prayer in Christ's name.

You should consequently proceed as follows. Go to him with the deacon and two or three good men. Confident that you, as pastor of the place, are invested with the authority of the ministerial office, lay your hands upon him and say: "Peace be with you, dear brother, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." Thereupon read the Creed and the Lord's Prayer over him in a clear voice, and close with these words: "O God, Almighty Father, who has told us through your son, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you"; who has commanded and encouraged us to pray in His name "Ask and you shall receive"; and who in like manner has said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you and you shall glorify me"; we unworthy sinners, relying on these your words and commands, pray for your mercy with such faith as we can muster. Graciously deign to free this man from all evil, and put to nought the work that Satan has done in him, to the honor of your name and the strengthening of the faith of believers. Through the same Jesus Christ, your son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, world without end. Amen.

When you depart, lay your hands on the man again and say: "these signs shall follow them that believe: they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Do this three times, once on each of three successive days. Meanwhile let prayers be said from the chancel of the church, publicly until God hears them.

To the extent to which we are able, we shall at the same time unite our faithful prayers and petitions to the Lord with yours.

Those who believe praying for healing is not Lutheran and not a part of the Reformation era may want to re-examine their thinking in light of Luther's beliefs and actions. Luther was a strong advocate for praying for healing.

Johann Blumhardt (Mid-1800's) The Awakening

Johann Blumhardt was a German Lutheran pastor in Mottlingen, Germany. Blumhardt, in 1844, cast evil spirits out of Gottliebin Ditlos, a young woman. His prayer was simply "Jesus, help." He was concerned that people took evil too lightly. His weapons were prayer and the Word of God. As he touched people or simply spoke over them, healing frequently happened. An awakening characterized by repentance and renewed faith changed the village into a place of peace and joy. Finally, because of their fear and inability to understand God's power, the state church forbid him to heal. Friends bought a spa for him at Bad Boll. He moved there in 1852. Soon people came from all over Germany and healings resumed. Remarkable tales of healings followed Blumhardt all his life. (You may order his book The Awakening or download free on some websites)

William Loehe

William Loehe, a Lutheran pastor in Germany in the 1800s, trained over 40 pastors who came to help America to plant the Lutheran Church. Being very pastoral, he regularly anointed people with oil and prayed over them in Jesus name. He instructed his students to do the same. Olsen writes in Healing Through Prayer, that Wilhelm Loehe not only trained 40 Lutheran pastors who came to America, but that he had a special gift of healing the sick through prayer. Olsen notes that Loehe seldom talked about cases of people who were healed through his prayers, but that he spoke about James 5:14-15 and praying for healing often. He believed the gift of healing did not cease after the death of the last apostle, but continued today. Eventually, Loehe and Walther, an early leader of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, had a serious falling out. Walther did not share the same views as Loehe about praying for healing. However, Loehe's views and practices continued in some regions of early America.

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