

New City Catechism

Question 38: What is prayer?

Answer: Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God in praise, petition, confession of sin, and thanksgiving.

Psalm 62:8

Before giving today's answer. Ask your family to answer the question. Then present the catechism answer and commit it to memory.

Jesus' disciples were impressed by the way they watched and heard him pray, which was probably quite different than they were used to hearing people pray. So they asked him to teach them to pray. He gave them a model prayer to guide the way they prayed in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4, which has come to be called "The Lord's Prayer." It has been learned and recited by Christians ever since. We will learn it and talk about it more when we get to Question 41 but for now it is important to know that Jesus probably intended this prayer to help us consider the kinds of things we should pour out to God in our prayers.

Today's answer summarizes the kinds of things we should pour out along the lines of The Lord's Prayer.

- What four things does our answer tell us to pour out in our prayers?

Here is another helpful summary of these of these four things the Bible tells us to include in our prayers. We can remember them by the acronym **A. C. T. S.**

A—Adoration (or praising God for his goodness, power, deeds, excellence, etc.)

"Praise be to God!" (Ps. 68:35), "How awesome are your deeds." (Ps. 66:3).

C—confession (of sin, shortcomings, weaknesses, our lack of faith)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).

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T—Thanksgiving

“I will praise the name of God with a song;
I will magnify him with thanksgiving.” (Ps 69:30).

S—Supplication (or petition, requests for things we need or need God to do).

“do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Philippians 4:6).

As a family, use this model to spend some time pouring out your hearts to God over something that matters to you (a sick loved one, a job, relationship issues, school, etc.). Talk through what you might say before you begin praying. Show your kids how anything in life can be poured out to God using this method.

Please make use of the New City Catechism Commentary, Video, and Prayer as you see fit.

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