

What Is The "Prayer of the Day"?

As Christians, we pray to God at various times throughout the day. We pray in the morning when we get up. We pray before meals. We pray when we are dealing with troubles. We pray when we go to bed. We also pray in our worship services. Every worship service has a different amount of prayers. In a liturgical worship service, there are two main prayers. They are the Prayer of the Day and the Prayer of the Church. In this column entitled, "Questions About Christianity", we are looking at the different parts of a basic Christian liturgical worship service. This month we will learn about the first of the two prayers by answering this question, "What is the "Prayer of the Day"?"

The Prayer of the Day is a short prayer used in liturgical worship services. Often it is referred to by its' Latin name, the *Collect*. This prayer is called the *Collect* either because it refers to the gathering of the people together to pray or it is a prayer that collected into one the prayers of the individual members of the congregation. The Prayer of the Day has been used in liturgical worship services ever since the early Medieval Ages. Some of the prayers used for the Prayer of the Day go back to 700 A.D.

The Prayer of the Day often comes after the Salutation and before the reading of the Bible lessons. One reason why it is placed here in liturgical worship services is because it prepares people for the Bible lessons that follow. The Prayer of the Day changes from week to week based on what day it is in the church year. It is usually connected to the Gospel lesson and the theme of the worship service. Even though it is a short prayer, it usually consists of five main parts: The Invocation where a person of the Trinity is addressed; Acknowledgement where the divine attributes of God are described; Petition where God is asked to do something; Aspiration where God is asked to bring it about; and Conclusion where people say they pray this in Jesus' name.

It is very easy for us not to pay attention to what we are saying in the Prayer of the Day. This is why I encourage you the next time you attend a worship service, which uses the Prayer of the Day, to pay attention to what you are saying. Also, take special note to see if the Prayer of the Day has any connection to the gospel lesson and the theme of the worship service. It just might make your worship service a little bit more meaningful.