



NAC-USA  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

# Midweek Experience Curriculum

Prayer | Fellowship in the Kingdom | Our Family

---

**2015**

---

February

---



# 2015 February FACILITATOR GUIDE

Welcome to the February Midweek Experience Curriculum. The theme for this month's Sunday divine services is "Fellowship with the Lord", and our midweek experience sessions will address this theme by exploring three ways we can practice fellowship.

The first session focuses on the subject of prayer. We'll discuss how prayer results in a richer fellowship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The second session examines the parable of the wedding garment in Matthew 22. Together we'll explore God's loving offer of fellowship with all mankind, as well as His expectations of those who accept His offer. The last session centers on the parable of the Prodigal Son. This parable highlights the unconditional joy that God the Father feels when lost souls find their way home. We'll consider our fellowship with each other by examining the conduct of the unhappy older brother.

## Session 1: Prayer

---

### NAC Catechism

---

#### 13.1 Prayer

In many religions, prayers are an expression of devotion to a higher being. Praying is generally considered an expression of devoutness. Christians understand prayer as an opportunity given by God for human beings to enter into contact with Him.

Now, let's begin our session on prayer. As Christians, prayer is something we are taught to do from the moment we become believers. Children are taught to pray at bedtime. Families pray before meals. We pray for ourselves when confronted with challenges and trials. We pray together as a congregation at church. Prayer is a fundamental part of the Christian life and it supports our fellowship with the Lord.

Our prayers lose their effectiveness when they become routine and we start praying without thinking about what we're actually saying. This can happen when praying is just another scheduled item on our to-do list. When pausing to pray it is good to take a moment to reflect on our relationship with God and recognize the

## NAC Catechism

### 13.1 Prayer - continued

In prayer, the believer experiences: God is present, God hears, and God answers. Thus the believing human being bows before God's majesty and love in humbleness. Prayer is closely related to the Holy Spirit (Romans 8: 26). In the Old and New Testaments, prayer is a verbal expression of belief in the God who has revealed Himself as the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer.

God addressed mankind first. For this reason, prayer is always mankind's response to God's word. The figurative image of prayer as the "breathing of the soul" clearly expresses the necessity of prayer for faith. Faith without prayer is not a living faith. Prayer brings to expression love and reverence for God. Petitions are brought to God in the knowledge that the Almighty will lead all things to the benefit and eternal salvation of the supplicant.

#### 12.1.7.2.1

##### Our Father in heaven...

The form of address "Our Father" identifies this prayer as a communal prayer in which those praying profess to be children of God. In this fellowship, Jesus Christ is the "firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8: 29). Whenever He prayed, He addressed God as Father (Luke 22: 42; 23: 46; John 11: 41; 17: 1).

The relationship between Jesus and His heavenly Father is unique. Since Christ taught human beings to pray to God as the "Father in heaven" He incorporated them into His relationship with the Father. When human beings address God as their "Father", this alludes to the reality that God has created them, that He is their Lord, and that He provides for them.

reason we are praying. As New Apostolic Christians we believe God is present, God hears, and God answers. We trust Him to answer in His way and at His time.

We profess our trust in God when we pray in the following ways:

#### To God, Our Father...

Jesus instructed his followers in Matthew 6:9 to pray "*In this manner: Our Father in heaven...*" As the Son, Jesus wanted the people to know God the way He did, as a loving and kind Father. This was really different from the understanding the Jews had of God at the time. Today, though, we believe our God is the omniscient and omnipotent Creator, and also our Father, the One who loves us and desires to spend eternity with us. Therefore we trust Him to care for us and assist us.

#### We pray In Jesus Name...

What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name? It means more than simply saying those words at the end of a prayer. It means praying as Jesus prayed, both in content and in approach. Ask yourself, "would Jesus be praying for this?" And, "how would He pray for it?"

Do we approach our Father the way that Jesus did? Jesus was very humble towards His Father, demonstrated when He prayed "*Your will be done*" in the Lord's Prayer and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

By praying "Your will be done" we acknowledge that we don't demand God to give us whatever we ask, but that we know He will care for us in His perfect way. Finally, we pray in Jesus' name because we trust that Jesus is our Mediator.

1 Timothy 2:5 states *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.*

#### When we pray, we are aided by the Holy Spirit...

In Romans 8:26 we read: *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

This verse reassures us that the Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray. Even when we find ourselves without words, in moments of stress and anxiety, He speaks for us.

#### And when we end a prayer, we say "Amen..."

"Amen" is a Hebrew term meaning something is solid, faithful, and true. From the Catechism we know that the word "Amen", which stems from Hebrew, translates

## NAC Catechism

### 12.1.7.2.1

#### Our Father in heaven... - continued

God is the source and sustainer of that which He has created. In love and trust, and without fear, human beings can address Him as "Father".

The words "in heaven" emphasise that God is exalted above all earthly existence. He—God, the Father—is greater and higher than everything, and yet, in His omnipresence, He is close to us human beings (Psalm 139; Acts 17: 27).

## Going Deeper

### Who do we pray to?

Jesus taught the disciples to pray to the Father (Matthew 6:9) and He did it Himself. See, for example, the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6) and the High Priestly Prayer (John 17).

Jesus wanted to share the special relationship He has with His Father with us. Our Catechism teaches: "When human beings address God as their "Father", this alludes to the reality that God has created them, that He is their Lord, and that He provides for them. God is the source and sustainer of that which He created.

Jesus serves as our Mediator, (1 Timothy 2:5) and the Holy Spirit is our Teacher and intercessor (Romans 8:26-27) in prayer. They are all involved in our prayer as the Triune God. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) We pray to God our Father and have access to Him through Jesus Christ.

as: "So be it!" It concludes the Lord's Prayer, and once more reinforces every plea and statement that has been brought to God in this prayer. Often Jesus Christ said, "Verily, verily". He was saying "I tell you, that is the truth. What I say is the word of God".

2 Corinthians 1:20 reads *For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.*

When we say amen after the prayer, we express, "Yes, that's what I want. Yes, I believe You can give me that." Admit it - sometimes we pray and we don't really mean what we say. Have you ever prayed "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors", but you have no desire to forgive a particular debtor, let alone allow God to forgive them? We must always ask ourselves: are we serious when we say "amen" to our prayers?

In future months we'll talk about the anatomy of a prayer, but for now, please discuss the questions found in this section of your participants guide. Thank you.

### Discussion Questions:

- How do you express to God in your prayer that He is indeed your Father? How do your prayers reflect this Father-son, Father-daughter relationship?
- How would using the "in Jesus' name" filter, transform our prayers? How does this change the way we approach God?

Let's look at the Roman 8:26 – 27 verses but in the NLT version: *And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.*

Think about that: even when we don't know what to say, or say something wrong, the Spirit prays for us more deeply than we could pray for ourselves, in God's will. This is the gift of the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

- Describe a time when you felt weak in prayer, or were so anxious that you could not pray. How did you feel the comfort of God in that moment, even when you couldn't find the words?
- Describe what the word "Amen" at the end of a prayer means to you.
- What are some "habits" we get in when praying? What are some of your personal repetitious catchphrases and what can you do to make your prayers more meaningful?









