

**Scripture Reading:** John 17

**Extra:** Apostle's Creed and Canons Ch. III/IV, art. 11 & rej. 6 (pg. 108)

**Singing:** 229:1-3 – 30:1-3 – 266:1-3 – 449:1-2

OPENING OBSERVATIONS

- The Lord's Prayer is the "Prayer of Prayers"
- Jesus gave this prayer as pattern for our prayers
- The simplicity and clarity of this prayer is unsurpassed

**WHY ARE BELIEVERS TO ADDRESS GOD WITH  
"OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN?"**

- I. TO EXPRESS THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE FATHER  
II. TO EXPRESS THEIR RESPECT FOR THE FATHER  
III. TO EXPRESS THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THE FATHER  
IV. TO EXPRESS THEIR UNITY AS THEIR FATHER

**I. "OUR FATHER ..." EXPRESSES THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE FATHER**

A. Prayer is always to be addressed to God

B. How to address God does vary within the Scriptures

1. In OT a variety of addresses is used
2. In NT this is significantly altered
  - a. main emphasis is on the Father
  - b. Jesus nurtured this awareness of God as Father in His disciples
    - Matt 5:16, 45, 48 – 6:1, 8, 14, 15, 32; Matt. 10:29; 18:14
  - c. why did He consistently speak to them as 'your Father?'
    - because none comes to Christ except as drawn by the Father
    - because all needed to be delivered from the 'spirit of bondage'

C. In each prayer the petitioner should express a *relationship* to God as appropriate to the reality

**II. "OUR FATHER ..." EXPRESSES THEIR RESPECT FOR THE FATHER**

A. Jesus commanded us always to *show great respect* for the Father

1. How easily we forget that we enter the Holy of Holies in prayer!
2. Be aware of the toxic (cultural) influence of 'egalitarianism'
  - a. defined as the gradual erasing of 'distinctions' of respect

3. Though respect is mostly a matter of heart, there are also forms
  - a. forms of respect refer to *proper titles, privacy, space, posture*

- b. particularly we need to re-assess our *posture in prayer*

### **III. “OUR FATHER ...” EXPRESSES CHILDLIKE CONFIDENCE IN FATHER**

A. Why did Jesus **command** His disciples to use this address?

1. to teach them that *God in Christ is an approachable Father*
  - a. consider what “Abba” meant to the Jewish ear
    - Mark 14:36; Rom 8:15; Gal. 4:6

2. to communicate the precious character of God as a Father

3. to encourage us to trust Him to do the best possible for us as an earthly would do (Luke 11:5-13)

### **IV. “OUR FATHER ...” EXPRESSES OUR UNITY WITH FATHER’S FAMILY**

A. God’s children are part of the Father’s family (Eph. 3:14-15; 2:16)

1. This truth of the *unity of believers* is a precious reality
  - a. believers are *never* like pieces of sand on a shore
  - b. believers belong to a family that spans the world – time/eternity
2. In John 17 Jesus labors for *unity of children of the Father* (21-23)

B. Why is the Biblical unity of those who confess same truths so vital?

1. Because division of God’s saints shadows testimony of God’s truth
2. Because division is fertile ground for the devil’s sowing
3. Because division often leads to *biblical unbalance* in churches
4. Mostly, because division grieves the Holy Spirit