

COMMON PRAYER

THE LESSON: 2 TIMOTHY 1

Before the Christian Church began, it was the custom of ancient Israel to pray together using words that the whole community could identify with: the psalms. When we talk about “common” prayer, like the prayers we find in the Book of Common Prayer, what we mean is that these are prayers which all believers have “in common”. We can say these prayer together or alone and be reminded that we are not isolated in our faith, but belong to the family of God. This family does not just include the people present at our church or meeting, but it is a body that stretches across time and space. So even if we are saying these prayers alone in our bedroom, there is a sense in which we are also praying with many other Christians around the world, and also joining with the tradition of saints and martyrs who have gone before us.

If you are not in the habit of praying at all or if you are used to making up your own prayers, using prayer book prayers can take some getting used to. But keep in mind that, “just as a great love song expresses the feelings of thousands who are in love, so a great prayer can find an echo in our own hearts. It is able to speak for us as if the words were our very own”. (Sue Careless, *Discovering the Book of Common Prayer: A Hands-On Approach*)

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In the Apostle Paul’s second letter to the young Christian leader Timothy, he wrote urging that all sorts of prayers be made for all people. This would be a tall order for us to keep on our own, which is why it’s important to remember that we never pray in isolation.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

At home, find a quiet space and spend some time praying with the Book of Common Prayer. (If you don’t have a hard copy, you can find the text online here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline>). Consider the exhortation in 2 Timothy to make “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings... for all people”. This is a good opportunity to pray for people and situations that you might sometimes overlook or forget about.

If you don’t know where to start, try flipping to the back of the book where you’ll find a section called “Forms of Prayer to be Used in Families” (page 728). There is another section called “Prayers and Thanksgivings” starting on page 39 that contains a great variety of additional prayers.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of all godliness: Be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (COLLECT FOR THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, BCP PAGE 256)

COMMON PRAYER

2 TIMOTHY 1: **FOR ALL PEOPLE**

¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, ⁴who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.