

A set of
31 Prayers



By Julian Duckworth

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Swedenborg Centre
4 Shirley Road, Roseville NSW 2069
Australia

Why we should pray

Swedenborg describes prayer as a conversation with God, our talking with God.

'Prayer, considered as it is, is talking with God and at the same time there is some inner intuition about what we are praying about, to which there comes a certain kind of inflowing into the perception and thinking of the mind of the one praying. In this way there is a certain opening up of our inner state towards God. This differs according to our state at the time and also according to what we are really praying about... If we pray with love and faith, and our prayer is about heavenly and spiritual things only, then our prayer has something like a revelation in it which gets felt in our emotions at the time, about hope, consolation and an inward joy.'

(Arcana Caelestia, parts of 2535)

Swedenborg is very clear that while every prayer of our heart is heard and acted on, our desperate prayers can't be answered as far as we are concerned because they are not genuine prayers.

We pray because we are instructed to do this by the Lord:

'when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask him. In this manner, therefore, pray...'

(Matthew 6:6-9)

There are many types of prayers. Through petitions we ask for something, or we might pray to reflect, or confess, give thanks, or seek to understand and grow:

'It is important to learn how to pray, just as one must learn everything else. Whoever knows how to pray and is able to concentrate in the proper way, their prayer can give results. It must be understood that there are different prayers and that their results are different. Petition is not the only form of prayer. Most of the oldest model prayers have nothing in common with petitions but are recapitulations, so that by repeating the prayer aloud or to ourselves, the person endeavours to experience what is in them, their whole content, with mind and feeling. We should do this also when we make new prayers for ourselves, reflecting upon each word while appealing to the Lord. In this way the act of prayer changes us. Prayers lose their sense and meaning and results when only repeated mechanically.'

(adapted from G.I.Gurdjieff on prayer, *In Search of the Miraculous*,
P.D.Ouspensky)

Here follows a set of 31 prayer guides covering our faith in the Lord, his divine providence, our love of the Lord, our love for our neighbour, our involvement in the lives we live, the world we live in, and the situations we hear about and care about.



List of Prayers

1st Prayer	A prayer acknowledging God
2nd Prayer	A prayer about God's providence
3rd Prayer	A prayer of thankfulness to God
4th Prayer	A prayer about God's blessings to us
5th Prayer	A prayer about the world of nature
6th Prayer	A prayer about God's gift of freedom
7th Prayer	A prayer about the Bible, God's Word
8th Prayer	A prayer about our use of the Bible
9th Prayer	A prayer about us knowing God
10th Prayer	A prayer for when we feel uplifted
11th Prayer	A prayer for when we feel downcast
12th Prayer	A prayer for the Lord's leading and guiding
13th Prayer	A prayer for personal strength
14th Prayer	A prayer for sincerity and integrity
15th Prayer	A prayer about being useful
16th Prayer	A prayer about our human failings
17th Prayer	A prayer about faith, trust and confidence
18th Prayer	A prayer for people who are sick
19th Prayer	A prayer for people who are dying
20th Prayer	A prayer for those who govern
21st Prayer	A prayer for people who are stricken
22nd Prayer	A prayer for natural disasters
23rd Prayer	A prayer for the church
24th Prayer	A prayer for ministers
25th Prayer	A prayer for homes and families
26th Prayer	A prayer for children
27th Prayer	A prayer for this day today
28th Prayer	A prayer for our values and standards
29th Prayer	A prayer about praying
30th Prayer	A prayer for Christmas
31st Prayer	A prayer for Easter

1st Prayer: A prayer acknowledging God

Lord God, Father of us all, Creator of everything that is and the best Friend we will ever have, I acknowledge you as the one and only God, the Lord of heaven and earth. You are almighty yet you are there with me in my heart, my mind and my life. You work all the time for our eternal welfare and you have made us to be in heaven for ever. While I worship you may I always set the course of my life to be as you would wish my life to be. Amen

2nd Prayer: A prayer about God's providence

Lord God, I know and I believe that your Providence is over all the things which ever happen. I know that this is true but I don't easily see it. Help me live my life based on my trust in you that you are always bringing about the best possible outcomes because you know every situation and every person intimately and completely. As we live our lives, help us see how your Providence has been there all the time, bringing things about and leading everything to its right and best conclusion. Amen

3rd Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness to God

Lord God, there are so many things for me to feel thankful for, more than I can think of or know. Give me a thankful heart, and sometimes let me tell you some of the things which bless my life.

I thank you for good health and the things I can do. I thank you for all healings that come in my body, my heart and my mind. I thank you for friends and the people I know. I thank you for each day. Most of all I thank you for knowing you and for loving you. Keep me in such thankfulness, always. Amen

4th Prayer: A prayer about God's blessings to us

Lord God, you bless us in so many ways. You give us so much and you lift us up from sorrow and bring us back to joy. You mend our hurts and you restore our blindness to sight. I thank you for the blessings across the whole of my life and the blessings of each hour and day. Bless all of us with your bounty and goodness and help us to see your blessings as what you know we need. Amen



5th Prayer: A prayer about the world of nature

Lord God, I can see that I live in a very beautiful world which is there all around me. This is your Creation. It is there in the bush and the forest, in the parks and gardens full of living things, in the beaches and rivers, the sky above me and the ground beneath my feet. Your creation is like a mirror reflecting our life and growth, our regeneration, shown so well in the fruitfulness of just a single tree. I thank you for it all, because it is your gift to us. May we take good care of it. Amen

6th Prayer: A prayer about God's gift of freedom

Lord God, you created us to have people to love and for us to love you in return. You did not make us like walking machines; you gave us the gift of our freedom, feeling free to be who we are, being able to make our choices and decisions. This shows us how much you love us and what your love for us is like, never forcing but always encouraging. This gives us the pattern for us to use with other people. Help us do this and keep your love for us always there in mind. Amen

7th Prayer: A prayer about the Bible, God's Word

Lord God, you reveal yourself to us so beautifully in your Word. It tells us what you are like, what you do, what you want us to become, here and in the spiritual world. It talks about your faithfulness and never-ending work with us. It describes our forgetfulness and our stubbornness and our need for repentance.

Its many stories teach us. Its many commands are there to direct the course of our lives. And supremely, it tells how you came into this world to be God with us to bring life and healing. Amen

8th Prayer: A prayer about our use of the Bible

Lord God, I love your Word because it talks about you. Help me make the best use of it, to read it and listen to it and obey what it says. Help me turn to it and find your truth which brings me back to you every time, where I need to be. Keep me from straying from it, from trying too hard to understand it and from forgetting what I have been reading. Make it part of my life and may it guide me in everything I do and know is right. Amen

9th Prayer: A prayer about us knowing God

Dear Lord, help me know you in the right way, most of all to know you are there with me. Of course, I realise that I can't know you completely and that your greatness and glory are far beyond what I can understand. Even so, Lord, may I keep what I do know about you there in my heart and mind because what you have brought me to see is what I need to have. I know your love, your wisdom, your presence, your power and your faithfulness. Keep me in these and take me where they lead me. Amen

10th Prayer: A prayer for when we feel uplifted

Dear Lord, my life, always in your hands, has its highs and lows. When I feel sure and confident, when I feel strong and lifted up, let me remember that this is a gift for this particular moment, and may I feel thankful and use it well. But give me humility too, so that I do not become self-assured or over-confident. I pray this because I know that at some point I will have new challenges to deal with and things about myself that I will need to work on. In all these changes I see your loving wisdom. Amen



11th Prayer: A prayer for when we feel downcast

Dear Lord, there are times when I feel down for some reason and sometimes I don't even know why I feel like this, but I do. Help me find my anchor and foothold at such times. Help me remember that you are always there and that if I turn to you I am doing the best thing to bring my sad state to an end. Let me be patient when it is hard or unclear for me, and realise that these times are part of the rhythm of life. In some way that I can't see right now, there is something for me to see, to go through and to endure. And as it has been before, I know that I will come through, with you. Amen

12th Prayer: A prayer for the Lord's leading and guiding

Dear Lord, I know that I depend on you for everything. I know too that you are always leading me and guiding me. I see this in the way that things unfold for me. I see this in the thoughts that come into my mind and the feelings that come into my heart. Just as you led the Israelites through the wilderness with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, you lead and guide us all. That is reassuring. May I live my life by your guidance. Amen

13th Prayer: A prayer for personal strength

Dear Lord, I pray to you for greater strength in my life, in my will, in my doings. Just as the ground beneath my feet holds me securely; just as the roots of the tree keep the tree safe and upright, may my beliefs, values and attitudes hold and keep me in the

right path. I will trust you at all times, knowing that you and you alone are the real strength of my life. Amen

14th Prayer: A prayer for sincerity and integrity

Dear Lord, keep me well away from all forms of pretence or deceit or hypocrisy and help me to think, feel, speak and do what is sincere and genuine. When I am with others, help me be true to what I hold dear, and be tactful and thoughtful in my words and responses. Bring every part of my life together to be part of my whole being so that I have integrity in who I am and so that I can be an authentic person. Amen



15th Prayer: A prayer about being useful

Dear Lord, when you were in the world you were of such great use to many people, giving healing, telling people the good news of eternal life and sharing stories which people could understand at their own level. You also described the emptiness of a religious life that is only upheld but never really lived. So may we find our areas of being useful, in whatever way these show themselves. And do this, knowing that this is your purpose in creating us. Amen

16th Prayer: A prayer about our human failings

Dear Lord, each of us has our human failings by being the person we are, by being affected by our heredity and our early life. Our nature is there in us, and it is our responsibility first to accept that it is as it is, then to manage it with great care and to pray to you to help us do this. We also pray that we may not cause harm or distress by being what we are like. We pray too that new loves and intentions can be sown in

us and transform us over time so that we grow more into the life which leads to the kingdom of heaven. Lord, we need you to help us in this goal. Amen

17th Prayer: A prayer about faith, trust and confidence

Dear Lord, we pray that our faith in you is strong, that our trust in you is absolute and that our confidence in your care for us is a daily source of strength and comfort to us. So may we then be faithful in what we do and in keeping your commandments, be trusting in allowing you to take control over our lives, and be confident that as our lives unfold everything is leading towards what you intend for us. Amen

18th Prayer: A prayer for those who are sick

O Lord, I pray to you about those people who are sick whether that is a sickness in their bodies or their minds or their hearts or their spirits, or their worry about something they are facing in their lives. I pray for them now to you. I hold them up to you for your care and healing. May your will be done with us all.

I pray for the people that I know have their illnesses, hardships or cares. I pray to you for _____ and ask you to be with him/her/them as I know that you are with all of us always. Amen

19th Prayer: A prayer for people who are dying

O Lord, you bring us all home into the spiritual world and its eternity. I pray to you for those people whose lives are drawing to their close here in this world and who will soon awaken in the world beyond this world. Give them quietness and peace; be there with them and bring them gently across, and strengthen them in the feeling and knowledge that this is all well, this is all right, and it is as it should be. And bring us all the joy of knowing that our reunion with those we love is your promise. Amen

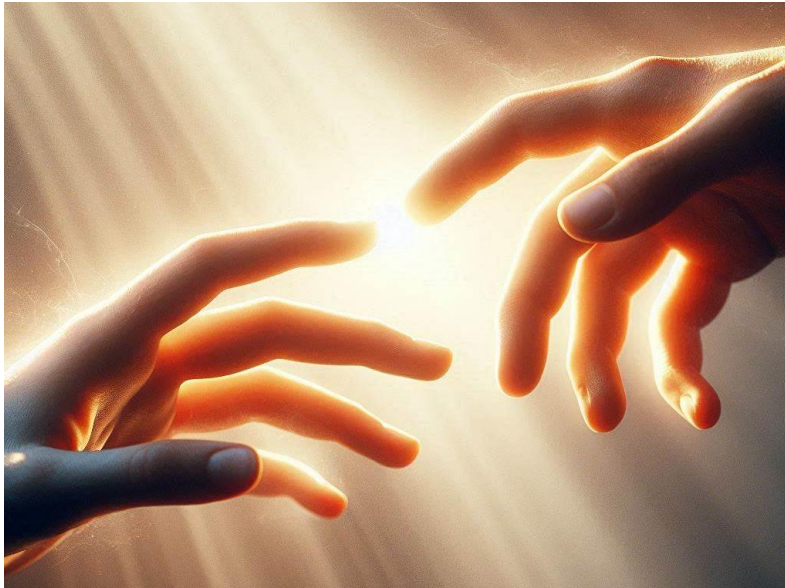
20th Prayer: A prayer for those who govern

Lord Jesus Christ, our heavenly Father, we pray for the people who are in charge of all that goes on in this world, that they are sincere and well-intentioned, that they may have wisdom, and that they are fair and just in all that they do in government. May they realise their responsibilities, may they act accordingly and may they know in their hearts that what they legislate affects the lives of so many people. Amen

21st Prayer: A prayer for those who are stricken

O Lord, my prayer to you is for those who are struck with sudden and devastating changes in their lives, whatever these are. I pray that they may find courage and strength to cope, and that over time their lives may become bearable. I pray for the help of their family and friends and of those who provide help and assistance.

Be with them, Lord in their need. Amen



22nd Prayer: A prayer about natural disasters

O Lord, our Father, you have created a beautiful world for us to live in, yet this world has its shifts, changes and activities. So we regularly hear about earthquakes, floods, cyclones, fires, and other disasters in which many people are killed or made homeless.

We pray for these people in their violent situations and we pray for those organisations, governments and volunteers who work so skilfully and hard to help. We bring them to you prayerfully. Amen

23rd Prayer: A prayer for the church

Lord Jesus Christ, your church on earth, wherever it is, seeks to be a witness to your presence and truth in this world. May its various communities witness this well in all their shared activities.

We ask for your blessing on all church congregations, for them to be faithful to you, to your truth, to the teaching of your Word, to your call to us all, and to all who believe in you. We ask for your blessing on our church in its use, work, fellowship and life. Amen

24th Prayer: A prayer for ministers

Lord Jesus Christ, Father of us all, we pray for all those who are called to minister to people and to lead the churches. May they feel and keep their own commitment. May they speak what is true and base their teaching on your Word. May they give pastoral care and help to all those who need guidance, comfort and forgiveness. And may all ministers take their part well in keeping a sense of what is divine and sacred among people. Bless them and their families in this work to uphold your commandments and to lead people to the good of life. Amen

25th Prayer: A prayer for homes and families

Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for the unity, peace, place and purpose of all the families in the world. Families, and the homes in which they live, are the very foundation of our shared human lives, of our important first years and of our learning to care for each other and show respect for each other. May we not lose sight of how essential this is. We pray for the security which this brings and for the loving that the family provides. We pray that you are present in their closeness and that you are turned to in keeping them enfolded. Amen



26th Prayer: A prayer for children

Lord Jesus Christ, you welcomed children to you and held them lovingly in your arms while others tried to forbid them to come. You set a child in the midst and talked about the kingdom of heaven. Be with every child and with all children so that they may have safe young lives and keep their wonder and innocence in their first years. Be there with them as they grow up and find the truest values and beliefs they will need for their adult lives. Protect them and keep them from harm, risk and danger. Amen

27th Prayer: A prayer for this day today

O Lord, each new day is your gift to us which brings its opportunities and experiences. Each new day gives us the chance to be renewed and start afresh. May today be filled with times in which we enjoy your blessings, in which we learn something that we did not realise yesterday, and may we bring the events and lessons of this day into the needs of tomorrow. Help us not waste the benefits and blessings of each new day but use them well. Amen

28th Prayer: A prayer for our values and standards

Lord Jesus Christ, help us be sure about the values and principles we believe and uphold. Help us avoid becoming narrow and dogmatic but instead to apply our sense

of values and our beliefs into the things of wisdom in our lives and into the human situations we meet and become involved in. Most of all, Lord, may we live by what we believe and value and not live lives which do not reflect what we say we believe. Help us in this personal care and its responsibility. Amen

29th Prayer: A prayer about praying

Lord, you tell us to pray, but we do not always find we can. Help us see the point that praying is talking to you, talking things over and sharing with you what is on our mind and in our heart. Sometimes, for us, such things are not easy to put into words. So help us to develop a regular prayer life and understand that beyond the words you always know what lies in our hearts. For you know what we have need of before we ask and we believe that you hear and answer all our prayers. Amen



30th Prayer: A prayer about Christmas

Almighty God, at Christmas we celebrate the truth that you, our God, came into the world as a little baby. We know that this was for our sake, so that you could be God-with-us. We know that you knew from all eternity that you would need to come and restore the world by your human presence with us and the teachings you gave. May we never exchange that wondrous fact for mere partying but keep alive the reason for this season. Amen

31st Prayer: A prayer about Easter

Lord Jesus, at Easter you rose from death into life and you gave us the truth that love is always triumphant. The meaning of Easter is about renewal and hope and eternal life, and it is all because of your steadfast love which can never be extinguished nor ever fail in its power. Help us understand the humanity of your crucifixion and the divinity of your resurrection, and we pray that you will rise daily in our lives and bring us our salvation. Amen

