WAYS OF PRAYING

Through prayer the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. The Holy Spirit enables our prayers. "Likewise the Spirit helps us with our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

Prayer is vital to faithful worship. Public prayer enables the community at worship to speak and listen collectively to God. Persons may kneel, stand, or sit for prayer, with their eyes either open or closed. Prayers may be led by a layperson—a child, a youth, or an older adult—or a pastor. Corporate prayer, however, should avoid lengthy discourses. Silent prayers, bidding prayers, and prayers of petition are excellent alternatives to a traditional pastoral prayer.

Many ways of praying are found in our United Methodist heritage. From the time of John Wesley we have encouraged both formal, written prayers and free, spontaneous prayers. The prayers and acts of worship in this section witness to the great variety of effective prayer, and they are intended to encourage worship leaders and congregations to find their own styles of speaking and listening to God. Two of these styles are described below.

TONGSUNG KIDO (PRAY ALOUD)

*In Korean congregations, among others, Tongsung Kido is popular and an important part of prayer life. Usually the congregation is given a specific time period, with a common theme of petition or supplication. Then all pray aloud at the same time. The voices of others will not bother them when they concentrate on their own earnest prayers, longing for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.*

THE COLLECT

*The collect, an ancient pattern of prayer, is short and to the point, yet has a rich content. Not only are many collects included in this and other collections of prayers, but persons who learn to pray in this form can quickly and easily compose appropriate prayers for all kinds of occasions. These are the elements of a collect, as illustrated by the traditional Collect for Purity and a contemporary version of it:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *1) Address to God* | Almighty God, | Almighty God, |
|  |  |  |
| *2) God's attribute*  *or acts*  *on which*  *this prayer is based* | unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: | to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. |
|  |  |  |
| *3) The petition*  *itself* | Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, | Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, |
|  |  |  |
| *4) Intended result*  *of the petition* | that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name; | that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, |
|  |  |  |
| *5) Final doxology* | through Christ our Lord. Amen. | through Christ our Lord. Amen. |

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