

Leading Prayers of the People

Updated 03 Mar 2010

In the first letter of Peter, the church is described as the priesthood of all believers. The work of the priesthood is to mediate between God and people and prayer is bringing people's concerns to God. Prayer is part of the work of the church. It invites God to work in the lives of people.

When we pray, we talk with God about situations that concern us, things in our personal lives: the birth of children, the death of loved ones, crises we go through, situations happening in our community, and things we hear on the news: war, natural disaster, elections.

When we pray, we express our feelings to God, our feelings of joy, thanksgiving, anger, doubt, and sorrow.

When we pray, we remind God of his promises in the scriptures, and ask God to act. Hearing scripture read or a sermon preached, may bring to remembrance something that needs to be prayed for. Our prayers could tie things that were said in the scriptures of the day and the sermon.

The Prayers of the People then should reflect what we, as a community, want to tell God.

The person leading the Prayers of the People helps us pray as a worshipping community. People who wish to lead the prayers of the people should let the Incumbent or the Reader Coordinator know and they will be added to the list. Mentoring is available from other people who lead the prayers of the people and a training session is held as required.

From the rubrics p. 190 Book of Alternative Services (BAS), "A deacon or lay member of the community leads the Prayers of the People after the following model. Intercession or thanksgiving may be offered for the Church, the Queen and all in authority, the world, the local community, those in need, and the departed."

Printed prayers are aids to help us pray as a community; the person leading the prayers uses them to help us pray. Extemporaneous prayer is free prayer.

Ideally the person leading the prayers should take some time to prayerfully prepare prayers.

He or she takes the concerns of the community, the Anglican, Indigenous, Diocesan, and Parish Prayer Cycles in the bulletin, Parish Ministry Prayer Cycle, the prayers that people write in the Parish Prayers book, and the forms in the BAS or the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and blends them into the Prayers of the People. The Anglican Cycle of Prayer can be found at www.anglicancommunion.org and the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer can be found at www.dioceseofalgoma.com.

When praying for someone who has died, it is customary to say:

Rest eternal grant unto *him/her*
and let light perpetual shine upon *him/her*.

Leading the Prayers of the People

The notes about 'Voice' and 'Lectern Light and Mike' in [Reading a Lesson](#) apply to Leading the Prayers of the People.

The person leading the Prayers should tell people whether to kneel, sit or stand, and which page to turn to. Pay attention to the introduction to the litany; Litany #6 directs people to stand. Sometimes people have been directed to sit, and then directed to stand. If need be, change the introduction in the litany so that people are directed to sit.

Persons reading prayers should read them prayerfully. Short pauses are okay. Silence allows people to focus their thoughts or clear their mind and pray silently.

If people are invited to say a prayer during the litany, the person leading the prayers invites them to do so. A suggested wording is, "I invite you to make your intercession [or thanksgiving] either silently or aloud." He or she allows an appropriate period of silence so that people have the opportunity to pray, and then concludes with the response for the litany.

Preparing the Prayers of the People using the Book of Alternative Services (BAS)

There are different forms of prayer. The BAS has litanies, a bidding intercession, a responsive intercession and collects. A litany is a series of biddings, each followed by a common response. Litanies are found on pp. 110-127. A bidding is a request to pray for something. "Lord have mercy", or "Lord, Hear our prayer" are two responses; there are others. Also the litanies may be sung, music and directions are found on pp. 915-917.

The person leading the prayers may modify them at his or her own discretion. From the rubrics p. 110 we read, "In the litany, petitions may be altered or omitted according to circumstances. Other petitions may be added." A bidding may be omitted if it is less applicable. Sometimes this is done to shorten the litany. A confession is omitted if one occurs elsewhere in the liturgy.

Biddings may be altering, making them more specific by naming people or situations, ex. Ron our Bishop, Paul our Prime Minister, Dalton our Premier, and Lynn our Mayor. People who are to be baptized or married, or who have died may be added at the appropriate bidding. Sometimes you have to look for a bidding to fit people in.

At the discretion of the person leading the Prayers of the People, the prayer cycles can be inserted before or after the litany or worked into it. In the case of the Prayers for the Candidate in the Baptismal liturgy (p. 155 BAS), these prayer cycles should be inserted between the litany and the concluding collect.

To work the prayer cycles and Parish Prayers into the litany, the person leading the Prayers needs to pay attention to the literary structure of the litany. In the Diocesan cycle of prayer, we are asked to pray for parishes and their clergy. In Litany #3, we can pray, "We pray for Ron our Bishop, for the Very Rev'd Gary Dobinson and for all bishops and other ministers". In biddings where we pray for Thunder Bay, we can add specific situations; for situations in our country and in the world, we can add situations that we hear on the news.

To add a bidding, the form of the litany must first be identified, and then a bidding is composed with the same form. From Litany #3, "We pray for the victims of our society and those who minister to them; that you will be their help and defense." It has 2 clauses. The first clause begins with, "We pray for", and it names someone to pray for. The second clause begins with, "that", and it asks you to pray for them in a specific way. Biddings are added to a litany when there is something special to pray for, but not mentioned in the litany. Litany #3 does not bid us to pray for anyone who has died. We could add, "We pray for N who died and his/her family, that God may grant him/her peace and his/her family comfort."

A Bidding Intercession is #17 found on p. 123. The leader bids people to pray about specific things, then pauses, and then concludes with a collect on the theme of the bidding. The rubrics for the bidding intercession read, "The leader should add particular intentions to each bidding. In the course of silence after each bidding, the people offer their own prayer, either silently or aloud." In the Solemn Intercession liturgy in the Good Friday liturgy, the leader reads the bidding and the Officiant reads the collect.

A Responsive Intercession is #18 on p. 128. Note the rubric, "The penitential section may be omitted." The liturgical principle here is each Eucharist needs only one confession. In this intercession, this confession or the one on p. 191 would be used, unless the Officiant directs otherwise.

Collects are found on pp. 129-132 and 675-684. These prayers focus on different themes such as a inner peace, the royal family or those in affliction.

Preparing the Prayers of the People using the Book of Common Prayer (BCP)

The practice in the BCP is for the person leading the prayers to read prayers called collects. Inviting the congregation to read them may vary this practice.

It is suggested that 3 or 4 collects be read as well as the Prayer Cycles and the Parish Prayers. For Morning Prayer read the Collect for the Clergy and People (p. 13), 2 other collects and conclude with the Prayer of St. Chrysostom (p. 15).

Other collects are found on pp 12-15, 39-61, and 728-736, of which the intercession on p. 57 and the thanksgiving on p. 736 are particularly suitable.

The person leading the prayers may exercise his or her creativity by selecting collects that best reflect the needs of the congregation and the themes reflected in the scriptures and the sermon.

See also

[Prayer](#)

[St. Stephen the Martyr Anglican Church Home Page](#)