



**N**EITHER pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; <sup>21</sup> That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. <sup>22</sup> And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (John 17:20-23)

The above prayer, among others, was uttered by our Lord Jesus Christ on the night of His betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. The central theme of this prayer is that His disciples, both then and now, would be One in Him as He is One in the Father. When we are One in Christ, there is no division or shadow of turning among us. How is this possible? It is possible because we have surrendered our old corrupt and sinful wills and have taken upon us the Will of God by virtue of His unmerited grace. In doing thusly, we are guided by Holy Scripture to agree in all things Holy. Divisions and contentions in churches today are evidence that the particular church is not One in Christ. There is no division in Christ. We agree in the One in whom we have placed our trust, and I might add, our very being.

Before proceeding, I wish to make a disclaimer: *I do not criticize or judge any church manner of worship that is reverent and made in good order, because I believe that is the proper means of Holy worship. The Anglican approach to worship may differ in many points from other sound churches, but I consider it to meet the requirement for reverence, propriety, biblicality, and Holiness. I am not addressing the other forms of worship, good or bad, that other churches may also follow.*

The form of worship of the Reformation Church of England (Anglican) is low and humble in its approach to prayer and worship. It is participatory in nature involving every member of the congregation. It is uniform in its observance of prayer, Bible texts, and liturgy. It is a comfort for me to know that every other Anglican Church in the world is following the same biblical text in preaching, the same prayers, and the same order of worship as my church is doing on any given day. This makes us One Body in Christ.

The prayers are corporate (or Communal). This means that every prayer appeals to the same promises of God and principles of the Gospel that applies to every Christian, every day. There are no prayers for special privileges to individuals except in cases of sickness or hardship. But the prayers are prayed at once by the whole church.

The lectionary provided in the Book of Common Prayer prescribes the texts to be used every worship period. In this way, the entire Bible is studied in order from beginning to end. We are not allowed to deviate from the prescribed lectionary text of the Church Calendar imply because we have a personal preference for a certain book or passage. This keeps the church moving in good order and consistency. We kneel to pray, sit for the reading of the Epistle and preaching, and stand for singing and the reading of the Gospel. Our prayers are all based upon biblical promises and texts. So we actually pray the Will of God for His people. Whatsoever we pray that aligns with the will of God will surely be granted. We are not permitted to alter the worship order as is customary in some churches that have no recognizable established order or liturgy.

There is one prayer that is uttered just before the benediction of the Morning and Evening Prayer Service. These two services are to be observed every day of the week when possible, in church or at the home altar. That prayer is the Prayer of St. Chrysostom:

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom.

**A**LMIGHTY God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests; Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.

ALMIGHTY God : Notice the form of this prayer. It is addressed to Almighty God – there is none as mighty or mightier than the God we worship. “. . . who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee” - We are saved by grace, and the Lord is full of grace. It is His love and mercy that grants us the grace to know and worship Him. Our prayers are agreed together in one accord. “and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests:” Just as the Scriptures say: *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* (Matt 18:19-20) I might add meaning to this text by stating that it is impossible for only two to be gathered together in the name of the Lord, for He will always be the third party of that group.

If we are One in Christ, our prayers will likewise be of one purpose and intent. When the will of God is prayed, that thing SHALL be granted: “. . . Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them.” We may, in our private prayers, oft times pray amiss believing a request is best for our interest and happiness; but God knows better, and like the good Father that He is, He knows what is best for us beyond our own understanding. We may not obtain what we request, but we will surely get what is best for us.

*“ . . . granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting.”* The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Prov 1:7), but it certainly is not the end. The more we know the Lord truly, the more we love Him (in return for that original love with which He loved us). *We love him, because he first loved us.* (1 John 4:19)

The more we love the Lord, the less we will fear Him as an avenger of the wicked; and the more we will fear Him as a Father who has given us all of Himself for our benefit and on whose name we do not wish to bring shame or disgrace as His children.

This prayer of Chrysostom is a prayer of dismissal from our Morning and Evening Prayers; but it is wholly based on biblical principles and precepts. There are some religious who disdain to pray any prayer written down – even the Lord’s Prayer! These aver that the only meaningful prayer must be extemporaneous. REALLY? I have never heard an extemporaneous prayer that did not appeal to some scriptural truth, and even quote it directly from the Bible. I remember one corporate prayer uttered alike by all the disciples present that needed no man’s embellishment, but simply stated the will of the Lord. *23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. 24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. 25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, LORD, SAVE US! OR WE PERISH!. 26 And he saith unto them, **Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?** Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.* (Matt 8:23-26)

What could possibly be wrong from all communicants repeating the same biblically sound prayers as one Body in Christ, and all of one accord? It might be beneficial for our ministers, rather than winging out on uncharted waters in worship, to follow good order and decorum. Christ never hopped about, flailed His arms about, or screamed during His sermons. He taught as One having Authority (which He possessed in full measure). Perhaps we could preach like Him, and according to His Word.

In the New Testament Book of Luke, we observe a sound example of ordered worship in the Temple administration of Zacharias: *And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest’s office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest’s office.* (Luke 1:8-9) Christ fulfilled the many practices of the Temple priest, but the good example for order and reverence remains. That is truly the reformed Anglican form of worship as well.