
McMaster Divinity College
Winter Semester, 2024



The Lord's Prayer and Christian Spirituality

MS 3XL3 (Cert./MTS/MDiv)

MS 5XL5 (DPT)

MS 6XL6 (MA/PhD)

Instructor: M. Knowles

Location: TBA

Schedule: Wednesdays, 2:00–3:50 p.m.

Office: DC 214

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Course Statement

This course will explore Jesus' experience of and teaching about prayer (above all the "Lord's Prayer") as the foundational model for Christian spirituality in general and Christian prayer in particular. Special attention will be given to John's Gospel, within which Jesus' experience of God provides the foundation for the spirituality of his disciples. Students are encouraged to examine their own understanding and practice of Christian spirituality on the basis of this perspective. Consideration will also be given to prayer as it is presented and practised throughout the remainder of the New Testament, in relation to the identity and spirituality of Jesus.

Specializations: Biblical Studies Christian Worldview Pastoral Studies

Course Objectives

Knowing

- ▶ To explore the theological foundations of Christian spirituality as a reflection of the spirituality of Jesus.
- ▶ To examine New Testament evidence regarding the prayer and spiritual practices of Jesus, his first disciples, and the early church.

Being

- ▶ To develop an awareness of spiritual identity and personal spiritual formation as foundational aspects of ministerial leadership.
- ▶ To help students clarify their own spirituality identities and preferred patterns of devotional practice.
- ▶ To function corporately as a community of learning.

Doing

- ▶ To develop skills in the devotional application of scriptural and theological insight
- ▶ To practise a range of spiritual exercises and models of prayer.
- ▶ To develop greater facility in fostering the spiritual growth of fellow disciples.

Lecture Outline and Schedule

- January 10 Backgrounds to New Testament Prayer I:
Prayer in Hebrew Scripture, Synagogue, and Temple
READING: Longenecker, *Into God's Presence*, 3–21, 43–63.
- January 21 Backgrounds to New Testament Prayer II:
Prayer in the Greco-Roman World
READING: Longenecker, *Into God's Presence*, 23–41.
- January 28 “*I in Them and You in Me*”: Prayer in the Gospel of John
READING: Cullmann, *Prayer in the New Testament*, 89–111.
Longenecker, *Into God's Presence*, 155–79.
- January 30 “*Our Father in Heaven*”: Prayer as Theological Re-Orientation
READING: Longenecker, *Into God's Presence*, 132–54.
Exegesis Assignment Due
- February 7 “*Hallowed Be Your Name*”: Prayer and the Name of God
READING: Cullmann, *Prayer in the New Testament*, 16–69.
Optional: Knowles, *Unfolding Mystery of the Divine Name*, 27–49.
- February 14 “*Your Kingdom Come; Your Will Be Done*”: The Spirituality of God's Reign
READING: Koenig, *Rediscovering New Testament Prayer*, 40–65.
- February 21 Reading Week (no class scheduled)
- February 28 Prayer and Spiritual Disciplines
Resources for Prayer and Spiritual Discipline Due/Class Presentations
- March 6 Bread, Debt, Deliverance, and the Challenge of Evil
READING: Longenecker, *Into God's Presence*, 113–31.

Foster, Richard J. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992. MILLS BV 210.2 .F68 1992
Knowles, Michael P. *The Unfolding Mystery of the Divine Name: the God of Sinai in Our Midst*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012. MILLS BS 1245.52 .K56 2012

In addition to the virtual and print collections of McMaster Mills Library, registered students also have access to the online Digital Theological Library: <https://libguides.thedttl.org/home>. Please keep the password confidential.

Assignments % of Final Grade

Written assignments are due at 2:00 p.m. on the due date, and are to be submitted via the Avenue to Learn course website (not via email to the course instructor or Graduate Assistant). In order to avoid late penalties, students are responsible for ensuring that assignments have been successfully uploaded.

Requirements for course assignments differ according to degree programme and specialization. In completing both oral and written assignments, DPT/MA/PhD students will focus on issues that correspond to their respective programmes of research, while Certificate/MTS/MDiv students are expected to identify and emphasize themes relevant to their chosen specialization.

1. READING

- a. Completion of weekly reading assignments (approx. 635 pages total).
- b. The remainder of reading requirements may be selected from the course bibliography and/or from theological, devotional, and exegetical materials that provide background research for written assignments. Programme standards are as follows:

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| Cert./MTS/MDiv | 3,000 pages |
| DPT | 4,000 pages |
| MA/PhD | 8,000 pages |

2. PRAYER JOURNAL

Students in all programmes are required to keep a prayer journal for the duration of the course. Its form and content are at the discretion of the journalist, but may include prayers, meditations, personal reflections, new insights into or answers to prayer, and quotations from other writers, as well as related deliberations upon the spiritual life. While not submitted for grading by itself, material from the journal should, where appropriate, be incorporated into other course assignments.

3. EXEGESIS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

Weight: 25%

Provide a brief exegesis of the Lord's Prayer, both against the background of the spirituality and ministry of Jesus (in the specific context of Second Temple Judaism) and as a model for the spirituality and/or ministry of Jesus' followers today. Additional requirements are as follows.

Professional degree specializations:

- ▶ *Biblical Studies*: compare and interpret the Matthaean and Lukan versions, preferably with reference to the Greek text
- ▶ *Christian Worldview*: address the counter-cultural identity implied by the Lord's Prayer
- ▶ *Pastoral Studies*: discuss the rôle of the Lord's Prayer in pastoral care and congregational development.

Research degrees:

- ▶ DPT students will relate exegesis of the Lord's Prayer to the theory and practice of prayer and Christian spirituality in general, citing relevant background literature where appropriate.
- ▶ MA/PhD students will situate their reading of the prayer (both Synoptic versions + Didache) in relation to the history of interpretation, both ancient and modern, and/or the history of Christian spirituality.

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| Length: | Cert./MTS/MDiv | 1,500 words |
| | DPT | 2,000 words |
| | MA/PhD | 2,500 words |

Due: January 30

4. RESOURCES FOR PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Weight: 35%

This assignment is to be conducted in three parts.

First, review one of the texts from the bibliography of “Classic Works on Prayer and Christian Spirituality” (below). So as to ensure equitable distribution of materials, a sign-up sheet for book selection will be made available on the A2L course website. Instead of reviewing the text in the usual manner, your study should identify and assess:

- a. the scriptural and/or theological foundations of its proposals for the life of prayer,
 - b. its implications for Christian identity in general, and
 - c. the practical exercises that it proposes for a life in communion with God.
- According to this text, how does prayer or spiritual discipline function, and what (if anything) does it achieve? How should we pray, when, why, or for what?

Second, compose an outline for a four-week book study designed to help members of your congregation grasp the essential insights *and practices* that the author commends. Explain how your text could be used to teach about Christian prayer and discipleship in the context of your particular theological or confessional tradition.

Professional degree specializations:

- ▶ *Biblical Studies*: discuss the use of Scriptural resources in conjunction with this text and its proposals for prayer and discipleship.
- ▶ *Christian Worldview*: address the relationship between Christian confession, on the one hand, and the questions, needs, and concerns of contemporary culture, on the other.
- ▶ *Pastoral Studies*: explore the contribution of spiritual disciplines in general and this resource in particular to spiritual direction and identity formation

Research degrees:

- ▶ DPT students will examine the work in question from the perspective of Practice Led Research, proposing amendments to their own spiritual theology, devotional practice, and/or pedagogy, in discussion with appropriate background literature.
- ▶ MA/PhD students will situate the selected text in relation to its literary and historical context, confessional setting, or devotional tradition, citing relevant theological resources that inform its theology and practice.

While only the first two components of this assignment are graded, each student will also offer, *third*, a ten- to fifteen-minute selection (depending on course enrolment) from their proposed book study. Introduce the book as a whole as well as one or two representative passages, so as to share the author's key insights into the life of prayer and discipleship. Creativity and participatory modes of presentation are encouraged.

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|---------|----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Length: | Cert./MTS/MDiv | 2,000 words | Due: February 28 |
| | DPT | 2,500 words | Class presentations: February 28 |
| | MA/PhD | 3,500 words | |

5. RESPONDING TO GOD Weight: 40%

The primary premise of this course is that Jesus' experience of God is paradigmatic for our own, such that "we are being changed into His likeness, from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:17). In other words, Jesus personally models mature spirituality and devotional discipline, as well as enabling us to be like Him. The purpose of this assignment is to reflect in greater depth on the assertion that the life, character, and ministry of Jesus facilitate our own encounter with God.

The format for this assignment will vary by specialization and degree programme. In formulating your response, be specific about the various assumptions, traditions, and denominational norms that inform your thinking, citing (where appropriate) material from your Prayer Journal. Submissions will be graded on the basis of theological acuity, creativity, and practical relevance to Christian discipleship.

a. Professional Degree

i. *Biblical Studies*

In Psalm 56:13, the psalmist writes, "You have delivered my soul from death and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life." Select one biblical book (from either Testament) and explain how you would use it to help fellow disciples "walk before God in the light of life." What does this book say about life as it is to be lived in the presence of God, and how does it help followers of Jesus to conduct themselves day by day in God's presence?

ii. *Christian Worldview*

Making use of both primary and secondary resources, describe a contemporary source of personal or social identity (e.g. nationalism, ethnicity, gender, fashion, finance, sport/health, technology, popular music, gaming, etc.). Compare and contrast this approach with specifically Christian identity and worldview, noting points of consonance/dissonance and proposing ways in which prayer and spiritual discipline can foster mature Christian discipleship that is modelled on and enabled by Christ.

iii. *Pastoral Studies*

Offer a comprehensive assessment of a specific spiritual discipline within Christian tradition. Topics may include (but are not limited to) those discussed by Richard J. Foster in *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978):

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. <i>Inward Disciplines</i> | b. <i>Outward Disciplines</i> | c. <i>Corporate Disciplines</i> |
| i. Meditation | i. Simplicity | i. Confession |
| ii. Prayer | ii. Solitude | ii. Worship |
| iii. Fasting | iii. Submission | iii. Guidance |
| iv. Study | iv. Service | iv. Celebration |

What experience of God does this discipline offer, or what implications for discipleship does it suggest on the basis of the way it represents God? In what way (whether theoretical or practical) is the life of Jesus presented as a model or instrument for the life of faith? How does this discipline convey spiritual benefit to the practitioner? Offer concrete and constructive proposals for the definition and conduct of Christian discipleship within your own confessional tradition and ministry setting.

Length: Cert./MTS/MDiv 2,500 words

Due: March 27

b. DPT

This assignment consists of two parts. First, identify and explain what you perceive to be the most pressing *spiritual* need or concern within contemporary Canadian (or American) society, citing a wide range of cultural artefacts and resources to make your case. Second, discuss appropriate forms of Christian response, giving particular attention to 1) prayer and spiritual discipline; 2) the rôle of Jesus in addressing this need; and 3) your own ministry setting or context.

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|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-----|
| Resources | February 28 | 2,500 words | 35% |
| Responding to God | March 27 | 3,000 words | 40% |
| MA/PhD | | | |
| Prayer Journal | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Exegesis | January 30 | 2,500 words | 25% |
| Resources | February 28 | 3,500 words | 35% |
| Responding to God | March 27 | 5,000 words | 40% |

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary

accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

Style

Stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide>. To assist with composition and completion of assignments, students are encouraged to make use of [grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) (<https://www.grammarly.com>), along with the academic support services provided by McMaster's Student Success Centre (<https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-support>). Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. See also "CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS," below.

Protocols for Live-Streaming/Online Participation

Appropriate etiquette for online participation is set out in the document [Online Classroom Etiquette.pdf](https://is.gd/rZmmwH) (<https://is.gd/rZmmwH>)

Cell Phone/Computer Policy

Students are to refrain from conducting cell phone conversations while class is in session. Should you need to maintain contact with family members and/or your church or ministry, please turn off the ringer so as to avoid disturbing others; upon receipt of an urgent call, you may discretely excuse yourself from the classroom.

The same policy applies to all computer-generated sound schemes, pagers, or other electronic annunciation systems.

Deadlines and Late Submission Penalty

Assignments are to be submitted to the course website on Avenue to Learn, and are due at 2:00 p.m. on the date specified, after which they will be considered late and penalized 1% per calendar day (in whole or in part). The final date for submission of all course assignments is April 10, 2024 (noon). Assignments submitted after this date cannot be accepted for grading or credit.

Disclaimer:

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make revisions up to and including the first day of class.

CLASSIC WORKS ON PRAYER AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Barth, Karl [1886–1968]. *Prayer*. 2nd ed. Ed. Don E. Saliers from the translation of Sara F. Terrien. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985.

Benedict of Nursia [480–543]. *Saint Benedict's Rule*. Trans. Patrick Barry. 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: HiddenSpring, 2004.

Bernard of Clairvaux [1090–1153]. *On Loving God*. Trans. Robert Walton. Washington: Cistercian, 1974.

Catherine of Siena [1347–1380]. *The Dialogue*. Trans. Suzanne Noffke. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist, 1980.

Forsyth, P. T. [1848–1921]. *The Soul of Prayer*. London: Independent, 1949.

Grou, Jean Nicolas [1731–1803]. *How to Pray: The Chapters on Prayer from The School of Jesus Christ*. London: Clarke, [1955, 1964].

Guyon, Jeanne Marie Bouvier de La Motte [1648–1717]. "A Short and Easy Method of Prayer Which All Can Practice Very Easily and Through Which All Can Arrive in a Short Time to a High Perfection," in *Jeanne Guyon: Selected Writings*. Trans. and ed. Dianne Guenin-Lelle and Ronney Mourad. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist, 2012.

- Hallesby, Ole [1879–1971]. *Prayer*. Tr. C. J. Carlesen. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1959 [1931].
- Ignatius of Loyola [1491–1556]. *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola*. Resources in Religion 3. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987.
- Julian of Norwich [1342–1416]. *Showings [= Revelations of Divine Love]*. Trans. Edmund College and James Walsh. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist, 1978.
- Kelly, Thomas R. [1893–1941]. *A Testament of Devotion*. New York: Harper & Row, 1941.
- à Kempis, Thomas [1380–1471]. *The Imitation of Christ*. Trans. William C. Creasy. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1989.
- Lewis, C. S. [1898–1963]. *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*. London: Geoffrey Bles, [1964].
- Merton, Thomas [1915–1968]. *Contemplative Prayer*. New York: Doubleday Image, 1969.
- Murray, Andrew [1828–1917]. *With Christ in the School of Prayer: Thoughts on Our Training for the Ministry of Intercession*. Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1953.
- Origen (184/185 – 253/254). “On Prayer.” In *Origen*. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist, 1979. Pp. 81–170.
- Rahner, Karl [1904–1984]. *On Prayer*. New York: Paulist, 1968.
- Rolle, Richard [1290–1349]. *The Fire of Love*. New York: Penguin, 1972.
- Smith, Hannah Whitall [1832–1911]. *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*. Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1952.
- Underhill, Evelyn [1875–1941]. *Worship*. [New York] Harper , 1937.

Students may make use of alternative scholarly
(not abridged) editions of these texts, as available

CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Grading of written materials will be based on the following general criteria

| Grade Range | Content | Argument | Presentation |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 90–100 A+ 85–89 A 80–84 A– | Mastery of subject matter; creativity and individualized integration of insights and their relationships; exceeds required elements | Clear, logical structure; with comprehensive introduction, persuasive argumentation, and innovative conclusions | Detailed adherence to relevant style for formatting of text, notes, and bibliography; no errors of grammar or syntax; elegant presentation |
| 77–79 B+ 73–76 B 70–72 B– | Above-average grasp of principles and concepts, and their inter-relationship; completion of all required elements | Coherent structure and consistent argumentation; well-stated introduction and conclusion | General adherence to relevant style and format; few errors of grammar or syntax |
| 67–69 C+ 63–66 C 60–62 C– | Adequate understanding of theoretical foundations; minimal completion of required elements | Rudimentary structure; minimal introductory and concluding statements | Significant errors of grammar, syntax, or style |
| 57–59 D+ 53–56 D 50–52 D– | Low level of comprehension; required elements incomplete or missing | Lack of coherence or structure in argumentation; no introduction or conclusion | Abundant grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic errors |
| 0–49% F | Inability to grasp basic concepts; required elements missing | Incomprehensible or illogical structure and argumentation | Failure to follow stylistic guidelines; incomprehensible syntax |
| Comments | | | |