

Matthew Henry's Method of Prayer

Intercession, or Address and Supplication to God for Others

OUR Lord Jesus hath taught us to pray, not only with, but for others: And the apostle hath appointed us to make supplication for all saints (Ephesians 6:18); and many of his prayers in his epistles are for his friends: And we must not think that when we are in this part of prayer, we may let fall our fervency, and be more indifferent, because we ourselves are not immediately concerned in it, but rather let a holy fire of love both to God and man here, make our devotions yet more warm and lively.

1. We must pray for the whole world of mankind, the lost world; and thus we must honour all men, and according to our capacity do good to all men. (1 Peter 2:17; Galatians 6:10).

We pray, as we are taught, for all men, believing that this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, and of Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:1, 3, 4, 6).

O look with compassion upon the world that lies in wickedness, and let the prince of this world be cast out, that has blinded their minds (1 John 5:19; John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

O let thy way be known upon earth, that barbarous nations may be civilized, and those that live without God in the world may be brought to the service of the living God; and thus let thy saving health be known unto all nations: Let the people praise thee, O God, yea let all the people praise thee: O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy, for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth (Psalm 67:2; Ephesians 2:12; Psalm 67:3, 4).

O let thy salvation and thy righteousness be

openly shewed in the sight of the heathen, and let all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God (Psalm 98:2, 3).

O give thy Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession! For thou hast said, It is a light thing for him to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, but thou wilt give him for a light to the Gentiles (Psalm 2:8; Isaiah 49:6).

Let all the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ (Revelation 11:15).

2. For the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts, and the enlargement of the Church, by the bringing in of many to it.

O let the gospel be preached unto every creature; for how shall men believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without preachers? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? and who shall send forth labourers, but the Lord of the harvest? (Mark 16:15; Romans 10:14, 15; Matthew 9:38).

Let the people which sit in darkness see a great light, and to them which sit in the region and shadow of death, let light spring up (Matthew 4:16).

Add unto thy church daily such as shall be saved; Enlarge the place of its tent, lengthen its cords, and strengthen its stakes (Acts 2:47; Isaiah 54:2).

Bring thy seed from the east, and gather them from the west; say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back: Bring thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth. Let them come with acceptance to thine altar, and glorify the house of thy glory; Let them fly as a cloud, and as the

doves to their windows (Isaiah 43:5, 6; Isaiah 60:7, 8).

In every place let incense be offered to thy name, and pure offerings; And from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, let thy name be great among the Gentiles; and let the offering up of the Gentiles be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost (Malachi 1:11. Romans 15:16).

O let the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9).

3. For the conversion of the Jews.

Let the branches which are broken off not abide still in unbelief, but be grafted in again into their own olive tree. And though blindness is in part happened to Israel, yet let the fullness of the Gentiles come in, and let all Israel be saved (Romans 11:17, 23-26).

Let them be made to look unto him whom they have pierced, and that they may turn to the Lord, let the veil which is upon their hearts be taken away (Zechariah 12:10; 2 Corinthians 3:15, 16).

4. For the Eastern Churches, that are groaning under the yoke of Mahometan tyranny.

Let the churches of Asia, that were golden candlesticks, which the Lord Jesus delighted to walk in the midst of, be again made so (Revelation 1:11, 12; Revelation 2:1).

Restore unto them their liberties as at the first, and their privileges as at the beginning; purely purge away their dross, and take away all their tin, and turn again their captivity as the streams in the south (Isaiah 1:26, 25; Psalm 126:4).

5. For the churches in the Plantations (perhaps today reference would be made to the Commonwealth).

Be thou the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of those that are afar off beyond the sea; And let them have the blessing which came upon

the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren, even to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills (Psalm 65:5; Genesis 49:26).

Create peace to those that are afar off, as well as to those that are nigh (Isaiah 57:19).

And let those that suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand, call the people to the mountain, that they may offer sacrifices of righteousness (Deuteronomy 33:19).

6. For the universal Church, wherever dispersed, and for all the interests of it.

Our heart's desire and prayer to God for the gospel Israel, is that it may be saved (Romans 10:1).

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces; for our brethren and companion's sakes we will now say, Peace be within her (Psalm 51:18; Psalm 122:7, 8).

O that we may see the good of the gospel Jerusalem, all the days of our life, and peace upon Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust to that (Psalm 128:5, 6; Isaiah 14:32).

Save thy people, O Lord, and bless thine heritage: Feed them also, and lift them up for ever. Give strength unto thy people, and bless thy people with peace; with thy favour do thou compass them as with a shield (Psalm 28:9; 29:11; 5:12).

Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; for thou knowest them that are thine; and give to all that name the name of Christ to depart from iniquity (Ephesians 6:24; 2 Timothy 2:19).

We pray for all that believe in Christ, that they all may be one; And since there is one body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all,

give to all Christians to be of one heart, and one way (John 17:20, 21; Ephesians 4:4, 5, 6; Jeremiah 32:39).

Let the word of the Lord in all places, have a free course, and let it be glorified. (2 Thessalonians 3:1).

7. For the conviction and conversion of atheists, deists, and infidels, and of all that are out of the way of truth, and of profane scoffers, and those that disgrace Christianity by their vicious and immoral lives.

Teach transgressors thy ways, and let sinners be converted unto thee (Psalm 51:13).

O give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, the truth as it is in Jesus, the truth which is according to godliness, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil (2 Timothy 2:25; Ephesians 4:21; Titus 1:1; 2 Timothy 2:26).

Let those that are as sheep going astray return to Jesus Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (1 Peter 2:25).

Shew those fools their folly and misery, that have said in their hearts there is no God, and that are corrupt, and have done abominable work (Psalm 14:1).

Lord, maintain the honour of the scripture, the law and the testimony, and convince those who speak not according to that word, that it is because there is no light in them; magnify that word above all thy name; magnify the law, magnify the gospel, and make both honourable (Isaiah 8:20; Psalm 138:2; Isaiah 42:21).

Let those that will not be won by the word, be won by the conversation of Christians, which we beg may be such in everything, that they who believe not may be convinced of all, and judged of all, and may be brought to worship God, and to report that God is with them of a truth (1 Peter 3:1; 1 Corinthians 14:24, 25).

8. For the amending of everything that is amiss in the Church, the reviving of primitive Christianity, and the

power of godliness, and in order thereunto the pouring out of the Spirit.

Lord, Let thy Spirit be poured out upon thy churches from on high, and then the wilderness shall become a fruitful field, then judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it (Isaiah 32:1; Psalm 94:15).

Let what is wanting be set in order, and let every plant that is not of our heavenly Father's planting, be plucked up (Titus 1:5; Matthew 15:13).

Let the Lord whom we seek come to his temple like a refiner's fire, and fuller's sope, and let him purify the sons of Levi, and all the seed of Israel, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years (Malachi 3:1-4).

Let pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, flourish and prevail everywhere, that kingdom of God among men, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. O revive this work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, and let our times be times of reformation (James 1:27; Romans 14:17; Habakkuk 3:2; Hebrews 9:10).

9. For the breaking of the power of the enemies of the Church, and the defeating of all their designs against her.

Let all that set themselves, and take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, that would break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from them, imagine a vain thing. Let him that sits in heaven laugh at them, and have them in derision; speak unto them in thy wrath, and vex them in thy sore displeasure. Give them, O Lord: what wilt thou give them? Give them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts (Psalm 2:1-5; Hosea 9:14).

O our God, make them like a wheel, and as stubble before the wind. Fill their faces with shame,

that they may seek thy name, O Lord, and that men may know, that thou whose name is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth (Psalm 83:13, 16, 18).

Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men, and wherein the proud enemies of thy church deal proudly, make it to appear that thou art above them (Psalm 9:20; Exodus 18:11).

Let them be confounded and turned back that hate Zion, and be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth before it groweth up (Psalm 129:5, 6).

Let no weapon formed against thy church prosper, and let every tongue that riseth against it in judgment be condemned (Isaiah 54:17).

Make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people, and let all that burden themselves with it be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth should be gathered together against it; so let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goes forth in his strength (Zechariah 12:3; Judges 5:31).

Lord, let the man of sin be consumed with the spirit of thy mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of thy coming: And let those be undeceived that have been long under the power of strong delusions to believe a lie, and let them receive the truth in the love of it (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 8, 11, 10).

Let Babylon fall, and sink like a mill-stone into the sea: And let the kings of the earth, that have given their power and honour to the beast, be wrought upon at length to bring it into the new Jerusalem (Revelation 18:2, 21; Revelation 17:17; Revelation 21:24).

10. For the relief of suffering churches, and the support, comfort, and deliverance of all that are persecuted for righteousness.

We desire in our prayers to remember them that

are in bonds for the testimony of Jesus, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body. O send from above, and deliver them from those that hate them, and bring them forth into a large place (Hebrews 13:3; Psalm 18:16, 17, 19).

O let not the rod of the wicked rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity (Psalm 125:3).

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, as in the generations of old, and make the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over (Isaiah 51:9, 10).

For the oppression of the poor and the sighing of the needy, now do thou arise, O Lord, and set them in safety from them that puff at them (Psalm 12:5).

O strengthen the patience and faith of thy suffering saints, that they may hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord (Revelation 13:10; Lamentations 3:26).

O let the year of thy redeemed come, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion (Isaiah 63:4; Isaiah 34:8).

O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion; and when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad (Psalm 14:7).

O let not the oppressed return ashamed, but let the poor and needy praise thy name (Psalm 74:21).

Lord, arise, and have mercy upon Zion, and let the time to favour her, yea the set time come; yea let the Lord build up Zion, and appear in his glory. Lord, regard the prayer of the destitute, and do not despise their prayer (Psalm 102:13, 16, 17).

O Lord God, cease we beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. O cause thy face

to shine upon that part of thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake (Amos 7:5. Daniel 9:17).

Let the sorrowful sighing of thy prisoners come before thee, and according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that for thy name's sake are appointed to die (Psalm 79:11).

Let those whose teachers are removed into

corners, again see their teachers, though they have the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction (Isaiah 30:20).