

# TRINITARIAN PRAYER

## John 14:15-21

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

# **The Bible and the Trinity**

A Prayer of William Penn's:

*O Lord, help me not to despise or oppose  
What I do not understand.*

The Trinity is difficult to understand.

Some sects and cults have chose to discard it.  
But it is Jesus himself who indicates its reality.

The Trinity is a Theological Mystery:

*Something that is revealed as true,  
but remains unknown to us how it exists.*

God is triune.

God is simultaneously three and one.

We believe God is triune.

It is in our songs and creeds.

So what?

## The Name of God

What happens when you address someone by the wrong name? (Illustration)

What happens in our prayers when we conceive of God with a distortion?

God doesn't get mad, he still loves us but our vision of him remains incomplete.

He wants us to know him.

The theologian Karl Barth said:

*The Christian name of God is: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

So how do we pray to a triune God?

## Seeing God

We need to ask ourselves how we see God.  
Intellectually, Emotionally, Imagistically.

Each person of the Trinity:

Father, Son, Spirit

Who do we feel the most affinity towards?

Who do we feel most distant from?

Sometimes a picture will help:



This is the orthodox icon of the Trinity.  
(Understand that icons are not idols - they serve to help us contemplate and are not objects of worship in themselves.)

The Trinity is in relationship with each other always. (figures look to one another)

The perspective of the icon is in reverse perspective, inviting us into the divine relationship and conversation.

This then, is what it means to pray to God: to be in relationship with the triune God, to be with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It does indeed require a sanctified imagination.

## **Understanding of Triune Prayer**

In observing the Scriptures,  
Jesus teaches us to pray to the Father.

We also know that he says that no one comes  
to the Father except through him.

He goes further to tell us that the Spirit will  
guide us.

Therefore:

We pray to the Father

Through the Son

In the Spirit

We can of course pray to the Son and Spirit  
directly. (Talking to Jesus, 'Come Holy Spirit')

## **A Model of Trinitarian Prayer**

Theologian N.T. Wright suggests this prayer:

Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth:  
*Set up your kingdom in our midst.*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God:  
*Have mercy upon me, a sinner.*

Holy Spirit, breath of the Living God:  
*Renew me and all the world.*

We are to address the Trinity.

God the Father, God the Son & God the Spirit.

It is approaching God as Trinity that the depth of our relationship with him increases along with the awareness of how far we have to go!

## **Exercise:**

Prayers to the Father

Prayers to the Son

Prayers to the Spirit

## **Related Topics:**

Sign of the Cross

The Work of the Holy Spirit