THE QUESTION

Did the early Christians pray to Jesus as well as to the Father?

Asked by a THF member on June 26, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 8 numbered quotations · the 33 early Christian passages and 110 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/did-the-early-christians-pray-to-jesus-as-well-as-to-the-father

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

Mostly they prayed to the Father through Jesus Christ, as Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer. But Cyprian also tells believers to plead with the Lord Jesus himself and then through him with the Father, calling Christ our advocate and our God. Other writers expect Christ to hear and answer the church's prayers.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
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POINT 1 OF 7

Jesus taught prayer to the Father

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tatian's harmony of the Gospels keeps Jesus' teaching on prayer. Jesus tells his disciples to pray to their Father in secret and gives them the Lord's Prayer, which is addressed to the Father in heaven.

1

> “But you, when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you openly.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tatian,** *Diatessaron* 9 (c. 150–180 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 8, page 6 **Read it in the library ›**

POINT 2 OF 7

The Didache: pray three times daily

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Didache, a very early church manual, tells believers to pray the Lord's Prayer as the Lord commanded in his Gospel, and to do so three times a day. The prayer is spoken to the Father.

2

> “Instead, as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, pray like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.”
>
> *later in the same passage*
>
> “Pray like this three times a day.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Didache,** *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 8 (c. 50–120 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 1, page 6 **Read it in the library ›**

POINT 3 OF 7

Clement prayed to God through Jesus Christ

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement of Rome closes his letter with a prayer to God. He asks God to bless every soul that calls on his name, and he offers glory to God through Jesus Christ, whom he calls our High Priest and Protector.

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3 “May God, who sees all things, and who is the Ruler of all spirits and the Lord of all flesh—who chose our Lord Jesus Christ and us through Him to be a special people—grant to every soul that calls upon His glorious and holy Name, faith, fear, peace, patience, long-suffering, self-control, purity, and sobriety, to the well-pleasing of His Name, through our High Priest and Protector, Jesus Christ, by whom be to Him glory, majesty, power, and honor, both now and forevermore.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 33, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 7

Cyprian: ask the Father in Christ's name

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian says we pray best when we use the words Jesus gave, so the Father hears his Son's words. He ties this to Jesus' promise that the Father gives whatever we ask in his name, and calls Christ our Advocate.

4 “Let the Father recognize the words of His Son when we pray. And let Him who dwells within our breast also dwell in our voice.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Treatises* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 22, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 7

Cyprian: plead with the Lord Jesus himself

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Here Cyprian speaks plainly of praying to Christ. Because Jesus prayed for us, we should first plead with the Lord himself and then, through him, with the Father. He calls Jesus Christ our advocate, intercessor, Lord and God.

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5

"But if for us and for our sins He both labored and kept watch and prayed, how much more ought we to be persistent in prayer; and first of all to pray and plead with the Lord Himself, and then through Him to make satisfaction to God the Father."

later in the same passage

"We have an advocate and an intercessor for our sins, Jesus Christ the Lord and our God, if only we repent of our past sins, and confess and acknowledge the sins by which we now offend the Lord, and for the future commit ourselves to walk in His ways and to fear His commandments."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 20, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 7

Christ is present to answer the church's prayer

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Ignatius says that where one or two pray, Christ is among them, and the prayer of the bishop and the whole church will gain its requests in Christ. An early liturgy likewise asks that Christ listen to the prayers offered.

6

"For if the prayer of one or two is so powerful that Christ is among them, how much more will the prayer of the bishop and the whole Church, in harmony with God, succeed in granting all their requests in Christ!"

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 4, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

7

"May Christ listen to your prayers, be pleased with your sacrifice, receive your offering, honor your priesthood, and grant us, through your mediation, the pardon of our offenses and the forgiveness of our sins, through His grace and mercies forever."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Early Liturgies,** *Liturgy of Adaeus and Maris* 1 (c. 200–400 AD) **Source 15, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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POINT 7 OF 7

Church prayers went to God through Christ

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

A later church order shows the normal pattern of public prayer. The people pray to God through his Christ, for the church, its leaders, rulers and the departed, and dedicate themselves to God through Christ.

8

> "Let us continue to pray to God through His Christ. Let us ask Him, concerning the gift that is offered to the Lord God, that the good God will accept it through the mediation of His Christ on His heavenly altar, as a sweet-smelling fragrance."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** **Source 24, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
(c. 250–380 AD)
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don't tell us

- Most of these passages show prayer to the Father through Christ; only a few speak of praying to Christ directly.
- The clearest words about pleading with Christ himself come from Cyprian in the third century, not from the earliest writers.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 33 early Christian passages and 110 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–33, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 34–66, in Bible order), then 77 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF's updated English unless marked "1885 English" (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). "… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

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EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *33 passages from 14 writers*

Didache, *c. 50–120 AD · source 1*

1 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 8 (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** “pray as the hypocrites; but as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, thus pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name… [continues online] **read ›**

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · sources 2–3*

2 *Shepherd* “pray to God, and He will heal your sins, and the sins of your whole house, and of all the saints… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Shepherd* (1885 English) “He will never leave you, but fulfil the request of your soul… [continues online] **read ›**

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 4–7*

4 *Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians* (1885 English) **Quote 6, page 4** “if the prayer of one or two possesses such power that Christ stands in the midst of them, how much more will the prayer of the bishop and of the… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Epistle to the Trallians* (1885 English; on point 6) “the Father is faithful in Jesus Christ to fulfil both mine and your petitions: in whom may ye be found unblameable… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English) “I enjoy your prayers! Pray ye that I may attain to Jesus… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Epistle to the Romans* (1885 English; on point 5) “Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be found a sacrifice [to God… [continues online] **read ›**

Tatian, *c. 150–180 AD · sources 8–9*

8 *Diatessaron* 9 **Quote 1, page 2** “you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand in the synagogues and at the corners of the marketplaces to pray, so that men may see them… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *Diatessaron* 33 (1885 English; on point 1) “your Father which is in heaven will 17 forgive you also your wrong-doings… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · source 10*

10 *Against Heresies: Book II* (1885 English) “directing her prayers to the Lord, who made all things, in a pure, sincere, and straightforward spirit, and calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, she has been… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 11–12*

11 *On Prayer* 14 (1885 English; on point 5) “taking our model from the Lord's passion even in prayer we confess to Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

12 *Against Marcion* 20 to the nations, a prince and commander to the nations; nations which do not know You shall invoke You, and peoples shall run together to You." Isaiah 55:4-5… [continues online] **read ›**

Early Liturgies, *c. 200–400 AD · sources 13–15*

13 *Divine Liturgy of St. Mark* 1 (on point 7) “Sovereign and Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Divine Liturgy of St. Mark* 1 (1885 English; on point 7) “Sovereign and Almighty God, the Father of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, we pray and beseech You to defend in Your good mercy our most holy and blessed… [continues online] **read ›**

15 *Liturgy of Adaeus and Maris* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 4** “Christ listen to your prayers, and be pleased with your sacrifice, receive your oblation, and honour your priesthood, and grant unto us, through your mediation, the pardon of our offenses… [continues online] **read ›**

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Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · sources 16–18*

16 *Commentary on Matthew* 11 (1885 English) “he will not sink because he will call upon Jesus with loud voice, and will say to Him, Lord, save me… [continues online] **read ›**

17 *Against Celsus* 26 (on point 5) “Our duty is to pray to the Most High God alone, and to the Only-begotten, the First-born of the whole creation, and to ask Him, as our High… [continues online] **read ›**

18 *Against Celsus* 12 (1885 English) “they pay excessive reverence to one who has but lately appeared among men, and they think it no offense against God if they worship also His servant… [continues online] **read ›**

Novatian, *c. 240–258 AD · source 19*

19 *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* 22 “every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, in the glory of God the Father… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 20–23*

20 *Epistles* **Quote 5, page 4** “Let us pray urgently and groan with constant petitions. For know, beloved brothers, that not long ago I was reproached for this also in a vision: we were sleepy in… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Treatises* (on point 2) for us, beloved brothers, besides the prayer hours observed long ago, both the times and the sacred rites have now increased in number. For we must also pray in the… [continues online] **read ›**

22 *Treatises* (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** “is a loving and friendly prayer to beseech God with His own word, to come up to His ears in the prayer of Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Treatises* (1885 English; on point 4) “this manner, says He, pray: Our Father, which art in heaven… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 24–30*

24 *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quote 8, page 5** “us continue to pray to God through His Christ. Let us ask Him, concerning the gift that is offered to the Lord God, that the good God will accept it… [continues online] **read ›**

25 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 2) “as the Lord has appointed us in the Gospel, so pray: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Your name… [continues online] **read ›**

26 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 7) and piety. Let us pray for those who bear fruit in the holy Church and give alms to the needy. And let us pray for those who offer sacrifices and… [continues online] **read ›**

27 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 7) them those desires of their hearts that are for their good, and reveal to them the Gospel of His Christ. May He give them light and understanding, instruct them in… [continues online] **read ›**

28 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 7) “But let him pray thus after the foregoing prayer, and say: O God Almighty, the Father of Your Christ, Your only begotten Son, give me a body undefiled, a heart… [continues online] **read ›**

29 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 7) “up, and bow your heads to God through His Christ, and receive the blessings.” Let the bishop then add this prayer… [continues online] **read ›**

30 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 1) But let the one who is to be baptized be free from all wrongdoing. Let him be one who has stopped practicing sin, a friend of God, an enemy of… [continues online] **read ›**

Archelaus, *c. 270–300 AD · source 31*

31 *Disputation with Manes* 1 (on point 1) “To whom, then, did the Lord Jesus address Himself, when in… [continues online] **read ›**

Arnobius, *c. 290–330 AD · source 32*

32 *Against the Heathen* 1 yet, you who laugh because we worship one who died a shameful death—do you not also honor Father Liber by dedicating shrines to him, though he was torn limb… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Rome · *source 33*

33 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English) **Quote 3, page 3** “God, who seeth all things, and who is the Ruler of all spirits and the Lord of all flesh—who chose our Lord Jesus Christ and us through Him to… [continues online] **read ›**

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THE BIBLE *33 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

34 **Matthew 6:6** But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. **read ›**

35 **Matthew 6:8** Therefore do not be like them, for your Father knows what things you need before you ask him. **read ›**

36 **Matthew 6:9** Therefore pray like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. **read ›**

37 **Matthew 8:25** The disciples came to him and woke him up, saying, “Save us, Lord! We are dying!” **read ›**

38 **Matthew 15:25** But she came and worshiped him, saying, “Lord, help me.” **read ›**

39 **Matthew 26:36** Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go there and pray.” **read ›**

40 **Matthew 26:39** He went forward a little, fell on his face, and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not what I desire, but what you desire.” **read ›**

41 **Matthew 26:42** Again he went away a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cup cannot pass from me unless I drink it, let your will be done.” **read ›**

42 **Mark 1:35** Early in the morning, while it was still dark, he rose up and went out, and departed into a deserted place, and prayed there. **read ›**

43 **Mark 10:49** Jesus stopped and ordered that he be called. They called the blind man, saying, “Take courage! Rise; he is calling you.” **read ›**

44 **Mark 11:25** Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father, who is in heaven, may also forgive you your transgressions. **read ›**

45 **Luke 11:1** When he finished praying in a certain place, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples.” **read ›**

46 **Luke 11:2** He said to them, “When you pray, say, ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your kingdom come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. **read ›**

47 **Luke 17:13** They lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” **read ›**

48 **Luke 22:41** He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and he knelt down and prayed, **read ›**

49 **Luke 22:46** and said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.” **read ›**

50 **John 1:6** There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. **read ›**

51 **John 1:9** That was the true light, which gives light to every man coming into the world. **read ›**

52 **John 14:9** Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you such a long time, and do you not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. How do you say, ‘Show us the Father’? **read ›**

53 **John 14:10** Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words I speak to you I do not speak of myself; the Father who remains in me does the works. **read ›**

54 **John 16:23** In that day you will ask me no questions. Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you may ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. **read ›**

55 **John 16:26** In that day you will ask in my name; and I do not say to you that I will pray to the Father for you, **read ›**

56 **John 17:1** Jesus spoke these things, lifted his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, so that your Son also may glorify you, **read ›**

57 **Acts 2:21** And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. **read ›**

58 **Acts 7:59** They stoned Stephen as he called out, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” **read ›**

59 **Romans 10:13** For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. **read ›**

60 **1 Corinthians 1:13** Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul? **read ›**

61 **1 Corinthians 3:4** For when one says, “I am Paul’s,” and another, “I am Apollos’s,” are you not fleshly? **read ›**

62 **Ephesians 3:14** For this cause, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **read ›**

63 **Colossians 1:3** We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying for you, **read ›**

64 **1 Thessalonians 3:11** Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. **read ›**

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65 **1 Timothy 2:2** for kings and all who are in high places, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and reverence. **read ›**

66 **Hebrews 5:7** He, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and petitions with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *77 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

2 Samuel 7:12

Job 1:6

Psalms 24:4 · 45:6

Isaiah 58:6

Jeremiah 24:1 · 29:12

Ezekiel 1:28

Zechariah 3:1

Matthew 5:8 · 5:28 · 6:5 · 6:11 · 6:13 · 6:32 · 7:7 · 14:22 · 14:27 · 14:30 · 14:31 · 15:16 · 19:29 · 21:9 · 21:22 · 23:21 · 26:45

Mark 5:9 · 14:19

Luke 2:14 · 10:18 · 11:3 · 11:48 · 15:7 · 18:1

John 2:19 · 8:58 · 10:30 · 14:11 · 19:34

Acts 3:1 · 4:32 · 10:9 · 12:13 · 17:24

Romans 2:7 · 6:3 · 6:8 · 13:12 · 14:8 · 15:24 · 16:7 · 16:20

1 Corinthians 3:16 · 10:13

2 Corinthians 4:14 · 6:16 · 7:1

Galatians 1:19

Ephesians 1:4 · 2:12 · 3:9

Philippians 2:6 · 4:3

Colossians 2:9 · 2:13 · 3:2

2 Thessalonians 2:4

Titus 2:14

Hebrews 1:3

James 1:5 · 1:6 · 1:8

2 Peter 3:9

1 John 5:14

Revelation 4:1 · 17:3 · 21:10

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Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

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THE END OF THIS STUDY