THE QUESTION

Did the early Christians pray to Jesus himself?

Asked by a THF member on May 3, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 11 numbered quotations · the 27 early Christian passages and 76 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-himself

The short answer *From the text: says what the passages say*

Yes. Early writers and prayers speak to Christ directly: a liturgy praises and adores him by name, Ignatius asks the church to pray to Christ, and Tertullian says Christians confess to Christ. At the same time, the church's set prayers were mostly offered to the Father through Christ, who also pleads for us.

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.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith's library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

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POINT 1 OF 8

An early liturgy adores Jesus by name

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

This line from an ancient Eastern liturgy speaks straight to Jesus. It gives him praise and adoration, the kind of worship offered to God, and it says this goes on forever.

1 “Praise be to Your holy name, Lord Jesus Christ, and adoration to Your majesty, always and forever. Amen.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Early Liturgies,** *Liturgy of Adaeus and Maris* 1 (c. 200–400 AD) **Source 12, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 8

Ignatius asks believers to pray to Christ

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

On his way to martyrdom, Ignatius asks the Roman Christians to pray to Christ on his behalf. He treats prayer to Christ as a normal thing for a church to do.

2 “Pray to Christ for me, that by these means I may be found a sacrifice to God.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle to the Romans* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 2, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 3 OF 8

Tertullian says Christians confess to Christ

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

In his work on prayer, Tertullian describes Christians praying with hands spread out like the cross. He says that in prayer they make their confession to Christ.

3 “We, however, not only raise our hands, but even spread them out. And, taking our pattern from the Lord's suffering even in prayer, we make our confession to Christ.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On Prayer* 14 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 10, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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POINT 4 OF 8

Sinners are urged to implore Christ the King

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

Commodianus speaks of Christ as the King whom deserters have fought against. He tells the one who has fallen to run to him, plead with him and confess to him on bended knee.

4 “Seek the refuge of the King, if you have been delinquent. Implore Him. Confess to Him, prostrate before Him. He will grant all things, for all our things are also His.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Commodianus,** *Writings* (c. 250–300 AD) *THF's updated English* **Source 25, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**

POINT 5 OF 8

Asking life from the Son of God

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

Clement of Alexandria describes the rich young man as asking eternal life from the only One able to give it. He says the man pleads with the Son of God himself.

5 “He therefore asks for it from the only One able to give it; and toward the law he carries himself with confidence, but the Son of God he supplicates.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* 8 (c. 190–215 AD) *THF's updated English* **Source 7, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**

POINT 6 OF 8

Most set prayers went to the Father

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

The Didache gives the Lord's Prayer, addressed to the Father, to be prayed three times a day. Cyprian urges believers to use Christ's own words, so the Father hears his Son's voice in our prayer.

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6 “Instead, as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, pray like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Didache,** *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 8 (c. 50–120 AD) **Source 1, page 5** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

7 “Let the Father recognize the words of His Son when we pray.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Treatises* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 15, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 8

Prayer to the Father goes through Christ

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

Church prayers in the Apostolic Constitutions ask the Father through Christ, yet still call him God and Savior. Irenaeus says the church makes its offerings to God through Jesus Christ.

8 “And restore them to Your holy Church, to their former dignity and honor, through Christ our God and Savior, by whom glory and adoration be to You, in the Holy Spirit, forever.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 23, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

9 “Therefore, since the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ to the omnipotent God, He rightly says on both these grounds, “And in every place, incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice.””

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 4, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 8 OF 8

Christ himself pleads for us

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

Tertullian calls Christ the one who successfully pleads with the Father for our daily sins. Clement says the eternal High Priest prays for people. So Christ is both the one we pray to and the one who prays for us.

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10 “For these sins, then, there will be pardon through Christ, the successful Suppliant of the Father.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On Modesty* 19 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 9, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

11 “This Jesus, who is eternal, the one great High Priest of the one God and of His Father, prays for men and urges them on.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Exhortation to the Heathen* 12 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 6, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These passages do not give a rule for when to pray to Christ and when to pray to the Father.
- Most of the full church prayers here are addressed to the Father, so direct prayer to Christ appears less often in this set.
- 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 27 early Christian passages and 76 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–27, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 28–59, in Bible order), then 44 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).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *27 passages from 12 writers*

Didache, *c. 50–120 AD · source 1*

1 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 8 (1885 English) **Quote 6, page 4** “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 ›**

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Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · source 2*

2 *Epistle to the Romans* (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** "Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be found a sacrifice [to God… [continues online] **read ›**

Tatian, *c. 150–180 AD · source 3*

3 *Diatessaron* 9 (1885 English; on point 6) "6:8 Then be not ye now like them: 30 for your Father knows your request before ye ask him… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 4–5*

4 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English) **Quote 9, page 4** "therefore, the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ, He says well on both these grounds… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *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 ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 6–7*

6 *Exhortation to the Heathen* 12 **Quote 11, page 5** "Jesus, who is eternal, the one great High Priest of the one God and of His Father… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* 8 (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** "the Son of God he addresses in supplication… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 8–10*

8 *Against Marcion* 26 (1885 English; on point 6) "inasmuch as John had introduced some new order of prayer, this disciple had not improperly presumed to think that he ought also to ask of Christ whether they too must… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *On Modesty* 19 (1885 English) **Quote 10, page 5** "these, then, there will be pardon, through the successful Suppliant of the Father, Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *On Prayer* 14 (1885 English) **Quote 3, page 2** "taking our model from the Lord's passion even in prayer we confess to Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

Early Liturgies, *c. 200–400 AD · sources 11–12*

11 *Liturgy of Adaeus and Maris* 1 (1885 English; on point 6) "for all that ask a prayer from our weakness, and for me, a degraded and feeble sinner… [continues online] **read ›**

12 *Liturgy of Adaeus and Maris* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 1, page 2** "be to Your holy name, O Lord Jesus Christ, and adoration to Your majesty, always and forever. Amen… [continues online] **read ›**

Hippolytus, *c. 200–236 AD · sources 13–14*

13 *Against the Heresy of Noetus* 1 "us, as I said, see how he is confuted, and then let us set forth the truth. Now he quotes the words, "Egypt has labored, and the merchandise of Ethiopia… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Against the Heresy of Noetus* 1 "bound with manacles, and they shall fall down to you, because God is in you; and they shall make supplication to you: 'And there is no God beside you. For… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 15–18*

15 *Treatises* (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 4** "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 ›**

16 *Treatises* (on point 6) "all things, the Teacher of peace and the Master of unity did not want prayer to be made separately and individually, as if each person should pray only for himself… [continues online] **read ›**

17 *Treatises* (1885 English; on point 6) "Nor was it only in words, but in deeds also, that the Lord taught us to pray, Himself praying frequently and beseeching, and thus showing us, by the testimony of… [continues online] **read ›**

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18 *Treatises* (1885 English; on point 6) “praying to the Father can be more truthful than that which was delivered to us by the Son who is the Truth, out of His own mouth… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 19–24*

19 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 7) pray for them in their minds, saying: Lord, have mercy on them. And let the deacon lead the prayers for them, saying: Let us all pray to God for the… [continues online] **read ›**

20 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 6) you search each person's thoughts. In every region of the whole earth, the incense of prayer and supplication is sent up to you. You have appointed this present world… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *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 ›**

22 *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 ›**

23 *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quote 8, page 4** “us earnestly beseech God through His Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 6) When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. But as the Lord appointed us in the Gospel, pray like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your… [continues online] **read ›**

Commodianus, *c. 250–300 AD · source 25*

25 *Writings* (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** “of Him; confess to Him prostrate: He will grant all things whose also are all our things… [continues online] **read ›**

Lactantius, *c. 290–320 AD · sources 26–27*

26 *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 44 (1885 English) “He was God, Isaiah Isaiah 45:14-16 thus declares: They shall fall down unto You, they shall make supplication unto You… [continues online] **read ›**

27 *Divine Institutes* 13 (1885 English) “chains they shall fall down unto You, and shall make supplication unto You, Since God is in You, and there is no other God besides You… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *32 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

28 **Susanna 1:60** And the whole congregation cried out with a loud voice and blessed God, who saves those who hope in him. **read ›**

29 **Matthew 6:5** When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. **read ›**

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

31 **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 ›**

32 **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 ›**

33 **Luke 6:12** In these days, he went out to the mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God. **read ›**

34 **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 ›**

35 **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 ›**

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

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

38 **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 ›**

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39 **Acts 1:14** All these continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer and pleading, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. **read ›**

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

41 **Acts 2:42** They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. **read ›**

42 **Acts 3:16** By faith in his name, his name has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith which is through Jesus has given this man perfect soundness before you all. **read ›**

43 **Acts 4:10** let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, this man stands before you healthy through him. **read ›**

44 **Acts 4:30** as you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are done through the name of your holy servant Jesus." **read ›**

45 **Acts 12:4** When he had arrested him, he put him in prison and delivered him to four squads of four soldiers each to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. **read ›**

46 **Acts 12:5** So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer was being made to God for him by the church. **read ›**

47 **Acts 19:5** When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **read ›**

48 **Acts 19:13** Some traveling Jewish exorcists attempted to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We charge you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." **read ›**

49 **Acts 26:8** Why is it considered unbelievable among you that God raises the dead? **read ›**

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

51 **Romans 15:16** that I should be a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest of the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. **read ›**

52 **Romans 15:30** Now I beg you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, **read ›**

53 **1 Corinthians 2:14** But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. **read ›**

54 **1 Corinthians 2:15** But he who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is discerned by no one. **read ›**

55 **Ephesians 1:16** do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, **read ›**

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

57 **Philippians 4:6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **read ›**

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

59 **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 *44 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.

Numbers 24:17

Joshua 1:1

Isaiah 7:14 · 19:20 · 58:6

Jeremiah 17:9

Daniel 7:13

Matthew 6:11 · 6:13 · 23:21

Mark 5:9

Luke 8:21 · 11:3 · 11:4 · 11:5 · 11:8 · 11:9 · 11:11 · 11:14 · 11:18 · 11:19 · 11:20 · 11:21 · 11:27 · 11:48 · 15:7

Acts 3:1 · 10:9

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

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1 Corinthians 7:29
2 Corinthians 6:16 · 7:1
Galatians 4:19
Ephesians 4:26
Philippians 4:3
Colossians 2:13
1 Timothy 2:4
Hebrews 7:3

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