Prayer in Christianity Summary Sheet

(Pages 38-39 in the Christianity textbook)

This summary sheet is to help you learn the nature and use of prayer. According to the AQA specification you need to know the following things:

‘• Prayer and its significance, including the Lord’s Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer.’

Terminology

**acronym** - a word where each letter stands for something

**confession**  - admitting something that was wrong

**informal prayer** - prayer that is made up by a person using their own words; not set prayer

**the Lord’s prayer** - a special prayer that the Lord taught his disciples

**prayer** - communicating with God

**set prayers** - prayers that have been written down and are repeated (e.g. the Lord’s prayer). This might be called formal prayer.

What is prayer?

Prayer is talking to God.

1. This can be done out loud or **silently** in one’s head because God can read people’s thoughts.
2. Christians believe that praying in **groups** can be more powerful because Jesus said ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am with them.’ (Matthew 18:20)
3. It can be done at any time in **any situation**, e.g. prayer before meals.
4. Prayer can be done in **any position**: standing, sitting, kneeling, etc., but some people think it is more respectful to God if kneeling.
5. Prayer might not be **answered** the way the person would like, e.g. Jesus prayed the night before his crucifixion that if there was another way that God would spare him this death but he said ‘Yet not what *I* will but what *you* will [be done].’ (Mark 14:36)

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who sinned against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours

Now and forever. Amen’

The Lord’s Prayer

The disciples of Jesus asked him how to pray. In answer to this question Jesus taught what is now called the Lord’s Prayer.

Set prayers

Formal worship will normally use set prayers. The one below is from the Church of England and used for confession:

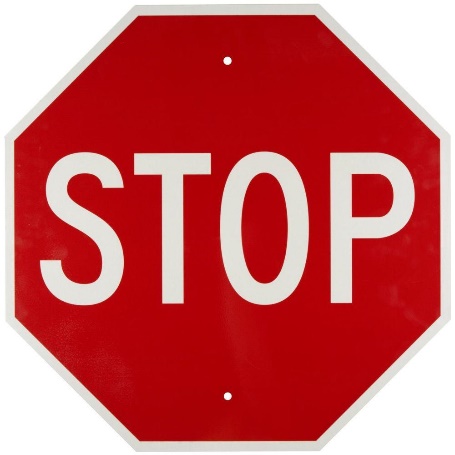
**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.**

**We are truly sorry,  
   and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past;  
and grant that we may serve you  
   in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
Amen.**

At a church service everyone reads out set prayers like this together.

1. The **advantages** of set prayer are:
   1. everyone **knows what to say** and
   2. they can pick the **best prayers** to be said.
2. The disadvantages are:
   1. some **people don’t** really **mean what they are saying**; they might not be sincere.

Informal prayer

This means praying in your own words. This might be done in private or with friends. Some people remember a guide on how to pray informally by the acronym STOP. This stands for **Sorry** (confessing sins) **Thanks** (thanking God for things) **Others** (praying for others) **Please** (asking for yourself).

1. The **advantages** of informal prayer are:
   1. people usually mean what they say; they are sincere prayers.
   2. You can say **whatever you want** without being limited by the set prayers.
2. The disadvantage is:
   1. People might not know what to say or how to say it.

The significance of prayer

Prayer is important because it’s a big part of having a **relationship** with God. It also gives people help and **peace** in times of trouble and Christians believe it helps them to **get things they need** from God (e.g. healing or possessions).