



## **Readers' Service**

A Service for Trinity Sunday

**God, the Three in One**

by

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Number: TS1

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# GOD THE THREE IN ONE

## ORDER OF SERVICE

### Call to Worship

May the nations be glad and sing for joy  
because you judge the peoples with justice  
and guide every nation on earth.  
May the peoples praise you O God,  
May all the peoples praise you.

(Psalm 67: 4-5)

### Hymn HP 7

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty,

### Prayer

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you who know all our needs,  
Who can read our innermost thoughts,  
You who are complete in every way,  
We laud and magnify your glorious name.

We thank you God the Father  
For your love, your comfort and guidance;  
For always being there when we have needed you.  
We have so much to thank and praise you for, O God our Father.

We thank you for the gift of your Son,  
For his love of people, whatever their need;  
For his humility;  
For the pain he underwent on our behalf;  
For the redemption and forgiveness he obtained for us;  
For his example of how to live.  
We have so much to thank and praise you for, O God the Son.

We praise you for the gift of the Spirit.  
For the sense of motivation that the Spirit brings;  
For the assurance to speak your Word;  
For the knowledge of the truth;  
For the power that the Spirit brings.  
We pray that we might have the confidence of the first disciples.  
May the Spirit fill our lives, O God the Spirit.

We offer these our prayers,  
Through the wisdom of God the Father;  
Through the love of God the Son;  
And through the passion of God the Spirit. Amen

## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **First Lesson**

Psalm 139.1-14 - God's complete knowledge and care

### **Hymn HP 137**

Jesus the Lord said, 'I am the Bread.'

### **Second Lesson**

John 14.8-17 - Jesus, the Way to the Father.

### **Third Lesson**

Ephesians 4.1-6 - The Unity of the Body

### **Hymn HP 286**

One there is above all others,

### **Sermon**

see attached sheets

### **Hymn HP 286**

Gracious Spirit, dwell with me,

### **Prayers of Intercession**

For our prayers of intercession today, there is a response. After the words 'Lord, in your mercy', will you please respond '*Hear our prayer*'. Let us pray.

Dear Lord and Father of us all,  
We come before you knowing that you hear our prayers, spoken or unspoken.  
And so we place the needs of ourselves and others before you.

We bring before you our fellowship in this place,  
remembering our minister and all those who hold office,  
and thanking you for all those who work so tirelessly in many quiet ways.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer*.

We bring before you the circuit to which we belong,  
thanking you for all the churches in this circuit,  
and for all who have taken on circuit responsibility.  
We commend to you all these lay and ordained who exercise leadership, [list by name if desired] and their families, that they might be strengthened in their calling to your work.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer*.

We bring before you the Methodist Church.  
We commend to you the President and Vice-President of Conference.  
We think of the work of the various sections at connexional and district levels.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

As you are Lord of the Church, so too is the world your kingdom.  
We bring it before you,  
praying for areas where there is conflict and violence,  
countries struck by famine and disease,  
people suffering from injustice and discrimination.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

We bring ourselves before you,  
thanking you for what you have given us,  
asking forgiveness for constantly wanting too much.  
We pray for your guidance to use what we have as best we can and to your glory.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

And finally we open our heart totally to you and bring before you in a period of silence our innermost and personal prayers.

(Period of Silence)

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

And so we offer up these our prayers,  
In the sure knowledge that you hear all,  
And in your infinite wisdom, answer all,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Notices and Offertory**

#### **The Offertory Prayer**

Let us pray.

All that we have is yours to be used to glorify your name.  
Take us and what we bring, and use it to your glory. Amen

#### **Hymn HP 18**

We give immortal praise

#### **The Grace**

We join together in saying 'The Grace'.

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
The love of God,  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
Be with us all evermore. Amen.*

## SERMON

The Trinity - a mysterious phrase of our Christian faith; something that is so often accepted and yet not understood. And as a result it can be neglected and even ignored. Yet today let's try and redress the balance.

Our text can be found in John's Gospel, chapter 14 verse 16: 'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, who will stay with you for ever.'

Perhaps we should begin by briefly considering our three lessons. The writer of Psalm 139 does not make any direct reference to The Trinity, but he speaks with feeling and passion about the completeness of God. 'Where could I go to escape from you? Where could I get away from your presence?' He talks of God in terms of reaching everywhere, and it is this complete knowledge and care that lays a good foundation for our thinking of God, the Three in One.

In the letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4, Paul makes clear reference to the concept of The Trinity, talking about the three, but laying clear emphasis on the word ONE: 'There is ONE God and Father of all mankind who is Lord of all, working through all, and is in all.'

Then we turn to our Gospel reading from John 14. This passage encompasses all the facets of the Trinity, and contains our text, 'He will give you another Helper.' The passage goes on saying, 'He is the Spirit who reveals the truth about God.'

We have already used a key word that does much to begin to shed light on the Trinity, that being the COMPLETENESS of God. The Trinity suggests the God of all eventualities, all-embracing.

To illustrate this idea of completeness perhaps we might think of the modern hypermarket which has given a whole new meaning to shopping. The larger of these boast that they have virtually everything under one roof. The old corner shop was always proud of being able to answer most needs from their stock, but they tend to look insignificant beside the large out-of-town superstores of today.

Or we may think of the modern package holiday and how one has just to pick a date and pay the agreed sum of money, and all the worry and arrangements are taken over by someone else.

Who knows where this might finish. In a few years time, the world that we live in may have changed even more. But is this multi-purpose approach really such a modern innovation?

On that first Pentecost day, God made a gift of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples, and so to us. We were given an advocate, a helper, a counsellor, a guide, a friend to stand alongside God our Father and creator, and Jesus our Lord and Redeemer. As we think of the Trinity, we give thanks for God's generosity.

We can begin to understand something of the Trinity by approaching in terms of 3 P's.

### **Firstly, GOD THE FATHER - THE PURPOSE.**

There should always be a reason or purpose for doing something. It may vary from person to person but it is usually there.

Sometimes the purpose for doing something can be focused on a person, a figurehead. Thomas Barnardo found a purpose in his life when he discovered young children sleeping rough on a London rooftop. He then became the figurehead who motivated so many people to care both throughout his lifetime and since his death. The same with William Booth and the Salvation Army. And what about Bob Geldof and Live Aid or Band Aid. He used his position and contacts in the world of popular music to persuade people to provide assistance for the hungry, to 'Feed the World'.

God, as the Father, can also be seen as the figurehead, the provider of purpose. All things began through God the Father, just as it did through Thomas Barnardo, William Booth, and Bob Geldof. God the Father was evident in working his purpose out through the words of the Old Testament prophets. And God the Father has continued to provide the focal point throughout the ages and does today. As The Lord's Prayer begins 'Our Father', so God the Father is seen as being central to our faith.

## **Secondly, GOD THE SON - THE PRACTICAL PROVISION.**

A purpose in isolation is rather futile. If one has a purpose but does nothing about it, it's impact is lost.

Bob Geldof had a vision of helping fight hunger, but then he had to arrange the concerts and gather together the musicians to make that vision become a reality.

Thomas Barnardo had a vision on that London rooftop of providing homes for homeless children. And we know how that vision has become a reality over the years.

God came to the world in the form of his Son to provide the practical application of the purpose. He provided the example for people to follow. Christ passed through all the human emotions that we might experience - companionship with the disciples, the joy of weddings, the loneliness of Gethsemane and the powerlessness at Calvary. And by his earthly life and death, real meaning was given to God's purpose.

And then as our text said, the Trinity was completed. 'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever.'

## **And so came, GOD THE SPIRIT - THE POWER.**

The action that is required to achieve the purpose needs sustaining. Follow-up has to be continued.

Both William Booth and Thomas Barnardo have long since ceased to have personal involvement, but their purpose and vision has lost no momentum. It continues through the work of their vast organizations and many followers. Perhaps we might call that the power-house. There is a similar power-house in any charitable organization, most of which start from a single dream or vision.

And so it is with the Church. When God provided the Helper, the Holy Spirit, he was giving the power which would enable his work to continue. And it would last. Note the words in the text 'a Helper who will stay with you for ever.' - no matter what, no matter where, no matter when.

And so we come back to the completeness of God as given voice to by the Psalmist.

We have the purpose essential to focus on. We have the practical provision to bring reality and life to the purpose. And we have the power that carries the application of the task on and on.

So through this interpretation of the Trinity, we have seen that God is able to know our every need and to answer them. A God one cannot hide from. A God who completely cares and a God who sustains and empowers.