

# Easter to Pentecost: A Season of Prayer

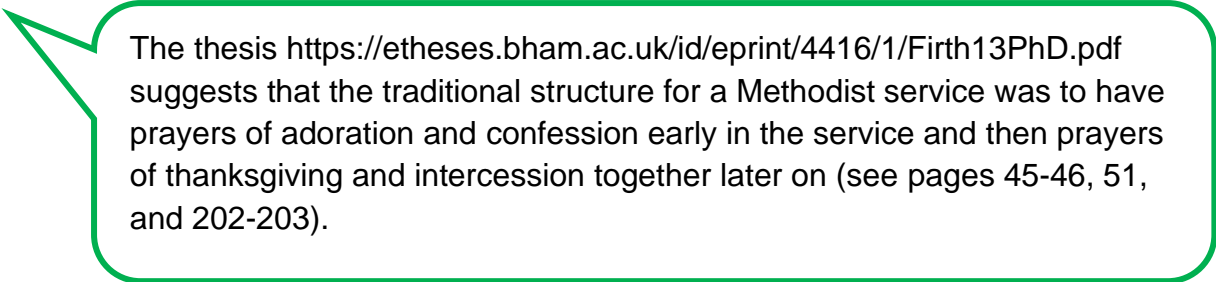
## Week 3: Focus on God

One thing that strikes me about this passage is the way in which thanksgiving and supplication go together. ("We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you", verse 3). Often in our formal services of worship we divide them with prayers of thanksgiving early in the service and prayers of intercession later on. Should they be more integrated?

"Thy will be done"

In today's world there are many ethical considerations where it can be hard to see exactly what God's will would be - euthanasia, abortion, genetic engineering to name but a few. With our ability to now pre-diagnose life-threatening conditions before birth and offer termination, are we really carrying out 'Thy will be done'?

Maybe thanksgiving and supplication are integrated in the prayer, 'Thy will be done'. In giving thanks for the world as it is - the difficult bits as well as the good bits - we recognise God's will being done, and seek God's purpose. In expressing our hopes for the future, we try to put into words our understanding of what God might wish for the world, attempting to fuse our will with God's (although it might often look the other way round!); but again we are seeking God's purpose. Thy will be done. Perhaps it is because these two elements of prayer are so closely connected as we seek God's will that we often separate them when structuring our worship. They are like a spring fastening that we prise apart, inserting hymns, readings, reflections between these two poles of our prayer. It is the spring that connects thanksgiving and supplication, and pulls them together, that holds the elements of our worship in place. The separation of these two poles of prayer only becomes a problem when the spring breaks, and we just get a succession of unconnected activities. Maybe?



The thesis <https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/4416/1/Firth13PhD.pdf> suggests that the traditional structure for a Methodist service was to have prayers of adoration and confession early in the service and then prayers of thanksgiving and intercession together later on (see pages 45-46, 51, and 202-203).

