



# Prayer as Joy, Prayer as Struggle

*Mark Braaten*

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Mark Braaten describes the experience of seeing the sun rise on a northern Minnesota lake and spontaneously offering thanks to God. He describes sitting beside his children's bed as they sleep and resting in the awareness of God's blessings. Confronted by such beauty, prayer flows out of us. That is to say, there are times when we are easily aware that we are in the presence of God, our awe comes naturally, and our prayer is full of joy. But Braaten also points out that at times prayer is a struggle. Life is often not awe inspiring and prayer is often not easy. We find our praying frustrating and difficult. Our prayer life is a journey of both joy and struggle. It is learning to recognize and reach out to God; even more it is recognizing how God is constantly reaching out to us.

Braaten explores many types of prayer, including thanksgiving, confession, praise, wrestling, petition, intercession, listening, and hope. He also explores what it means when the answer to prayer is no and how we experience prayer in doubt and in confidence. In each chapter, he uses an extended biblical example of prayer and also provides the text of prayers we can use in our own practice. For all who seek joy in prayer, even as we struggle, Braaten offers an engaging personal and pastoral reflection on the ways we pray.

*Mark Braaten is the Senior Pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Tyler, Texas. He holds a doctor of ministry degree from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Braaten's book Come, Lord Jesus, a study of the book of Revelation, was published by Liturgical Press in 2007.*

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