



## **Why don't we have "kneelers" in the pews for praying ?**

This question came during one of those confirmation classes where one question seemed to lead to another and another. We had been talking about praying and how one of the great benefits of prayer is that it humbles us. Humility is something God values very highly and prayer by its very nature is a humbling experience. When you come to God to ask something from Him you are admitting that you're powerless to control that specific situation in your life. It's very humbling to admit there's something you can't control.

That led to our featured question. My simple answer to that question is this: "I would say that there's no real good reason for not having kneelers." In keeping with the humble nature of prayer I can think of no better place to pray (or to make confession of sins) than on our knees. I have been in Lutheran churches (though, few and far between) that did have kneelers for people to use during prayers or the confession. Kneelers were also a part of the new chapel was built during my last year at seminary in St. Louis. But they are definitely the exception rather than the rule.

In answer to a question about the appropriateness of practices like making the sign of the cross or kneeling for prayer, the LC-MS on its web site has this to say (in its FAQ's section): *While there are numerous factors that can be cited [about why we don't see normally see these practices in LC-MS churches], probably the chief one is the fear that it is a "Catholic" thing. While the Lutheran Church does have serious disagreements with the Roman Catholic Church, it is an unfortunate thing that for many Lutherans in times past, the things that really divided us from the Roman Catholic Church had to do with external practices [which have nothing to do with our areas of disagreement], like making the sign of the cross, kneeling for prayer, etc...*

There's an old saying "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water." It means "Make sure you don't throw out the good when you throw out the bad." Unfortunately, over the centuries since Martin Luther threw out the "bath water" (like the teaching that we can buy forgiveness with money), we've also tossed out lots of good things like the practice of kneeling during prayers and confession in worship.

Thanks for asking,  
Pastor David

**Send your questions to <mailto:pastor@livingwordlutheran.net>**