



Doctrine 3: The God who is never alone

We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost – undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

Big ideas

- **Christians worship one God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit**
- **God is a perfect community of love**
- **The three persons of God are distinct but united**

“*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all*”

(2 Corinthians 13:14).

God is never alone. He is a fellowship or a community of love, even before the creation of the world. The Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit loves the Father. They are mutually dependent and interwoven with one another in an eternal dance of love. We are called into this community of love, service and grace.

This is known as the doctrine of the Trinity. One God but three distinct persons.

God as Father is significant in the teaching of Jesus. Jesus calls us to pray to God as ‘Our Father’ using the intimate expression of a child’s love – ‘Abba Father’ or ‘Daddy’.

This, then, is how you should pray:

“*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*”
(Matthew 6:9–10).

Jesus is the son of God who came in the flesh as a baby and grew to be the man on the cross at Easter and raised to life. He came to make God known in a very personal and vulnerable way – not distant, but intimately coming into our world to be God with us.

“*The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word*”
(Hebrews 1:3).

“*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him*”
(Colossians 1:15–16).

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in us. The Spirit inspires us to understand, believe and obey God's word. It brings God near to us and directs our attention to Jesus, while uniting us in our relationship with God and empowering us to serve.

Our connection with this dynamic, loving relationship of the Father, Son and Spirit is seen in John 14–17.

“ *I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day, you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you*” (John 14:18–20).

“ *These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you*” (John 14:26).

Discuss

What difference does it make to think of God as a loving community of grace and service?

Putting belief into practice

I will be responsive to the Holy Spirit's work and obedient to his leading in my life, growing in grace through worship, prayer, service and the reading of the Bible.

Let's look at how these ways of growing in grace spring from the doctrines we have looked at:

- Worship is the recognition and honour we give the one God, the Lord of all. It's not just something we do on Sundays but how we live our lives.
 - Prayer is how we actively engage all three persons of God – we pray to the Father, because of the Holy Spirit urging us, and in the name of Jesus, who gives us confidence that our prayers will be heard.
 - Service is our response to the grace and love of God in mission. This is an expression of our worship that involves us in the loving service of God and others.
- “ *Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer*” (Romans 12:1).
- Reading the Bible is the main way we hear God, and learn more about his character and how we can live and flourish in life.

The first lifelong commitment soldiers make is to grow in grace. We grow more aware of God's generous goodness through worship, prayer, service and reading the Bible. This our obedient response to God.

Reflect and pray

Take some time to prayerfully reflect on your own response to God.

- How do you worship?
- How do you find prayer?
When do you pray?
- How do you seek to serve?
- How do you find reading the Bible? What have you found to be helpful for you?