

**Reformed Theological Seminary
PT6396 Pastoral Prayer**

Course information

Times: 5:00pm to 6:00pm

Dates: Tuesdays, from 3 February until 12 May 2026

Instructor: Dr Rufus T Burton

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Office hours: By appointment / Usually, the hour after to class in the library.

Course description:

Prayer is the bedrock of gospel ministry. This class exposes students to the duties and glories of leading congregations in prayer. By reading and reflecting on the Word of God and significant theological works on prayer from the Reformed tradition, students will learn to read meditatively, reflect on theological truth as it relates to leading public prayers, and will be exposed to resources helpful in preparing for studied and well-formed pastoral prayer. Students will set their own ministries of prayer on a firmer foundation by having a greater knowledge of and deeper love for the Lord who calls His people to pray.

Goals:

1. The student will be *introduced* to the pastoral duty of reading, reflecting, and meditating on Scripture and theological truth in order to ground ministry in prayer, and provide a stable foundation from which to lead God's people in prayer.
2. Through the lectures, the student will be *exposed* to the links between theological commitments and the pastoral ministry of prayer and *develop* a greater critical appreciation for Christian literature related to, recording, and encouraging pastoral prayers.
3. Through the readings and discussions, the student will be *oriented* to key figures, beliefs, practices, and patterns in the duty of pastoral prayer and will *explore* how they relate to contemporary Christian life and ministry.
4. Through the primary source readings, the student will *appreciate* the practice of Christian pastoral prayer, and *experience* the way in which Reformed theological commitments directly shape and inform Reformed ministries of prayer.
5. Through the routines of prayer and writing, and in preparing the Final Packet the student will *reflect* on how healthy Christian practices of pastoral prayer have relevance for contemporary Christian life, worship, and ministry in a Reformed context.

Prayer is the power source of the Christian life and therefore of Pastoral Ministry. There is a great deal of helpful material on prayer, pastoral prayer, and the life of prayer. The trouble is not reading; the trouble is praying. The point of these texts is to whet the appetite for a lifetime of studied prayer and encourage earnest and sincere prayer.

Required Texts:

Wilhelmus À Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service, Volume 3: The Law, Christian Graces and the Lord's Prayer*, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 1994 [1700]); ISBN: 978-1601781291

NB: PRTS has made this available as a pdf. The relevant portions will be on the course CANVAS page.

William Henry, *A Way to Pray*, edited and Revised by O Palmer Robertson, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2010 [1710]); ISBN: 978-1848718609. **NB:** It is worth purchasing a worthy edition of this classic.

Paul Miller, *The Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2009); ISBN: 978-1-6000063008.

Pat Quinn, *Praying in Public: A Guidebook for Prayer in Corporate Worship*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021); ISBN: 978-1-433572890

A Book of Published Prayers from your Tradition.

One of the assignments is to acquire a service book or book of prayers relevant to your ministerial context. If you are Presbyterian that might mean a *Book of Common Order* or a *Book of Common Worship*. If you are Anglican, the *Book of Common Prayer* will be essential. If you are a Baptist or part of the Bible Tradition or from a Non-denominational work, then you will need to find a book of published prayers that would be suitable for work in your context. A sample of such books will be displayed on the first day of class.

Recommended texts:

Samuel Miller, *Thoughts on Public Prayer*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2022 [1849]); ISBN: 978-1800402829.

Guy M Richard, *Persistent Prayer*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2021); ISBN: 978-1629958729.

Eric Alexander, *Prayer: A Biblical Perspective*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2012); ISBN: 978-1848711495.

Timothy Chester, *The Message of Prayer: Approaching the Throne of Grace*, The Bible Speaks Today Themes, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003); ISBN: 978-1789740639.

RTS Grading Scale

The seminary uses the following attenuated grading system:

A	(97-100)	4.00 quality points
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66
C+	(83-85)	2.33
C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	0.66
F	(below 70)	0.00
I	(incomplete)	0.00
W,WP	(withdraw, withdraw passing)	0.00
S	(satisfactory)	0.00

The grade "I" indicates that the work required for the course was not completed. It is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination. A written request for an extension must be submitted prior to the due date of the work concerned. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. In any case, an "I" grade must be removed within the extension time granted; otherwise it will be changed to "F."

Late work:

Late work is not accepted.

Incomplete work:

Given that **late work is not accepted**, students should consider submitting incomplete work rather than nothing at all.

Resubmitted work:

The three term time papers may be resubmitted until they achieve a desired grade, provided they are complete when they are submitted. **The final due date for resubmitted papers, is 5 May 2026.**

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: PT6398
 Professor: Burton
 Campus: Washington, DC
 Date: Spring 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Students will have to speak and write knowledgeably about the topics at hand. .
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	The devotional tradition is primarily an exegetical tradition.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Reformed theology and its practical ramifications for pastoral prayer are a focus of the course.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	The point of the course is to grow in sanctification, and increase in the skills required for leading public prayer.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	Use biblical pre-suppositions to think clearly and piously about issues of worship and prayer.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	In lectures and discussions, model critically sympathetic engagement with other perspectives.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Strong	In lectures and course work model helpful pastoral habits and attitudes, particularly with reference to personal devotion.

Burton		Pastoral Prayer		Spring 2026	
Week	Date	Reading		Henry	
1	3 Feb 2026				
2	10 Feb 2026	AB	443-482		
		PM	9-28		
		PQ	15-36		
3	17 Feb 2026	AB	483-493		Praise
		PM	29-76		
		PQ	37-42		
4	24 Feb 2026	AB	493-506		Confession
	Paper Due	PM	77-102		
		PQ	43-48		
5	3 Mar 2026	AB	507-522		Thanksgiving
		PM			
		PQ	49-54		
Reading Week		10 Mar 2026	Reading Week	Intercession	
6	17 Mar 2026	AB	523-538		Praise
		PM			
		PQ	55-60		
7	24 Mar 2026	AB	539-554		Confession
	Paper Due	PM	103-164		
		PQ	61-66		
8	31 Mar 2026	AB	555-572		Thanksgiving
		PM			
		PQ	67-89		
9	7 Apr 2026	AB	573-587		Intercession
		PM	165-220		
		PQ			
10	14 Apr 2026	AB	587-589		Praise
		PM			
		PQ			
11	21 Apr 2026	AB			Confession
	Paper Due	PM	221-268		
		PQ			
12	28 Apr 2026	AB			Thanksgiving
		PM			
		PQ	83-120		
13	5 May 2026	AB			Intercession
	Resubmissions Due	PM			
		PQ	121-166		
Finals Week		12 May 2026	FINAL WEEK	End of Term	

FINAL PACKET DUE 23:59 15 MAY 2026