

It was bound to happen

By [Tim Graves](#)

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Yes, I'm the pastor. Yes, I've been praying the prayer since childhood. Yes, I lead the prayer every Sunday.

Still, it was bound to happen.

I've feared it would and it finally did. I messed up the Lord's Prayer. And I don't mean I substituted trespasses for debts, forgetting the tradition of this particular congregation. (There are many slight variations of the prayer.) I mean I jumped from the first lines to the end of the prayer. The congregation, confused by my mixup, sat in silence and I had to return to the beginning of the prayer to get back on track.

I guess this kind of thing is why I consistently find reassurance from Paul's letter to the Romans. The apostle writes about prayer,

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:26-27 NRSV

As one who is often called to lead public prayer, the experience of forgetting lines of a prayer so well known is a humbling experience. It is also a reminder that it is not the words I speak but the content of my soul that reaches God. It is also an opportunity to display my humanity before my congregation and give them the opportunity to love me and forgive me through my human flaws.

Altogether, not a bad experience.

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