

## Prayer - Week 4

### The Lord's Prayer



And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

<sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>7</sup>“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. <sup>9</sup>Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread, <sup>12</sup>and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup>And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

<sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

(Matthew 6 :5-15)

In these verses Jesus teaches how to pray.

Prayer is about relationship with God, opening our lives to him and walking life's journey with him. We need to think about where and when we pray so as not to be distracted by others or our surroundings in order that we can focus on God. Prayer is not about gaining public approval with eloquence of oratory, as Pharisees were inclined to do.

Jesus warns us against 'empty phrases'. Indeed, we don't need fancy words, or even use a particular language, we just tell God what's on our mind, just as if we were talking to our *Abba*, our Dad, our Father – because we are. Sometimes it can be difficult to find words; then remember these words of Paul: “God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans”. (Romans 8:26-7 MSG)

The prayer Jesus gives us is a model for prayer. God comes first. Give him praise.

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Indeed, the first three petitions focus on God's supremacy the remaining three on personal and community needs.

Pray for the continual advance of God's kingdom and complete transformation of the world; that Christ will reign in the Church (so the Good News is proclaimed) and in people's hearts (so God's love is made real in people's lives).

Verse 10 reminds us it's not what *we* want but what God wants that matters.

The fourth petition, concerning daily bread, recognises our complete dependence on God for all that sustains us in earthly and eternal life.

Jesus then emphasises the importance of forgiveness, stressing a relationship between being forgiven by God and the forgiveness we must give others. (Matthew 18:21-35 expands the teaching on this point.) Those who have been forgiven by God should be moved by gratitude to forgive those who have wronged them.

The last petition, 'lead us not into temptation', is a request to be protected from all that tempts us away from God and his will for our lives.

### *For reflection*

How can God's 'will be done on earth as it is in heaven' in your own life?

'Daily bread' is a reference to bread we eat, a metaphor for all we need for earthly life – food, clothing, shelter, health care etc. 'Daily bread' is also a reference to the *bread of life* sustaining our souls through eternity.

'**Our** Father', 'give **us** this day', 'as **we** forgive' – notice this is a communal prayer. How does this prayer relate to our being a '*royal priesthood*' (1 Peter 2:9)?

### *For doing*

Click on these links and use them as a prayer.

[The Lord's Prayer – Cliff Richard](#)

[Lord's Prayer with Actions](#)

Print the outline below to make a Lord's Prayer cube. This could be a fun activity with children and a way of your teaching them.

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*Our Father in  
heaven,*



*hallowed be  
your name*

*Lead us not into  
temptation,*



*Your Kingdom  
come, your will be  
done on earth as  
it is in heaven.*



*But deliver us  
from evil.*



*Give us this day  
our daily bread,*



*and forgive us our  
debts, as we forgive  
our debtors.*