

PRACTICAL PRAYER – BEGINNING

(Exodus 3.1-6 and Luke 11.1-3)

Children's Activity

Actions for the phrases of the Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven

Hallowed be your name

Your kingdom come

Your will be done on earth as in heaven

Give us today our daily bread

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours

now and for ever. Amen

Adults: Practical Prayer - Beginning

There are times when prayer can seem challenging and the words of Christian leaders about how they pray may seem daunting.

John Wesley said - I have so much to do that I have to spend several hours in prayer before I am able to do it.

Jesus' disciples had seen the importance that Jesus himself gave to prayer-prioritising- early in the morning and nights in prayer.

They knew that John had taught his disciples to pray and they wanted to be taught too. They may well have felt daunted too. here do we start?

Today we heard the disciples' question – "Lord teach us to pray."
And Jesus's response – a simple "model prayer" or the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven- focus on God- as our Father and in heaven.

For us too, begin by coming into the presence of God and remember who he is as our Father and in heaven.

Hallowed be your name- focus on holiness of God.

- In our first reading Moses encountered God in the miraculous situation of the bush being on

fire but not burning up – he approached the bush- he was stopped and God spoke telling him that he was on holy ground and told Moses who he was- the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So for us- reminder to come into God's presence and remember and acknowledge his holiness.

Praying for God's kingdom to come and God's will to be done as in heaven- often in life God's way is not clear- initially at least- but as we pray and seek his will things do become clearer.

The 3 asks- bread- food; forgiveness and for God's leading so that we do not fall into temptation. 3 asks come after remembering who God is; His holiness and His will.

We end by appreciating who God is a little more deeply.

The Lord's Prayer is a good place for us to start when we are considering the practical topic of beginning prayer.

Stocktake

Where are we now with prayer? Compare Baseline Observations when we go into hospital.

Questionnaires (see appendix below).

Where do I pray? (home, work, car, outside, in church, same place every time, different places).

When do I pray? Morning, evening- other times.

How do I pray? – a set pattern; Bible notes; book of prayers, own words; sitting; kneeling.

I find it helps if prayers include

- confession
- praise and thanks
- intercessions
- meditation
- listening

Are We Distracted In Our Prayers?

As we take stock on where we are with our praying we may have concerns or regrets that we could be praying differently or more faithfully. However, the unique thing about the Christian life is that we can always start afresh - come to God, say sorry, thank him for his love for us and dying for us and ask him to lead us forward.

Moving On

More of the same- yes and God will answer

Some things different- prayer as a priority time-

For example, pray at home -good- pray at work or when out for a walk – good too.

Pray in the mornings -good- and evenings?

Pray for people a lot -great- listen to God too.

Nothing is too small to bring to God in prayer.

Back To The Lord's Prayer

Pray slowly with some variances.

For example, *Our Father*- we can thank God because he is our loving heavenly Father- we should be *real with God* – are we hurting or struggling? Compare Psalm 22.1- My God, my God why have you forsaken me? (As in families if we don't communicate- poor relationship).

Hallowed be your name- praise God for his holiness; other name for God in the Bible. For example, Redeemer/ Saviour.

Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven- one particular part of earth- Long Newton, Stockton- another country; area troubled by war.

Your will be done-

- family
 - friends
 - work
 - social contacts
-
- *Give us today our daily bread*- God's provision for:
 - Ourselves
 - Our families
 - Friends
 - Church

Going On In Luke

Jesus's further answers to the question- Lord- teach us to pray:

Verses 5-8- the parable of the unexpected visitor and going to a friend's house to ask for bread- neighbour will give bread because the friend kept on asking.

Charles Spurgeon once said- Prayer pulls the rope down below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. He who communicates with heaven is the person who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously with all his might.

Lesson- *persist in prayer*- not because God needs reminding but to show that we are really committed to something and keep bringing to God.

Verses 9-10. The promise is that God does *answer prayer*. The disciples would have heard this from the Old Testament:

The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place. 2 Chronicles 30:27.

Your prayers will help others. Prayer is powerful. God really does answer prayer. One of the best ways we can help other people is by praying for them: many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many. When your prayers are answered, God will be glorified.

When we have the vision that prayer changes things, situations and people we are spurred on to keep praying or start praying.

Verse 11-13

The goodness of God and asking for God's Holy Spirit.

Praying in the power of the Holy Spirit and being led by his Spirit.

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."
Ephesians 6.18.

We can think of prayer as preparing us for actions and it is good to pray before we do things. However, prayer itself is God's work. As we get older or our health is less good we may be able to do less, however God can give us opportunities to pray more and serve Him in that way.

