

Week Beginning: 26th February 2017

Worship Series: #5 in series



living sharing growing



lifegroups
live life abundantly

Theme Verse

"When you pray...your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! Pray like this: Our Father in heaven..." Matthew 6:7ff

Remember This Week

The radical simplicity of the Lord's prayer is that it contains the rhythm of a blessed life. It starts with God, moves to our human needs and rises to God again. God is in this prayer. We are in this prayer. The past, the present and the future are in this prayer. The deepest things of life are wrapped up and find fulfilment in the presence of our heavenly Father.



What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? Deuteronomy 4:7

How blessed we are, Heavenly Father, to have a relationship with you because of Jesus Christ, and to be given the right to call you 'our Father.' *"Now through your mercy implant in our hearts a comforting trust in your fatherly love, and let us experience the sweet and pleasant savor of a childlike certainty that we may joyfully call you Father, knowing and loving you and calling on you in every trouble."* Grow us deeper in your life as we come together to be enriched by your Word. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen. (Italicised prayer above was one Martin Luther prayed Luther, "Personal Prayer Book," LW 43:29; WA 10II:395.20ff)



1. Share your highs and lows for the past week?
2. Accountability time! How did you go with your living purposefully from last time?
3. Who is your favourite 'father' from a television show and why?
4. What's the first prayer you can remember praying or learning by heart? Who taught you it?
5. Describe your prayer life in one word. Why did you choose that word?

On the lips of a person lying in hospital in a coma, these words form. In the midst of personal tragedy or hardship, these words bring tears to eyes. In times of doubt or want or struggle, these words give strength. They are words for every season. Words so simple, brief and yet comprehensive. Words which radically make a difference. For in Jesus Christ we discover the most important truth in the world – our God is a father who invites us into the intimacy of his love and who promises to respond more abundantly than we could ever imagine. As God promises: **'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'** Jeremiah 33:3. In this study we discover the radical prayer that transforms our lives and aligns our hearts with our Father in heaven.

Read Matthew 6:1-15

First thoughts/reflections

6. What is challenging/confusing/surprising about this text?
7. What do you notice about the structure of the prayer here? Why do you think it uses the pronouns 'our' and 'us'?
8. In what ways does it mirror the Ten Commandments and what does it reveal about what is important to God?
9. Why do you pray?
10. What role has the Lord's Prayer played in your life to this point?





This section in Matthew is still part of the extended teaching of Jesus to his disciples. Jesus has just taught on how not to pray...don't pray like the hypocrites because they like to be seen...don't pray like the pagans because they babble on and on trying to manipulate their gods to give them stuff...when he turns to the disciples and says, "When you pray...pray like this. It is not meant to be a verbatim, word-for-word prayer we're supposed to pray, although there is certainly no problem in using it that way. Rather Jesus gives the disciples a framework or structure around which to build their prayers. It is like the framework of a house. Builders begin by putting down a foundation, and then put up a frame so the walls have something to support them and the house is able to stand. It's a prayer for all seasons; a prayer that is able to contain every question, doubt, worry, fear and keep us standing in hope, certainty and a confidence in the one who is God over all.

11. *Think of all the things that you question, worry about, cause you fear or make you doubt - how is the Lord's Prayer able to contain them all?*
12. *In the 5th century, Saint Prosper of Aquitaine said: "The law of praying establishes the law of believing". In other words, your prayers reveal and shape what you believe. Read [2 Chronicles 20:5-12](#) What does Jehoshaphat's prayer reveal about what he believes about God? Compare that to Jesus' prayer in [John 17:1-17](#).*
13. *Think of your own prayers. What do they reveal about what you believe/perceive to be true about God? Is he...*
 - o Unlimited or Limited*
 - o Approachable or Distant*
 - o Giving or Demanding*
 - o Willing or Unwilling*
 - o Relational or Transactional*
14. *How does praying the Lord's prayer correct our false understanding about God?*
15. *Luther understood prayer as being, "the conversation of the dependent and trusting child, who is eager to voice both thanks and requests with the loving Father, who in turn is eager to hear from his children." To what degree is your prayer the conversation of a dependent and trusting child?*
16. *How has God revealed Himself to you as Father recently?*

In looking at the structure, the first half of the prayer talks about God - his name, his kingdom, his will. The second half of this prayer talks about our needs - give us, forgive us, lead us. The Lord's prayer begins with God, moves to our needs by dealing with the past (*Forgive us our sins*), the present (*Give us today*), and the future (*Lead us not into temptation*), before rising to give God the glory again. That's what makes this such a radical prayer. God, who invites us into the intimacy of his presence and to call him Father, wants to align our hearts with his and give us the certainty that he is big enough to handle all our prayers in every season of life by giving us a kingdom perspective.

17. *What would a church devoted to prayer look like? What impact would it have on its community?*
18. *How would you rate the prayer life of LifeWay and how can you be a part of strengthening it?*

The power of the Lord's Prayer, according to Luther is that it **"binds the people together and to one another, in that one prays for the other and with the other, and therefore it becomes strong and powerful, so that it dispels all evils and even death itself."**

19. *What part of the Lord's Prayer is the most meaningful for your life today? Why?*
20. *Finish this sentence: "The one thing that keeps me from growing deeper in prayer is..."*
21. *Paul encourages us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to pray unceasingly, i.e. consistently and persistently. How do you think you can put this into practice in your prayer life? What are some adjustments you might need to make so that you can develop a more consistent prayer life?*

Read 1 John 5:14-15

- * Praise God for drawing you into a relationship with him and inviting you to call him your Father. Thank Jesus for giving you access to all that that Father is and for providing a framework to come before the Heavenly Father in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to turn your heart to be consistent and confident in prayer, relying on the Father in everything you face in life.
- * Pray for strength to overcome the obstacles that your group faces in growing deeper in prayer.
- * Pray for those who don't have a father role-model in their life, that they may come to know the Heavenly Father who gives us the best of who he is, all the time.
- * Finish by praying the Lord's Prayer together as a group.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

Name, God your Father is always ready to hear your prayer. Amen.

