

# TEACH US TO *Pray*

## Practising Prayer in Community **BIBLE STUDY WEEK**

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### *Give Us Today*

#### Begin by praying the Lord's Prayer together

*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

**THEME:** Prayer is an opportunity to practise daily reliance on God.

Each week as we have pursued this study together, we have started with focusing on a few key words: "Our Father" reminded us of our identity in community, "Your Kingdom" reminded us of surrendering to the Lord. This all relates to what we call our "posture" in prayer and we put this into practice by consciously praying "with open hands". Today we transition to the importance of "asking" in prayer, as we continue our focus on the pattern of the Lord's prayer. James 4:2 says "You do not have, because you do not ask." So learning to pray is also about learning to ask.

Jesus also focuses on this later in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 7, he encourages us to ask and seek, saying God is a Father, who will "... give good gifts to those who ask Him!" In these few words in the Lord's prayer, Jesus introduces two concepts: give us "today" our "daily bread". This is not vain repetition, today is a reference to when we receive, while daily bread is a reference to what we will receive. We will receive what we need, not always what we want. The difference between what we need and what we want builds on our concept of surrender from last week.

**What do we want Him to teach us?** To learn to pray in agreement with God's will and in a constant willingness to wait for His right response and perfect timing.

#### SHARE WITH ONE ANOTHER

Have you ever been so focused in prayer on a particular outcome, that you might have been hindered in receiving what God desires for you? Take a few moments and use the "journal" section below to list a few things you are currently asking for in prayer. Now take a moment to circle the ones that are your desires and put a square around the ones that are real needs (some might have both :) Take some time to discuss your list.

- ? What does it mean to you to pray: Give us "today" our "daily" bread?
- ? How does this relate to the Lord's teaching later in Matthew 6:34, "...do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself."?

**?** Have you ever felt that your prayers have been unanswered? How did this make you feel? Does God always answer “yes” to our prayers? Why or why not?

## GOING DEEPER

**Read Matthew 7:7-13.** What does Jesus command us to do in these verses? Who according to Jesus receives an answer? Why do you think Jesus brings in the analogy of the earthly father? In the context of our earlier studies about our identity as God’s children and surrender to Him, how does this encourage you today to ask? **(Read John 15:7, 16 and 1 John 5:14-15).** These verses teach us about the keys to effectiveness in our prayers. What are some of the ‘conditions’ laid out in these verses, that are necessary for effective prayer? Which condition seems most relevant to your situation? Can you share about a time when you struggled against or finally realised the ‘condition’ and received (or recognised) an answer to your prayer?

**Read Exodus 16:11-20.** The Bible is full of references to bread. In Psalm 37, the psalmist says, “I have been young and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his children begging for bread.” When tempted by Satan, Jesus responds that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God and Jesus commanded us to break bread “in remembrance of Him”. On two miraculous occasions, Jesus provided bread to more than 5,000 followers and said of Himself, “I am the Bread of Life.” In Exodus 16, God provided the Israelites ‘daily bread’ in the form of manna and quail. They were told to take only what they needed and not to try to save it for the next day (verses 18-19).

## LET’S PRACTISE PRAYER TOGETHER

Apart from being a basic necessity of life, bread in the Bible is an enduring symbol of our trust in God and an acknowledgment of Him as the source of all that we need. Bread is a simple daily reminder of our practical needs. Sincerely practicing daily prayer for our daily bread will transform the way we live our lives. We can move away from attempting a fatiguing daily self-reliance and live every day in surrender and full assurance that He will meet us in our moment of need. Both in the meeting of our needs and the timing, God loves you and knows what is best. This rhythm of daily dependance was right for Jesus and His disciples, right for the Israelites, and is right for us in the 21st century. Spend some time now in prayer together, sharing your needs as well as some words of encouragement about God’s provision and timing.

# Weekly Prayer Journal

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