

TEACH US TO *Pray*

Practising Prayer in Community **BIBLE STUDY WEEK**

2

Your Kingdom Come

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 act of surrender to God's will.

We began our study in prayer together by focusing on the meaning of the "our" in Jesus' model of prayer for his disciples. The "our" reminds us that we are children of God, that we are not just praying to Jesus' Father in heaven, but to "our" Father, who welcomes us into a relationship with Him and one another. The "our" also reminds us that we are brothers and sisters, approaching a loving father together. This week we will turn our attention, away from ourselves, and on to the "thy" of Jesus' prayer. This itself is an act of surrender, shifting our focus on Him.

Our world - and the surrounding culture - teach us from a very young age to be independent. Indeed many of us, having experienced poor examples of fathers (and mothers), may have learned to survive this way. But the Lord's Sermon on the Mount begins with a tribute to dependence ("blessed are those who hunger and thirst"). To surrender ourselves to God's will is a step of faith. Prayer is a dialogue with God about what He wants to do, then aligning ourselves with Him. He knows best and He wants to make things better (on "earth as it is in heaven").

What do we want Him to teach us? To surrender our own ideas and desires to him and believe that He knows what is best, aligning ourselves with His perfect will.

SHARE WITH ONE ANOTHER

Do you ever struggle to put God at the center of your life? What are the things that get in the way of putting Him at the center? Can you see why this "positioning" of ourselves and Him is so important to our experience of prayer? What fears or concerns do you have about aligning yourself with God's will for your life?

- ? What impact do the words "your kingdom come, your will be done" have on us?
- ? Have you ever tried praying "with open hands"? What does this posture mean?
- ? How does our study this week of "surrender" relate to the understanding of God as our Father, and us as His children, from last week?

GOING DEEPER

Read Mark 14:27-37. Jesus knew that he had a great work to do on the cross for us and that he needed to prepare that work in prayer. Knowing how hard that work would be, he needed to align himself with the Father's will. He modelled something important to us in the garden of Gethsemane - it's OK to ask for what we want. It's OK to be troubled, to experience distress, even to feel overwhelmed. This is what it means to be human and Jesus was human. When Jesus faced the distress of being alone, He reached out to the Father, surrendering His will to His Father, knowing that His Father knew best, what he needed to do.

Read Jonah chapters 3 & 4. Does it seem funny to reference the story of Jonah in a study about prayer? Or should we focus on Jonah's prayer of desperation for help in chapter 2? The story of Jonah can help us to learn surrender. First, God knows best what He wants to do. Then, even when we are reluctant to surrender to His will, God always offers a second chance to align ourselves with His will, and helps us through our troubles, so that we can help those who face trouble themselves (**read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4**). I can't help smiling when I read chapter 4: how many times have I obsessed about my little "vines" when a city of more than 120,000 people are having a hard time knowing "their right hand from their left". Just saying :)

LET'S PRACTISE PRAYER TOGETHER

Let's spend some time now in prayer together. Begin this time with a bit of silent prayer, praying with open hands in a posture of surrender to the Lord. As you hold your hands palms up, ask the Lord to reveal what you may need to "surrender" to him: your work, your relationships, your finances, your dreams, your worries, your health, your children... (so much for Pastor Sam's list, you have your own!)

Ask someone to **read Psalm 34**. Now shift your thoughts to your empty hands, ready to receive something new from God. This is truly what it means to pray. This is what Jesus meant when He taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". We'll look at our prayer requests again next week, when Jesus teaches us to pray "Give us this day our daily bread". This week, let's just focus our thoughts on welcoming His kingdom and will in our lives, praying that we will help one another to be aligned with what He wants to do today.

Weekly Prayer Journal
