

The Lord's Prayer – it is impossible to say all that there is to say in just a few minutes – in fact more than one sermon could be preached on each phrase. So, I intend to just give some brief thoughts on each phrase.

The Lord's prayer is found in a slightly different format in both Matthew and Luke's gospel. Today our focus is on the Lukan version, which of course is different again from the one in our service book. In the first verse of chapter 11, Luke puts the Lord's prayer into the context of Jesus' own prayers. More than any other gospel, Luke's account of Jesus ministry recalls Jesus' regular practice of prayer. There are many occasions when we have heard him pray to the Father particularly times when he needs space and rest, when he was worried, when he needed comfort, when he felt thankful and I am sure it is at those times that we too feel the need to turn to prayer too. Clearly, prayer was a regular part of Jesus own life as it should be ours.

The disciples seeing the difference that prayer made to Jesus, and, knowing that they are struggling with prayer, wait until Jesus has finished praying, before asking a key question – *Lord, teach us to pray*. The urgency of the request can be felt. Think about this request for a moment, don't you think this means that the disciples value prayer, value their relationship with God and would like to learn more about how they can grow in that relationship. Have you too ever wanted to learn more about prayer?

So, Jesus replies by giving them a prayer to pray. It is very brief, but each line is full of meaning and interpretation. In fact in this version the heart of what Jesus taught about prayer is summarised in 37 words.

We begin, ***Our Father***: As soon as he started to pray, Jesus addresses God as Father, a term of affection. Through this very first word 'Father' he is inviting us to call the Lord God, creator of the universe – Father, we are invited into that same relationship which he himself enjoys. He is teaching us that God loves us like a Father and we should do likewise.

Hallowed be your name. The word 'hallowed' means to make holy, to revere. So we are praying that God's very nature will be honoured in every possible way, in every part of the earth and for all time. We are praying that God's will be known and worshipped, that God's nature might be reflected in human society in justice, peace, love, joy and hope. In calling God 'Holy' we acknowledge that there is much about God which is above and beyond us.

Your kingdom come: Here we are acknowledging that God's reign over the universe is a reality but not yet fulfilled. This idea of the Kingdom of God is complex so when we pray, "Your kingdom come," we are asking God to manifest the power and glory of his kingdom in us, and throughout our world. We are asking that Christ will soon reign over us all and that the Father will hasten his return.

Give us each day our daily bread: This is a prayer asking God to meet our everyday needs for food, but also for all our other needs too. I don't think that Jesus wants us be poor, but he does want us to get in the habit of relying upon the Father for everything. Since it is God who has given us the ability to earn a living, then in a real sense, it is he who "gives" us our daily bread. He strengthens us, and provides through us. Jesus is teaching us to look to the

Father for every provision. God will provide for us without us asking for him to do so. without us even asking.

And forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us: The final two verse are related, and build on each other. First the call for forgiveness recognises God's ability to forgive human sin. Our willingness to forgive is related to God's forgiveness of us. God's healing grace to us and our obligation to others go hand in hand. We pray for forgiveness, then we connect the forgiveness we can receive from God to the forgiveness we extend to each other. We are called to forgive others when they sin or trespass against us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial: Jesus taught his followers to pray these words, when we do so we recall how much we depend on the Lord, that when our faith is tested how much we rely on him and of course it helps us remember that God is there for us all the time.

We are called to worship not only with our lips but our lives. Reflect on this wonderful prayer, used by generations of Christians and as you do, remember that there isn't a moment or a day when someone in the world isn't praying to God, using this prayer, in their own language.

Lord, teach us to pray too.