

Real deep prayer in real daily life

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[0 : 00] And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at street corners, that they may be seen by others.

Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their many words.

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

[1 : 07] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Well, thanks for reading that for us, Lizzie. I feel extremely inadequate and humbled to give a talk on prayer.

But reading this book as a staff team, and I'll come back to that, a couple of years ago, I found so helpful that the women's team, we thought it would be a good idea to talk about our prayer lives together.

And the book I've just held up is by Tim Keller, and its title is Prayer, Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God.

Now, the Lord himself gives us a lot of help in his Bible on how to pray. For example, the whole book of Psalms is the inspired prayer book of the Bible.

[2 : 15] Tonight, we're going to think a little bit about why we pray, how to pray, and some practical tips. You'll see, hopefully everyone's got a handout, you'll see on the handout where we're going.

First of all, we're going to look at what Jesus says about prayer, in the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6. And then we're going to break out into little groups where we're sitting to discuss.

Secondly, we'll look at real, deep prayer, what are the different types of prayer, and how we can grow in our prayer life. And then we'll break out for a few minutes again and discuss that section.

And then thirdly, we'll think in a more practical way about how we might set about growing our prayer life in real, daily life, where the rubber hits the road, if you like.

And finally, we'll break into our groups with the aim of praying together, swapping ideas, and encouraging each other. But to start, why pray?

[3 : 21] The opening sentence of this book is quite striking. Tim Keller writes this. In the second half of my adult life, I discovered prayer.

I had to. Now, coming from a world-renowned pastor and author, that was quite a confession. He tells the story of his wife, of how his wife challenged him that they needed to really work on their prayer lives, to keep going as a Christian, and to grow as a Christian.

The Lord wants his people to pray. Prayer is absolutely necessary in the Christian life. God speaks to us in his word, the Bible, and we speak to him in prayer.

Prayer is not a two-way conversation. We're to read his word and then respond to him in prayer. Now, there are two things involved when we pray.

There's the heart and the head. The Lord wants us to engage both. So first, our hearts. God wants our hearts to be involved.

[4 : 41] He wants our affections. It's not an intellectual experience. But secondly, he also wants our minds involved. Our heads.

He wants us to think about the Bible passages he's given us to read, to be discerning, to be thoughtful and wide-ranging in our prayers.

So both the affections of our hearts and the convictions of our minds are both involved. Now, prayer is hard. We need to acknowledge that.

The devil would love us not to be praying. Everyone has dry patches and seasons. But let's not forget, if we're his, we have his spirit living in us.

Romans 8 helps us with that. And the spirit will help us in our prayer. So don't panic. We can learn to pray. It's the way we finally treat God as God, Keller says in this book.

[5 : 44] And actually, praying can be really so encouraging as well. Let's turn to see what Jesus says about prayer himself.

So, in your handout, we're on number one. And we're putting our noses in the text here. Matthew 6. Jesus is teaching the crowds in the Sermon on the Mount.

He now gives the ultimate masterclass on prayer. Now, there's a danger for us with the Lord's Prayer. It's so familiar. We can take it for granted.

But Augustine, Luther and Calvin all base their prayer life upon it. We, too, can come face to face with our Father and King, the creator of all things.

We can pour out our hearts to him and sense him listening to us and loving us as we look carefully at the Lord's Prayer. As we heard in the reading, the verses immediately before verse 9 give us some tips.

[6 : 47] Have a look, verse 5 and 6. Talk about not being like the hypocrites who pray for outward show. Verse 7 is telling us that the length of our prayers count for nothing.

Verse 8 helps us to see that the Lord is sovereign. Now, let's look at verses 9 to 13 in more detail. Do look down at verse 9.

Jesus says here, Pray then like this. Our Father in heaven. Because of what the Lord Jesus has done for us, we are adopted children of God the Father.

We get to address the creator of the universe, the Lord God, the almighty King, a far, far greater monarch than even our late beloved Queen Elizabeth II.

We get to do this, but it's only because we're in Christ. The one who knows all things is our Father in heaven.

[7 : 49] The use of the word Father here is very informal. In Jesus' day, talking about Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament, in such familiar terms, would have been shocking. But Jesus clearly wants his followers to have a personal view of his Father.

He wanted those at the time, and he wants us today, to talk to him in intimate terms. He's not some distant authority figure. We get to do this because of Jesus.

So using this form of address, it's like saying, we're praying in Jesus' name. The second half of verse 9 says this, Hallowed be your name.

The old-fashioned meaning of this word is just holy. God is holy. His people are to live holy lives to bring honour to him. If you've got one of the church ESV versions, there's a footnote.

And footnote number 2 says this, Let your name be kept holy, or let your name be treated with reverence. This is helpful. We're to uphold the Father's name however we can.

[8 : 59] But there's something more implied. It's a petition that God be glorified among all the nations. As his people live joyful, grateful lives, we're to be a beautiful witness to him.

I guess my personal take home from verse 9 is that because of Jesus, I have a loving Father in heaven, who can never let me down, who's holy, and with whom I can have a relationship forever. My prayer is that we all remember this and want to live for our Father in heaven. Let's look at verse 10.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Again, if you've got the church Bible ESV footnote at the bottom, number 3 says, Let your kingdom come, let your will be done.

In the first half of this verse, Jesus is reminding us that our Father is the King in heaven now. And as his people, he's urging us to live for him in the day to day.

[10 : 10] To long for his kingdom and to come in full. He's showing us that our concerns as we pray are to be for his kingdom. For those of us who heard the talks on the away day, it's a bit similar.

We're to be praying for the growth of his kingdom for eternal fruit, both in ourselves and in others. As we grow in maturity and seek to obey God's will in our lives more and more, we'll point others to Jesus.

And as we pray your kingdom come, we'll yearn for it more and more. The second half of the verse adds, your will be done.

If we deeply recognise God as our Father, only then will we truly pray, your will be done. Only if we trust him fully, like a little child, can we pray this and mean it.

Jesus himself prayed this in the Garden of Gethsemane, that his Father's will be done. This is the way to true peace. If we trust our Father, it will stop us trying to control everything in our lives.

[11 : 20] We're to submit our wills and feelings to him. It's important to note that so far in this prayer, Jesus has taught us how to speak to God, how to relate to him and how to submit to him.

The prayer is rightly God-centred as it starts, so that we can be less self-centred and more directed to him. Now let's look at verse 11.

When we turn to this, our needs, our daily needs. Give us this day our daily bread. And footnote number 4 says, our bread for tomorrow.

Now this is a nod back to the Old Testament and the book of Exodus, where God fed his people with man-old bread in the desert, after the escape from Egypt. On the sixth day he would give bread for that day and also bread for the next day.

It reminds us who gives us our daily bread and helps us to trust him as we ask for our daily necessities and for those of others.

[12 : 31] Let's look at verse 12. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. If we're following Jesus, then he has forgiven us everything.

If he who knows us inside out can forgive us our debts, our sin, Jesus tells us that we too must forgive others. Now this is a really big topic in itself, and we'll be covering it in a talk later this academic year.

But for now, just glance down at 14 and 15, which help unpack the idea of forgiving others, as the Lord has forgiven us. We're to confess our sins daily to our Father, to humble ourselves before him, to forgive others as he has forgiven us, and so not to harbour bitterness towards them.

Now, of course, we're all a work in progress. We don't always get this right. But Jesus wants us to have humble, soft hearts as we approach his throne, and to be praying to be able to forgive those who have wronged us.

He's concerned for our hearts as we pray. Lastly, in this bit, let's look at verse 13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[13 : 53] Or as Footnet 5 says, the evil one. Now, being tempted is an inevitable part of being human. Jesus tells us how to pray, not to be led into temptation.

He wants his people to learn to resist temptation. It's a way in which he refines his people, giving greater humility and self-knowledge. By asking for his help, we're acknowledging that temptation is real, that we need help, and that God is sovereign over it.

As an example, if we've prayed this on any given day, then it would be at the forefront of our minds. We might be able to make wiser decisions. For myself, I know that I'm tempted, for example, to watch movies that might be a little bit on the edge.

So I could pray, asking God to help me, maybe make sure I'm not staying up too late, or watching by myself, where I would be more tempted.

And I can pray for self-control. The Lord can and does answer prayers, and he will help us to think about wise precautions. Back to the second half of verse 13.

[15 : 15] But deliver us from evil. Jesus is pointing out that the devil is real. Satan is prowling around like a waiting lion, seeing whom he may devour.

And that was preached to us recently in 1 Peter 5. Jesus takes the devil seriously. So should we. So that's Jesus' masterclass on prayer.

A friend once encouraged me that if I can't think of a text to read, or what to pray, then I can always turn to the Lord's Prayer. If we're stale or dry, we can turn to the Lord's Prayer.

If we haven't got our Bibles, we can turn to the Lord's Prayer. We can still pray to him at any time, in any place, in any season. And he longs for us to do that.

One final thought. The Lord's Prayer is given to us in plural form. It's a form of praying, not just for the individual. If we pray in community, we can help each other to see different facets of the same

Holy God.

[16:25] Like we've been seeing together in Philippians, we can strive together in prayer also. We're now in section two on the handout, so if you turn to that.

We've called this Real Deep Prayer, and we're looking at different types of prayer, for want of a better word. And by understanding different types of prayer, the hope is that it will lead to growth in our own prayer lives.

The Lord Jesus wants us to speak with our Father. He wants us to be encountering him, seeking his face daily. And for me, this process has been really helpful, so that I can imagine different types of prayer, and not get so stuck in a rut, not to get so stale.

But if we've thought through the different ways of praying, it's a really practical help, I think. So let's think of a few different types of prayers.

The first one we're calling Adoration. This is basically giving praise and glory to God. He is perfect, omnipotent, omniscient, and we should have a right view of him.

[17:43] Be in awe of him. His character is amazing. In fact, we can't really get our fine heads around it. God's glory makes anything we watched of our late Queen's coronation, or indeed funeral, pale into complete insignificance, spectacular though it was.

God's glory is in a completely different league. So a great way to start our prayer time is to give him the praise that he's due.

Adore him. Be in awe of him. In the Old Testament, God's people couldn't even approach the Holy of Holies without ritual cleansing. And only certain people could do it.

But now, we can approach directly because of what the Lord Jesus has done for us. on the cross. So one way of praying is adoration.

Second type of prayer, thanksgiving. If we stop to think about it, prayers of thanks to God are a really important way to approach him.

[18:51] Because it's an attitude of heart, isn't it? Being grateful. Wanting to say thank you. I think we can forget all the amazing things that we have from God.

There's creation for a start. I love leaves, autumn leaves and colour. I mean, the colours are just gorgeous. I'm sorry, that's shriveled slightly now. But a couple of days ago, it was the most brilliant colours.

Creation is amazing. And like we've been studying in our growth group videos, they've been saying this as well. Let's be thanking God for all the good things we have.

Material things and spiritual things. All the blessings we have if we're following him. we're redeemed. We're part of his family.

We're his daughters. And we're sisters of the Lord Jesus reigning in heaven now. Back a couple of generations, it used to be a normal thing, I'm told, to count your blessings day by day, one by one, so that each day you would remember to thank God for all the blessings that you had.

[20:01] When we stop to think, we do have many blessings, even in the darkest of circumstances. Now unfortunately, I've been to two funerals in the last couple of weeks.

And we all know of much sadness and different individual circumstances around at the moment. But, if we're trusting in Jesus, we still have much to be thankful for.

So that's thank you prayers. Third category, sorry prayers. Now the posh word for this is confession. If we're sorry for the things we know we've done wrong or for the things we've admitted to do, think or say, well this is a very important step in coming before God.

We are called to wrestle with sin. God wants us to be wrestling with our sinful nature. but with the help of his Holy Spirit and to keep short accounts with him.

He wants us to confess to him daily what it is that we're sorry about. When we repent of our sin and turn to follow Jesus for the very first time, that is an amazing moment.

[21:19] But it's just the start of the journey. Repentance is an ongoing thing. Prayer type number four.

Meditating. Meditating on the Bible. Christian meditation on the Bible means deeply dwelling in the truth in God's word. It's not the same as other types of meditation where people might empty their minds.

In fact, it's quite the opposite. We're engaging our minds as we read the Bible and then we're engaging our affections as we think about it deeply.

So to meditate on it, I might be finding one verse from a daily reading and then really mulling over it and thinking about it deeply for some time.

How might this verse affect my own life on the ground in the general messiness of life? Will it affect how I think? How I speak?

[22 : 22] How I pray? Or how I act? And you could be dwelling on this verse as you go for a walk or as you're on your commute meditating on the Bible.

Prayer type number five. Please prayers. The posh word for this is supplication or petition. We're approaching the throne of grace.

We're pleading with him, asking him to help us or others in personal situations, in particular circumstances, in evangelism.

Please prayers can be very personal and they can cover a lot of things. Really deep down heart matters, church family matters, world matters, evangelistic concerns, persecuted Christians worldwide.

We can be creative. The idea is that we are coming to our heavenly father who loves us and who wants all to come to him. So that's please prayers.

[23 : 31] A final suggestion is a method that Luther used to use. He turned every phrase of the Lord's prayer that we've just been looking at into his own words as an introduction to his then praying more free form type of prayers of praise and petition.

It's worth pointing out that with these different types of prayer one can easily flow into another type of prayer because they're all linked. For example, our sorry prayers on any one day might lead us to pray particular please prayers or what we've meditated on will influence our please prayers.

Remembering this helps us to have less of a tick list mentality and I think that's particularly we're prone to that particularly with please prayers perhaps. So there we go.

We've been thinking about different types of prayers which help us at different times and in different seasons. Different ways of speaking to God and engaging our hearts and minds as we pray.

Now some of us will be facing particularly different circumstances right now. Some illness some bereavement some singleness some pregnancy or new babies and prayer is not one size fits all but making time to pray is essential for everyone regardless of our current circumstances.

[25 : 01] So section three on your handout and we've called this a real daily life. Now we're all in slightly different positions in life but we all have in common if we're Christians is wanting to follow Jesus and to have a deeper relationship with him.

So here is where we can think about sort of practical tips and help each other. I was struck recently in a conference for Christian workers that my main take home was very very simple to keep saying sorry thank you and please to God.

That's a four day conference and that was my main take away. And I remember that it was exactly what we had been teaching our little children when they were young.

and we had some books from the Good Book Company and strikingly I always remember the prayer points being sorry thank you and please. And after this conference I was chatting with Patasha and she mentioned that Kids in Faith which is a company have brought out a set of squidgy dice.

I borrowed that off Patasha. And she uses this with Wilf so with a young child. I believe what happens is I won't do a demo but you roll the dice and on one side of the dice it says something to pray so where are we?

[26 : 37] Sorry prayers. And then you roll it again and oh yes thank you prayers. And you roll it again and please prayers.

and they've actually added two lovely ones as well which is pay for other people and praise God the king. Praise is the other one.

So that's a lovely idea isn't it for the littlest of children. So when we pray we pray this is you pray whatever is on there but I thought to myself this is an excellent reminder whether you're a little child or someone who studied quite a bit of theology in your time we can never do better than stick to the basics of sorry thank you and please prayers.

You may not like acronyms but if you do like acronyms they can be helpful sometimes when we get stuck about what to pray. One is called STOP I don't know if you've heard that S-T-O-P sorry thank you others please the stop the stop sign another one is ACTS I don't know if you've heard that ACTS adoration confession thanks supplication and it's just another way of helping us when we're

feeling stuck I can do those types of prayers.

Tim Keller in this book I've brought along and I've put it on the resource sheet at the back of your handout he quotes Jim Packer when saying that what we should be hoping for we should be hoping in our prayer life to find our way through duty to delight through duty to delight I think it's a lovely phrase so that we're both enjoying God and glorifying him at the same time so we're both speaking with God and encountering him okay so let's think of a few tools that might help us to deepen our prayer life and have that intimacy with God in the everyday so here are a few resources just put together and on the back of your sheet there's a list now quite a few people in the church family have recommended the first thing on there prayer mate and I heard this group talking about prayer mate it's a very good app

[29 : 03] I am told this is the new thing that I am going to do is download it so you can ask me prayer app we enter apparently so Ruth showed me actually we enter in things that we want to be reminded to pray about and that can be useful on the commute you can enter in bible verses things to pray about apparently it's ever so useful lots of people have mentioned it I've just put an explore app on there you used to be able to get it in a book form but you can pay a subscription and get it on your tablet and you can still get it in paper I think but it goes through the passage and then gives lots of ideas of prayer so I think those sort of things are very useful these little books have been produced by the Good Book Company they're a little series five things to pray for for example non-Christian friends for someone suffering your kids so that's an option possibly

I think Patasha is recommending those I think daily reading notes are very helpful for prayer ideas these ones from ten of those are undated so that's a different company ten of those undated and I find them very helpful because they've got a bible passage which you read and then quite a lot of prayer ideas I spoke to Alice Meadows about recommending something for new mums and those are little kids and there's something called the new baby survival guide which is bite-sized bible reading and that's from the Good Book Company and on the handout there's a few other ideas of books and of course you can come and talk to me and we can chat in groups as well so do use also one another as a resource for good ideas I mean getting together with people in our growth groups to encourage each other in prayer maybe talk to your growth group leader especially as we get to know each other better through this term and beyond maybe using a whatsapp group chat to help us with prayer meeting up with a friend to pray things through is also really helpful so I would encourage you to use each other what I don't want us to hear as you go away this evening is I must do better I must turn over a new leaf I must try harder I hope we've seen that by looking at what the Lord Jesus is teaching in the Lord's prayer that we're wanting to come before our heavenly father who we can perfectly trust with everything and to give him thanks and praise we can also confess and meditate on his word and commit things to him we might feel it's impossible to have a long time of daily prayer in our routine but we all have a finite amount of time but interestingly we all have the same amount of time too so it's just really a question of how we choose to spend it we can ask for his help in this if we've slipped away from praying very much don't put the bar too high straight away prayer improves with practice and a few minutes at the beginning of the day is just a great idea as our growth group video said a couple of weeks ago if we get to bed early we will be better able to get up in the morning another idea is to try praying both morning and evening that might work for some it's something

I had never tried before and again that might be something that you might want to try a few minutes in the morning and a few minutes right at the end of the day if you want to borrow this book or get your own copy the appendices in this book by Tim Keller have quite a lot of other ideas about how to get going better in your prayer life well there's that list of resources and do have a look at that