

How to Pray

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[0 : 00] Today's reading is from Matthew chapter 6 verses 5 to 15 and it can be found on page 978 of the church Bibles.

Matthew 6 verses 5 to 15. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in 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 that 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.

[1 : 17] Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 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.

And we thought, Simon and I were talking last year, we were thinking, what's a good thing to do in the new year, new year's resolutions and all that sort of thing, as Matthew was saying earlier.

And prayer is a classic, isn't it? You know, all the people outside church, what their dieting is what I need to do for new year. Christians, prayer. I need to get my prayer life back on track. So it's a great idea to do a series on prayer.

We're going to do four talks over the course of January on prayer. And as I start, well, it seems appropriate, let's pray. Our good and gracious Father in heaven, we love you and adore you and honour you.

[2 : 22] We praise you that, even though we're just, you know, a handful of people meeting in a school hall, that the Lord of heaven and earth, the one who made all things, is here with us by your Spirit.

So please, we ask, good and gracious Father, would you give us good gifts after Christmas of knowing you, of understanding your ways better. Please would you encourage us and strengthen us in our prayer lives.

And we ask this for the glory of your name, Father. Amen. So, New Year's, it's a good time for self-evaluation, for stopping and thinking, what do I want to be this year?

What do I want to get better at? Do I want to diet more, or do I want to be better at a language, or where do I want to go this year? What do I want to say that on Christmas, sorry, New Year's Eve 2011, that 2011 was about, that I've done, that I've achieved, I've become, I've been?

Well, let me ask the pastor's question, okay? How are you doing spiritually at the moment? It's a good time to stop and think about all sorts of things. How would you, you know, if I asked you to say, marks out of 10 for where you are on a spiritual scale, where would you put yourself at the moment?

[3 : 33] Don Carson, a famous writer from Canada, says that, excuse me, when people come to him and say they're spiritually dry, he's got two questions for them, positive and negative.

Negatively, what sin are you committing then, causing you to be spiritually dry? Anyway, it's a good question, isn't it? Because often our sins are holding us back spiritually. But more positively, he then asks, well, why have you stopped reading your Bible?

To which I might add, why have you stopped praying? Because often people, when they're spiritually dry, like in the desert, have just stopped praying. Their prayer life is just shriveled up, is evaporated.

One of my great heroes in the Bible is a guy called Enoch. Let's see if I can get my mouse device out.

And Enoch was a man who, I was reading Genesis earlier in the year, and this is what it says of Enoch. Enoch, there's only about four verses in the Bible about Enoch. And this is what it says of him.

[4 : 40] Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. I mean, he was in his 300s by this stage, so he'd had a pretty good life. But here's a man who, it could be said of him on his epitaph was, Enoch walked with God.

So at some point, God in his life thought, do you know what Enoch, Enoch, sorry, Enoch, come, come, I want you to be with me. Here's a guy who, in his life, as he walked along in his life, walked with God.

I imagine, you sort of see a child walking along with their dad, just walking along, hand in hand. And spiritually, in his life, that was Enoch. He walked hand in hand with God.

In the morning when he first got up, when he's having his breakfast, when he's going to work, when he's at work, when he's at home with the family, wherever he is, whatever he's doing, he's holding, he's walking with God.

He delighted his father. And I'd like to encourage us this year, as we think about prayer, I don't want these talks to be guilt trip sessions. Every Christian I've ever met thinks that they could pray more.

[5 : 49] I mean, there literally doesn't exist a person who's a Christian that says, I pray enough. But I'd love us to be like Enoch, to be like Jesus, and be people who more and more walk with God in our prayer lives, as we speak to God, as we walk with him.

This is what Luke summarises Jesus' prayer life. Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. I mean, that was normal for Jesus. You know, the disciples would wake up in the morning, what's Jesus gone?

Oh, he's probably off praying somewhere, because that's what he did. He did that all the time.

Jesus, like Enoch, walked with God. Now, I don't know if you've ever seen, rather than a child walking with their dad, sometimes I've noticed teenagers when they're walking along the streets together.

Have you ever noticed a teenager doing this? Well, one of them's got headphones on, listening to their MP3 player, and the other one's on the phone chatting with someone else. And it's like, as if they may as well not be with each other walking along.

They're just, what's the, why don't you talk to each other? Okay. But spiritually, often, we can be like that, as Christians. We walk with God, as it were, but we don't walk with God. We walk, we're walking along with our spiritual MP3 player on, or talking on the phone, as if God isn't there.

[6 : 58] And I'd like to encourage us to be people of prayer, people who keep praying to our Father in heaven. And I'd love that to be said of you, that you'd be people who walk with God, people who are on your knees before God, with him, all the day, every day, walking with him.

Now, the context of these verses, if you've got your Bibles open in chapter 6, are Jesus teaching three things, really, about religiousness.

This is in the Sermon on the Mount, so there's a long sermon by Jesus. And you'll notice, before the bit we've read, is about giving to the needy. So he's teaching there, don't give money like hypocrites.

Religious hypocrites give money so that everyone knows, oh, look, how good are you? They're the kind of people, up their arms, there's all those bands that say all the charities they give to, and they've always got loads of poppies on themselves, because they want other people to see their givers.

But Jesus is saying, don't worry about what other people, let God know that you're a giver. And then after it, we've got a bit on fasting, from verses 16 to 18. It's the same idea, don't fast like hypocrites. Religious hypocrites pretend, oh, I'm fasting, things are so bad, I'm so devoted to God.

[8 : 24] They want everyone else to think they're brilliant, super spiritual fasters. And Jesus says, don't do that, wash your face, don't let anyone else see, do it for God. Let your religion be something you do for your Father in Heaven, rather than for the watching world.

And lo and behold, he's teaching exactly the same thing about prayer. Don't pray like the hypocrites, who pretend they're praying to God, but they're genuinely, actually, deeply, more worried about what other people think of them, rather than what God thinks of them. So in this talk, you're going to follow through on the back of the service sheet, there's a couple of points. And the first point is going to be the longest, so don't despair when we're keeping going on the first point.

And the first point is this, our attitudes behind prayer. The second point will be our attitudes in prayer. But firstly, our attitudes behind prayer. Let me read from chapter 6, verse 5, and we'll spend a few moments in these two verses.

It says, See, the hypocrites, they love to be on the street corners.

[9 : 55] They love to stand in the synagogues. They love to be in the churches, in the prayer meetings, and say their long and glorious and theologically astute prayers. They sound very impressive.

They're the people you're intimidated by, and they want you to be intimidated by them, because they love the sound of them. They want people to think, well, I wish I was like them spiritually. But they're hypocrites.

Now, a hypocrite isn't really so much someone who doesn't walk the walk but talks the talk.

Hypocrite isn't so much someone who does, you know, says something but doesn't do it.

A hypocrite is more someone who wears a mask. A hypocrite is someone who's pretending to be this person, but actually underneath they're this person. They're a wolf in sheep's clothing, for example.

And a prayerful religious hypocrite is someone who pretends to have this super spiritual walk with God. But actually, the only thing they're ever praying for is themselves and about themselves, so that others think well of them.

[10 : 54] And Jesus says they've received their reward already. What is their reward? The others think, well, they're impressive. And you won't hear anything from God if that's the way you think about prayer.

Because they weren't even praying to him anyway. Of course, in contrast, Jesus is saying, those who pray in secret to God, those who want him to pray vertically rather than horizontally, those are the people God hears.

Those are the people God rewards and answers their prayers. Now, it's important to see what Jesus is not saying and what he is saying. Firstly, what is he not saying? He's not saying don't ever pray in public, okay?

He's not saying don't ever pray in public, because then he teaches us our Father in heaven. He teaches us a corporate prayer. So he's expecting us to pray corporately. That's a good and normal thing.

He's not saying don't ever pray in public. He's just saying don't pray to the public. When you're amongst people, who am I praying to? So there you are in the prayer meeting.

[11 : 54] Here you are praying at the front in church. There you are in your prayer trip, or just praying with other Christians. Who are you praying to? Am I thinking God, or am I thinking other people?

That's essentially what Jesus is teaching. And let me put it straight. I think this is what he's saying. He's saying if you pray to other people, expect God not to answer your prayers.

And conversely, if you pray to God with others, expect your prayers to be answered. Now, why is it we pray to others? Why do we get stuck in that rut of feeling worried about what other people think? You're kind of saying, you ask, imagine yourself in the prayer meeting, and I don't like these prayer meetings because I'm not very good at praying, and I don't know if I'm praying the right thing, and am I using the right words, and I feel uncomfortable praying out now because my prayers are much shorter, and they're just fumbling compared to the person I'm sitting next to.

I feel awkward. And I want to encourage you, and I'm sure Jesus would say this, don't worry about other people. Don't pray for other people or worry about what other people think you.

[12 : 59] Worry about what your God thinks of you, what your Father thinks of you. Be released from others and just pray to your Father by faith. See, when we come together, we're a family.

We're not a bunch of people who want to sit and judge each other and evaluate each other's prayers. Oh, yeah, that was an eight, a bit like come dancing, you know. Nine, well done. You

know, we're not like that. We're brothers and sisters.

We love each other. You know, praying amongst church people should be the most comfortable and easy thing to do. It shouldn't be a terrifying thing at all because we're brothers and sisters. We're just forgiven sinners.

None of us are perfect. None of us have got our prayer lives sorted. Some are further on than others. That's just the way it is. We're not evaluating each other. When we're praying with others, we're not thinking, oh, I don't know about that prayer.

Which is, again, why we say amen at the end of prayers. I tell you, there's nothing more discouraging when you pray with other Christians. And you pray a prayer and you really mean it to the Lord. And you say amen at the end.

[13:55] And there's six or seven of you and there's one person mumbles, ooh, at the end. But it's wonderful when seven or eight of you, and everyone says amen. Because what's happened there is all of you together, corporately, are praying vertically.

We're all saying that prayer together. That's why it's really important when we're praying with other people, and I tell you, I find this hard. I don't want to pretend that I don't find this otherwise. But when we're praying with other people, when the person at the front is praying the prayers, we all want to be saying, we all want to be listening because we're praying that prayer too.

We're all lifting this prayer up together. So we're all saying amen at the end. So let's pray together as groups. When we come together at the prayer meeting on Tuesday, 7.30, 7.45, let us be people who are praying vertically to God together, saying amen together.

But what about private prayer? Let me give you some tips on private prayer. Jesus says when you pray, go into your room, shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. He's not saying don't ever pray in public, but he is saying actually the majority, much of our prayer will be in private. Prayer is like icebergs, you see. Nine-tenths of it should be sort of hidden, you see. Maybe you might see a tenth of it. Let me give you seven quick tips on private prayer.

[15:12] I've been reading a whole bunch of books. One of the most helpful, and some of these ideas are from a book by Don Carson called Prayer for Spiritual Reformation, which is an excellent book I recommend.

You can ask me about that afterwards. Let me give you seven quickfire tips on prayer. Some of these are his and some of these are mine. First of all, plan to pray.

The majority of times I don't pray is because I just haven't got a slot in the day when I'm praying. Just be people who plan to pray. When is your prayer slot for the day? You have a breakfast slot. You have a brush of teeth slot. You have a go to bed. We all have slots in the day for all sorts of things. When is your time to pray? If you're finding it difficult to pray in the morning, what time does your alarm go off?

Subtract 15 from that. Reset your alarm and get up 15 minutes earlier. Rico Tyson, a famous evangelist, I remember him saying in a talk, he said, if you see me up and around after 11.15 in the evening, you can say to me, Rico, oh, I see you've decided you're not going to be praying in the morning.

[16:17] So Rico is so organised with his life that he knows if he's not in bed by 11, 11.15, that he's not going to get up at whatever time he gets up in the morning so that he can pray in the morning. He's a man who's planned his life so that he has a slot to pray.

So when is your slot to pray? Why don't New Year reassert a time slot when you actually pray?

Then it's likely to happen. It does for me. Secondly, have you got a place to pray?

When I was younger, I used to pray on my commute to work on the tube. To be honest, you can do it, but it's a disaster really. It's very difficult to pray on the train. Or driving. I'm sure that's illegal to pray when you're driving.

Where do you have a place to pray? Have somewhere quiet in your house. If it's a broom... The old days, I used to have prayer closets. I don't know what that is. But where's the place in your house? Somewhere quiet where you can pray. Just you and your fathers, in secret. Thirdly, posture. This is a random thing to put on. Have you ever think about your posture of prayer? I used to pray lots with younger Christians and they would sit there like this when they'd pray.

[17:18] Oh yeah, God. And your posture in prayer is a lot about what you're feeling to God. Do you ever pray on your knees? We've kind of lost that a little bit.

Do you know, praying on your knees is wonderful if you're feeling really repentant or you feel real need for humility or really exalting God. Praying on your knees is wonderful. Or when we were in Rome a year or two ago, we saw this inscription on some early Christian graves.

That is a Christian praying in the first century. In the first century, they used to pray like this, raising holy hands in prayer. That is a brilliant way to pray because sometimes when you pray like this, it's as if you're lifting yourself up to God.

You're lifting God up. Why not think about your posture in prayer? Because the way you have in your body is very helpful for the way you're expressing yourself to God.

Very helpful. Prayer lists. Why not start a new prayer list for the new year? Here's a random prayer list structure that I came up with this week.

[18:24] Why not have an everyday list and a weekly list? These are not rules, by the way. These are just the throwaway ideas. Why not have a... Because then when you get up in the morning, you think, oh, what should I pray? Blank head. I've got some things I can pray for.

So have a list of things you might pray for every day. And then why not have a weekly list and have a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday thing? Just things you might pray for that day. It's very helpful because it just gives you structure to your prayers.

It's not the only thing. Pray where you feel led to pray, but it's very helpful having prayer lists. And I just rehash mine every few months because they're always out of date. I change them all the time just to give them some freshness.

What about this? Preventing mental drift. Do you find it really easy to say, Father God, thank you for today. Really please help me at work. Oh, I wonder what I've got to do at work today.

And, you know, suddenly mental drift. And even when you're in prayer groups, it's really hard for your mind not to drift. Let me give you a few tips on preventing mental drift. Number one, pray out loud.

[19:21] On your own, do it. Pray out loud. It's a weird thing to do, but it really helps you keep concentrating your prayers. Why not pray, Father God, I'm feeling very distracted this morning.

Please, would you help me not to be distracted to the Lord's answer's prayers? Thirdly, I've got a little notepad and a pen next to me when I pray because when those things come into my mind, oh, I've got to remember to do whatever it is.

Just stop, jot it down, put it to the side, forget it, worry about it afterwards because then I'm going to keep it in my head. Those are just some things I do to help me to try and prevent mental drift, which always happens.

Perfecting your prayers. Why not try to get better at your praying? Two good ways of learning how to pray. One is, get sat next to someone who is actually very good at praying in the prayer meeting and listen to them.

It's very encouraging learning from other people. Another way I learn how to pray is there's a book I really like called Valley of Vision, which is a book of Puritan prayers and I often pray one in the morning because I read those prayers and I find myself at the end of going, Amen.

[20:24] I mean, that is a prayer and I'm learning how to pray. And the last one, which I think is going to go off the bottom of the screen, is pray until you pray. I find in the mornings, there I am, I'm tired, my brain's dead, I haven't had a coffee yet and prayer can be quite stuttery, quite difficult.

And this is just the advice of Don Carson actually, just keep praying until you pray. You'll find, you'll get through, you'll break a barrier until you get to the point where you're really speaking to the Lord. Why not keep praying until you pray?

Particularly if you've got time. And your Father, Jesus says, who sees in secret will reward you if you pray. Those are just tips, just throw away thoughts on your private prayer life.

The second thing that Jesus teaches us is not just to pray to God instead of people, but pray in faith, not to manipulate God. Have a look down at chapter 6, verse 7.

When you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do. For they think they'll be heard for their many words. Don't be like them.

[21:33] For your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. The second attitude here is it's very easy to slip into a mentality that if I pray in a certain way, then God has to answer my prayer.

If I pray like this or in this manner or in this way, then God's got to answer my prayer because I prayed like that. And subtly, we've just twisted prayer from asking my Father for good gifts into a

kind of manipulating God into having to give me something by the way I pray. Now the Gentiles here, he's talking about, they think that God will hear them for their many words. And that's a classic way. Some people think that if they pray for long enough, you know, if I do all-night prayer vigils or 24-hour prayer stations or whatever it is, because of the length of my prayers, God's got to hear me.

Now those are good things to do. Pray for long periods. There's nothing wrong with praying for a long time. But don't think that God has to hear you because of the length of your prayers. I think it's striking. How short is the Lord's Prayer?

I mean, you can do it in about 15 seconds flat, can't you? And that's the prayer that Jesus taught us. It's a very short prayer. See, all you have to do, rather than praying long, long, long, long, long, long prayers, all I have to do is pray to my Father who loves me, ask Him for good gifts, which He already knows that I need, and just leave it with Him.

[22 : 57] See, that's faith, isn't it? Faith just means to trust your Father. Dad, I really need this. Please would you give it to me? Amen. That's a prayer of faith.

All right, and other ways which I think we subtly try to manipulate God, some people think that they treat prayers like magic charms, like the Lord's Prayer can be like a magic charm. If I say it every night, then God will bless me.

If I say my Hail Marys enough times, God will bless me. God becomes a bit like a slot machine. Stick in a couple of prayers and out comes a chocolate bar, you know, whatever you want. But again, why would God be like that?

He's your dad. He loves to give you good things. Just ask Him. You don't have to manipulate Him with magic charm prayers. Other ways that we might pray, some Christians pray, they think, if I have enough spiritual fervour, if I pray loudly enough, oh God, then He'll answer my prayers.

And do you know what? There's nothing wrong with spiritual fervour. There's nothing wrong with asking for things with passion. But don't let slip into the mentality which is easy to do that thinks God's got to answer my prayer because of my passion.

[24 : 06] He doesn't. He knows your heart. He knows if you're putting on the passion or not. He knows what you're really like. He knows what you need. Just ask Him. Do it passionately if you want. That's fine.

If that's how you feel at the time. But don't think because of your passion, God has to answer you. You just have to ask your dad. Have you ever seen children trying all the tricks in the book?

Kids are clever to get something out of mum or dad. You know, nagging or whatever it is. There's loads of different tactics getting around and looking sweetly. I don't know what it is. And it's brilliant when parents can see straight through it.

Absolutely. Well, God is the same. He sees straight through our means to manipulate him. We just have to ask him. He's our dad. He knows what's best for us. Just ask him.

And that is the prayer of faith. Well, that's the first and longest point. Attitudes behind prayer. Pray to God, not to people. And pray in faith, not to manipulate. Let me just spend a few moments on the Lord's Prayer itself and think about some attitudes in prayer.

[25 : 07] Now, Simon Dowdy, our pastor, is going through the Lord's Prayer in our prayer meeting, so I won't spend ages on this. But I want to encourage you to think of the Lord's Prayer as a template, as a model for prayer.

So often I'm thinking, how shall I pray this morning? Why don't I pray the Lord's Prayer? And think of each phrase as an attitude that you turn into your own words and pray in your own way for that very day or for that week.

And actually, I learn loads out of prayer just by praying through the Lord's Prayer in my own words. It's not magic. It's not a magic charm prayer. It's a series of attitudes. So let me just go through each phrase, just quickly thinking about what the attitude is and commending it as a way you might pray. So the first is the attitude of being a child, our Father in Heaven. What a great way to start a prayer. My Father, my good Father in Heaven, thank you that you've made me your son, you've made me your child.

Thank you that you've adopted me in your family. Thank you that you've given the Lord Jesus so that I can know you and walk with you. What a great way to start a prayer. Talk to your dad. But the second attitude is a stupid translation.

[26 : 16] It's a silly old-fashioned translation. Hallowed be your name means holy. May your name be holy. My mum always says, Marks and Spencers has got a good name.

And what she means by that is not, I like the sound of Marks and Spencers, although Marks is quite a nice name. It's not about the sound of the name. When she says Marks and Spencers have got a good name, what she means is they make good clothes and they make nice food.

You know, they're trustworthy. They've got a good reputation in Marks and Spencers. So when we're praying Hallowed be your name, we're saying of God, I honour your name. I honour your reputation.

To me, you are holy. You are a great God. It's an attitude, the praise. Very interesting, isn't it? It's easy to get out the shopping list when we start praying. But Jesus commends, why not praise God? It's so much fun spending time praising God. We'll think about that in a couple weeks' time. But why not start with praise? Hallowed be your name. God, you are a great God, the only God above all gods. You're the one who made the heavens and the earth and you made me and all that I know, you are a great God.

[27 : 21] The third attitude is one of hope. I think this is fascinating. Your kingdom come. Who's the kind of person that thinks to say to God as a priority, your kingdom come. I cannot wait for your new heavens and your new earth.

I cannot wait for the new creation. I cannot wait, Father God, for the day when Jesus comes back and I see him with my own eyes. I cannot wait for the day when all things are righteous.

Father God, I cannot wait for the day when I am sinless. I cannot wait for the day when everybody loves each other perfectly. This is an attitude of salivating about our eternal wonderful futures.

Why not pray about how brilliant the future will be? It's a brilliant way to pray. It's so encouraging. And as soon as you pray your kingdom come and how wonderful the future will be, you think, oh, and how not wonderful the world is today.

So you find yourself saying, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Oh, Father God, would you make this world like that one? An attitude of hope.

[28 : 23] And then an attitude of dependence. Oh, Father God, give us today our daily bread.

Because every mouthful I eat, every heartbeat, every breath I take, every penny in my bank account, all my friends, all my intellect, all the abilities, everything I have is all by God's grace.

And it's very easy to get so self-dependent or self-righteous, isn't it? So helpful. Why not pray with thanksgiving for all that we have and ask God, Father, today I need your help.

Please, would you provide for me? Physically and spiritually. An attitude of repentance. I think, again, this is very interesting. Jesus would always have us pray, Father God, forgive us our sins.

Because we don't want to get to the point in our lives where we're self-righteous, where we think we're okay. We're always, always falling short of God's glory. And one day we'll be perfect, but not until that day. So Jesus would have us always pray, forgive us our sins.

And yet, there's that, did you notice the line he put at the end, verse 14. If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

[29 : 34] In other words, even when I find myself praying, Father, forgive me my sins, I'm saying, as I forgive those who sinned against me, oh, hang on, have I forgiven Jane and Dave?

Because I know that if I haven't forgiven others, why would God forgive me? Very helpful thing to do in prayer. And finally, an attitude of desired godliness, lead us not into temptation.

Father God, forgive me my sins, I'm so sorry for the way I've lived. And please today, Father, would you lead me not into temptation? Would you deliver me from the evil one, from the devil? Would you help me today by the power of your spirit to live to please you?

Keep me from all those things I know I've just asked for forgiveness from. Please help me. Amen. What a great prayer. Pray all sorts of other things.

But I think that's a wonderful attitude in prayer. So let me commend the Lord's Prayer as a template in how to pray, in thinking how to pray. We've thought about two things this morning.

[30 : 36] Our attitudes behind prayer, praying to God vertically, not praying to people. And not trying to manipulate God, but asking him for things as a father in faith. And then just our attitudes in prayer, maybe use the Lord's Prayer as a template.

Pray how you feel led. It's not a rule, but it's a really good way to pray, and it teaches you very much. At the beginning I mentioned Enoch. Do you remember Enoch? He walked with God like a father walks with a child.

Why not this year, let it be a year, and I'm sorry, I say this to myself as much as I say it to all of you. Turn over a new leaf, forget all the things that we've failed in before in prayer, and why don't we get ourselves walking with God, praying to him.

Set yourself time in the morning to honour him and thank him and praise him and ask him for good gifts that he loves to give. I would love it if you were more and more of a person like Jesus, like Enoch, who walked with God more.

Now if you've got any more questions, I think it's very, please come and ask me, do ask Simon or Helen, ask your growth group leaders. If you want tips on prayer, don't be shy to ask, because we're all family here, and it's a good thing to do.

[31 : 45] I don't have all the answers, actually, I've got a few. It's really helpful. Ask older people, because they've been praying for longer. Why not ask them how to pray? And if you're struggling in prayer, let me encourage you, why not ask, the best person in the universe to ask for help with anything is God.

So when I'm struggling with prayer, Father, I'm finding it really hard to pray. Please would you help me to pray? It's about the best prayer you ever pray. It's funny that, isn't it? Why don't we say a prayer as we finish?

Our good and gracious Father in heaven, we want to say to you as your people, thank you that you're our God and you're our Father and you've made us your children.

Hallowed be your name. Our good and gracious God, we honour you and praise you and exalt you, for you genuinely and truly are the God who makes all things happen. Everything is named by your name.

You name everything. You've made us and made us your people, both in creating us and saving us in the Lord Jesus. We honour you so much. Our Father, your kingdom come.

[32 : 51] We long for the day that we're running for, that we're living for when we see you with our own eyes and where everyone is righteous and everything is perfected, everything is clean, where there is no more sickness, no more death and no more sin.

We long for that day and we humbly ask, Father, that you would help the United Kingdom to be more like God's Kingdom. Please, we pray for our government and all those in authority.

We long that, Father, that you would help this nation know you and therefore reflect your ways more and more. Our Father, give us today our daily bread. Father, we have everything from you.

Thank you so much. We sit here so privileged. Please, we ask for all the things that we need, our food, our clothing, our health, the protection of our children. And, Father, we ask that you'd nourish and strengthen us spiritually as we take the Lord's Supper and as we walk with you, Father.

Forgive us our sins as we prayed earlier, Father, as we forgive those who have sinned against us. Thank you for your grace to us, Father God. And would you help us today and this week not to be led into temptation, Father.

[34 : 00] Would you protect us from the evil one so that everything that we think and say and do is pleasing to you and honouring to you, our good and gracious Father. Thank you so much for your grace to us in the Lord Jesus.

Amen.