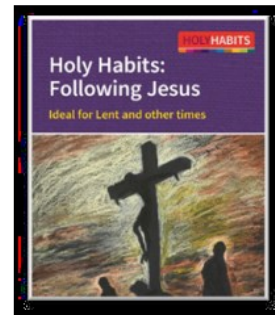




LENT COURSE - HOLY HABITS: FOLLOWING JESUS

Week 4: 11th March - 'JESUS PRAYING'

Focus habits: 'Prayer', 'Fellowship' and 'Worship'
Luke 11:1-4



Before we start... any feedback on your 'giving thanks/eating a piece of bread' before a main meal last week? *(If you are on your own doing this course reflect on your reaction to this exercise)*

Opening Song: 'To be in your presence' by Noel Richards <https://youtu.be/typ7cueKdT4>

(Reflect on the words if you do not have access to the music, or you don't know the tune.)

To be in your presence, to sit at your feet, where your love surrounds me, and makes me complete:
This is my desire, O Lord, this is my desire. This is my desire, O Lord, this is my desire.

To rest in your presence, not rushing away, to cherish each moment – here I would stay:
This is my desire, O Lord, this is my desire. This is my desire, O Lord, this is my desire.

Prayer: Lord, we pray that you would teach us afresh how to pray and renew a passion for prayer within us. Amen.

Bible Reading: Luke 11:1-4 (NRSV) (As you listen/read - what words or phrases do you notice? Note these and we will return to them later.)

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.'² He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.'³ Give us each day our daily bread.'⁴ And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

Reflect: Read the text slowly three times. Note the phrases/words which jump out at you... (we will return to these later).

<https://youtu.be/sxWOfNqobNY> Watch and join in with the Contemplative Fire's sacred posture body prayer of the Lord's Prayer. *(If you prefer, or you have no internet, say the prayer very slowly, with some actions if you feel that would help...)*

Most of us pray the Lord's Prayer so regularly that we risk dulling its meaning and impact through our familiarity with it. The disciples saw how important prayer was to Jesus and John the Baptist. In hunger and humility, they ask Jesus to teach them to pray. Jesus offers them a model for praying – some say it should be called the 'Disciples' Prayer'. We have a shorter version in Luke; a longer version in Matthew (6:9-13).

The prayer begins with worship - 'hallowed be your name' – prayer and worship are linked in the way they honour God and orientate our relationship with God and God's world. In our regular prayers it is important to inhabit this worshipful space and resist the urge to rush to our list of requests. (In emergencies or when we are in a bad place, there is a rich biblical tradition of crying out to God without the language or emotions of worship).

The focus of prayer is the kingdom or reign of God, in which the hungry are fed. Notice how the prayer uses plural personal pronouns, 'us' rather than 'me'. This is a fellowship prayer – a prayer we share with all those who pray it; not just for our own personal blessing and benefit. In these days of climate and Covid emergencies, and divided communities and nations, there is a particular challenge to pray this prayer conscious of the need for the healing of relationships and the fabric of creation.

Question for Reflection:

1. (In pairs if possible, or reflect on your own) Think about your habits of prayer at the moment. Do they need to be renewed?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you have a story of a way your prayer life has been renewed recently?
2. How can you avoid the rush to making requests and enter into prayer in a worshipful way?
3. How can your shared times of prayer be renewed? Could you pray as a group when you are not physically together, such as via prayer apps? Could you organise times when you covenant to pause to pray wherever you are?
4. How does Covid, the climate emergency and the divisions in society challenge and shape your prayers?
5. Returning to the words you noted from the Bible reading, which other things might you need to pay attention to?

Respond: Listen to the 'The Lord's Prayer' sung by Jackie Evancho

<https://youtu.be/Vg2AsS4CErM> (If you don't have the internet you could sing the Lord's Prayer yourself)

Prayer: The Lord's Prayer...

Sing: 'What a Friend we have in Jesus' by Joseph Scriven

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged— Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden, cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Saviour, still our refuge— Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In His arms He'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.

'Take-home' idea: Dwell deeply with the Lord's Prayer this week. Try lighting a candle and spending five minutes reflecting on one word or phrase of the prayer each day.

1. Abba (Father).
2. Hallowed be your name.
3. Your kingdom come.
4. Give us each day our daily bread.
5. And forgive us our sins.
6. For we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
7. And do not bring us to the time of trial.