

The HOLY FROG Blog

Honour Others, Lower Yourself & Fully Rely On God



LORD, TEACH US to PRAY!

At six years old, sitting in an inflatable dinghy, amongst a bunch of my elder brother's friends, out on the sea, I felt quite grown up and safe. I waved to my Dad, watching us play, we exchanged a "thumbs up" and he smiled. Then, as some of the bigger lads began to rock the boat, one of them fell into the water, which everyone thought was hilarious... apart from me. I was terrified! Another boy leapt out and the dinghy tipped to such an angle that water began to swirl around me. Everyone began hollering and shouting in excitement as it capsized and we were launched into the cold, salty sea. Gasping in mouthfuls of water I desperately called out "**Daddy! Daddy! Help me!**"

It is of course quite natural to call for help when trouble comes. It may surprise you to know, however, that for many people, **praying is an instinctive response to a crisis**: "Please, God! Help me! Whether through fear, a moment of panic, an outburst of anger, or a quiet moment of reflection in search of hope, people start to pray - but to whom?"

Henry, 64, explained to The Guardian (2017) that although he didn't believe in God, he prayed every night, kneeling by his bed to silently recite the Lord's Prayer. "Sometimes," he explained "I include other specific people or suffering groups. Then I have a fuzzy moment about me – not concrete thoughts" Praying didn't make him feel better he admitted nor had he any idea if God heard his prayers. "I wonder why I don't stop doing it" he said. "Sometimes I feel a hypocrite." Which was honest. **So why do we pray?**

Unlike Harry, **there was no doubt in Jesus' mind** as to why he prayed - it was an important aspect of his life. He was constantly communicating with God. Everything he did, thought or said was wrapped up in his unity with God; sharing and living every moment of life, good, bad or ugly, with God. When Jesus prayed he wasn't just reciting words, he was living out a real relationship...with God! For Jesus, **it was about connecting with God**. Perhaps it was this intimate dynamic that prompted the disciples to ask Jesus "**Lord, Teach us to pray.**" Which Jesus happily did saying...

"This, then, is how you should pray:

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6:9-13)

Click below for The Lord's Prayer



Jesus taught his followers more than just a few words to recite when in trouble. He showed how it is possible to connect, communicate and **'to be with God' when we pray**. Jesus' model of how to pray reflected how he lived, holding to the commands to **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and Love your neighbour as yourself."**(Matthew 22:37ff) In the first part of this prayer therefore, Jesus reminds us of God's rule and reign in this world and our relationship with him. Next, there

is a focus on our human relationships and needs. The final part points towards God's salvation in the world now, and in the one to come. So let's consider the first few words:

“Our Father in Heaven”



Jesus often referred to God as ‘Father.’ This was quite a significant difference to other religious leaders of the time. When Jesus refers to his Father as ‘abba’ (Aramaic) it is a very comfortable, deeply intimate child-like term, interpreted as ‘daddy’ and show us that **Jesus has a very close relationship with his father**, not distant, stoic or merely positional. It is what a loving father has with his child and the child lives securely and comfortably in that love. It is a close relationship we too can know, with the God of Heaven himself! Awesome!

“Hallowed be your name” It is also important to understand that we approach God with respect and reverence. **‘Hallowed’ reminds us God is holy**, ‘set apart’ or ‘sacred’. So, as we come to God, our Father, we must also be mindful of his holiness and show respect, treating him and his name with honour. In the Netflix series ‘The Crown’, when coming into the Queen’s presence, her children first greet her with ‘Mummy’, give her a kiss and then show reverence to her as Monarch with a bow or curtsy. It is with the same reverence **We are invited into God’s presence, Our Father and King.**



As a Christian I believe that prayer is far more than just words or something to ‘use in an emergency’. **Prayer is vital for our daily walk with God.** Prayer opens up the possibility to share life with God in all of its challenges and triumphs. There is a relationship to be explored between us and God that is centred in prayer. My cry for help as I fell into the sea was not the first time I had spoken to my father! I didn’t call out to some distant stranger or hope that ‘something out there’ might save me. I specifically called for my daddy because I knew him, because I trusted him, because he was there with me. Don't wait for an emergency to start talking with God speak with **Our Father in Heaven** now.

Chaplain’s Challenge

1. When did you last need help? Why? Who helped?
2. Who has been a good example of how to pray in your life?
3. What difference do you think prayer made to Jesus’ life?
4. Create a ‘prayer space’ at home using some of the ideas from this website:
<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/prayer-spaces-at-home>
5. Where might you have seen or heard the word ‘Hallowed’ or similar before?
6. Is O.M.G. a prayer or swear? Discuss.

Reflection

Galatians 4:6 says, “And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.”

Prayer

OUR FATHER who is in Heaven, hallowed is your Name. We thank you for the opportunity to share life with you. Thank you that you are with us in all of life’s experiences- the good, the bad and the ugly. Lord Jesus, teach us to pray as you do, so that we may grow closer in our relationship with you. Amen

If you have prayer requests or want to know more about Christian faith please contact me via jmaggs@speters.org.uk. Joe - S.Peters Chaplain.

