



Give us our daily bread ...Lawnmower!

Lawnmower? Can you really ask God for a lawnmower?

How does that even work? Not the lawnmower, the prayer!

This was the reaction of our youth group when our youth-leader shared with us his amazing practice of **trusting God for provision** of his needs, on this occasion a **lawnmower!** In wanting to be diligent with finances and with an ever growing lawn, our youth leader and his wife, had taken the issue to God in prayer, as they took ALL THINGS to Him. **That was their normal way of life to talk to God about stuff.** Incredibly, a few days after they had prayed, as they looked through 'items for sale' in the newspaper, they saw a genuine bargain lawnmower for sale that was just perfect for their needs. What struck me about this was not so much that God provided for their need, but that they actually asked in the first place...**trusting He would provide.** I wanted what they had. The relationship with God, not the lawnmower!

In the first lines of The Lord's Prayer (Jesus' guide on how to pray) we see that relationship; **Jesus prayed to The Creator of Heaven and Earth calling Him, "Daddy"!** such was his close relationship with God. We can know Him this way too. Jesus then asked Our Father to reign 'on earth as in Heaven' and willingly gave his life to God; **Jesus chose to live under God's direction and according to His ways:** As we may also choose to do. With this relationship being key to our prayers, we now come to the next phrase , **"Give us this day our daily bread".**

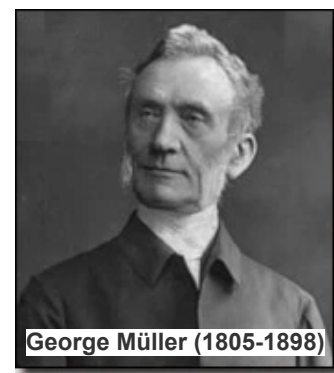
Here, in a spirit of humble dependence, **Jesus asks God to provide his needs** from day to day: As we are invited to do. *Note the word NEED rather than WANT.* We are not given license to ask God for the winning lottery ticket (even if we promise to give some of the prize money to charity) or for popularity and power (even if we promise to use them for good) This is not about a wish list that we demand but rather a conversation, with Our Father, about our need. Jesus himself explained that **"your Father knows what you need even before you ask Him"** (Matt6:8) just as any parent who knows their child would understand what they require, or sometimes, actually don't need! It is in the trusting relationship between us and God that we are encouraged to make our needs known to Him, asking that He will provide. Which was exactly what my youth leader had done!

So why the emphasis on bread? Jesus was not telling His disciples to pray only for bread. But bread, as in our culture, was a staple in the diet of the Jews, and was a basic need that everyone would understand was important for survival. **Bread was a powerful symbol of basic provision** to sustain human life.

Bread was also a powerful symbol of God's provision for His people. In the Old Testament we read that God cared for the Israelites when they were in the wilderness, after their exodus from Egypt, by providing for their NEEDS (not their WANTS) Life in the wilderness was hard, and soon the people began to complain that it would be better to be

back in Egypt, where they had wonderful food to eat. In response to these complaints, God promised to “rain bread from heaven.” *The next morning, when the dew lifted, there remained behind on the ground “a small round substance, as fine as frost... the taste of it was like wafers made with honey” (Exodus 16:4-15)* In referring to bread in his prayer, Jesus encourages the disciples to remember God’s loving attention of the past and to seek Him for their needs each day, trusting Him to provide however he chooses; being thankful!

George Müller was a Christian missionary evangelist and a coordinator of orphanages in Bristol, England. Through his faith and prayers (and without asking for money) he cared for over 120,000 orphan children. In his journals, Müller recorded miracle-after-miracle of God’s provision and answered prayer.



One morning, at The Orphanage, all the plates and cups and bowls on the table were empty. There was no food in the larder and no money to buy food. The children were standing, waiting for their morning meal, when Müller said, “Children, you know we must be in time for school.” Then lifting up his hands he prayed, “Dear Father, we thank Thee for what Thou art going to give us to eat.”

There was a knock at the door. The baker stood there, and said, “Mr. Müller, I couldn’t sleep last night. Somehow I felt you didn’t have bread for breakfast, and the Lord wanted me to send you some. So I got up at 2 a.m. and baked some fresh bread, and have brought it.” Mr. Müller thanked the baker, and no sooner had he left, when there was a second knock at the door. It was the milkman. He announced that his milk cart had broken down right in front of the orphanage, and he would like to give the children his cans of fresh milk so he could empty his wagon and repair it.

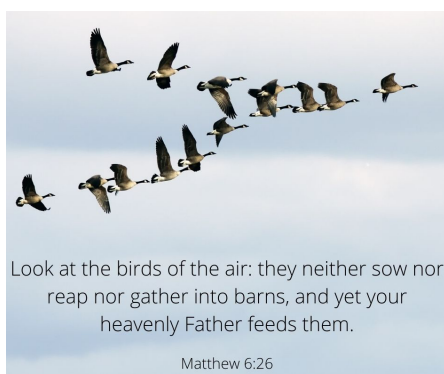
So, what have we discovered about “how to pray?” Prayer is simply talking to God, sharing time together with our Creator. Praying consistently builds a personal relationship with God that enables us to ask anything and speak from our heart. There are many types of prayer mentioned in the Bible but the common factor in prayers that build relationship with God is that the words we use are heartfelt. God wants us to be open with Him. That doesn’t need fancy words or even many words at all. He isn’t looking for prepackaged prayers that are recited out of a sense of duty. He wants to hear what is on our hearts and minds, what are our needs...even the practical ones like a lawnmower!

Chaplain’s Challenge

1. What is your favourite type of bread? What is the best thing to eat with it?
2. What can we learn about 'How to Pray' from George Muller?
3. The Well Food-bank in Wolverhampton pray for everything they need. Check out their story!
4. How might praying “Give us our daily bread” apply in your life?
5. Is there a story you can share with the school about a time you believe God provided a need?
6. How does Jesus talk about bread in John’s Gospel? (John 6:51, 6:35, 6:27 6:32-35)



Reflection: How much do You trust God for your needs?



Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

Matthew 6:26

Prayer

OUR FATHER in Heaven, how awesome is your name! We thank you that you care for us in every detail and want to provide for us. This week we ask that you would enable us, through your Holy Spirit to trust you for the things we need, as George Muller did. We ask also that you would encourage us into sharing what we have with others when prompted to do so by you. Thank you for your love. Amen

LIVE LIFE! LIVE FAITH! - If you want to chat, leave a prayer request or would like to know more about Christian faith please contact me via jmaggs@speters.org.uk.

Joe - S.Peters Chaplain

