

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

### Reflection 1

**"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."**

Jesus called his father "Abba." Almost in every prayer where Jesus calls on his father in the New Testament he uses the word "Abba."

Abba was the name used by Jewish children and adults when addressing their fathers. It is a name that evokes respect, intimacy, trust, confidence, affection, warmth and security. All the good things that we long for from our earthly fathers.

By beginning this prayer with the word "Abba" Jesus is inviting his disciples into his family, for this is the family prayer. It is the prayer that is said by those who are already members of the Kingdom of God. Jesus is declaring that we are his brothers and sisters and we can share his Father in heaven.

God is **our** "Abba" in heaven just as he is Jesus' "Abba" in heaven. We are members of the heavenly Kingdom through the grace of God by faith in Jesus' work on the cross and we can now enter into the Kingdom of God and address him as Father.

**Our Father in heaven.** Heaven in the New Testament relates to the atmosphere, the sky, the air we breathe, literally it means 'our Father who is all around us.' Our Father is with us right now, close to us, he is near, not far off. But he is sovereign, he rules in heaven. So while our relationship with him is close and intimate we are still in awe of him and recognise our place before him. He has all power and all authority to rule over heaven and earth.

When we say **hallowed be your name** we recognise that our heavenly Father is special, to be sanctified or set apart. God's name reflects who he is, his character, his divine nature, his eternal qualities. The word hallowed reflects the holiness of God. It was his holiness that once separated us from him but now because of his grace and our faith in Jesus we are no longer separated from our God for Jesus has made us holy, he has set us apart to do the Father's Kingdom work and to enjoy fellowship with him.

The Father is revealed by those who are 'in' him. Jesus said *"Those who have seen me have seen the Father. " Jn 14:9*

This represents an incredible responsibility.

As Christians we bear our heavenly Father's name so we need to be careful how we represent the Father in all we do and say. The lives of Christians will reflect on God, either to draw others towards him or to push them away.

To 'hallow' God's name is to dedicate ourselves to God's plan and purpose, which is bringing in the Kingdom of God where his name will be glorified and

all honour and glory will be given to him. We 'hallow' God's name as we do his will.

**Questions to reflect on:**

1. When you pray "Our Father" how do you see yourself before our Father who is in heaven?

2. Our Father is in heaven. The New Testament meaning for heaven is the atmosphere, the air around us, the air we breathe. If this is so then our heavenly Father is close to us, near us and in Biblical terms he is 'in' us. We are never alone. After all Jesus has promised to be with us always. How does that work out for you on a daily basis?

3. Hallowed is another word for holy. What do you understand this to mean when it is in reference to God our heavenly Father's name?

4. How can you take on the responsibility of 'hallowing' our heavenly Father's name?