





## Contents

1	Suggestions for using these studies	Page 4
2	Text of the Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew 6:5-15 and Luke 11:1-4	Page 5
3	Background to the Lord's Prayer	Page 6
4	Bible Study 1	Page 10
5	Bible Study 2	Page 14
6	Bible Study 3	Page 19
7	Bible Study 4	Page 25
8	Bibliography	Page 31

## Suggestions for using these studies

1. Enjoy the studies. There is no test at the end. They are provided to help you grow in your relationship with our great God.
2. Make sure that each person has a copy of the study booklet you are using. Some people have hearing problems and no-one concentrates all the time, so they need a written copy of the questions to take part in the discussions. Copies of the studies can be bought from the MU Office for each person, or you may wish to buy one copy and use your church facilities to photocopy the number you need.
3. If possible it is good to hand out the studies a week or so before the day, so people have time to prepare in advance. Encourage your people to read the Bible passage a couple of times as they prepare. If you do this it is wise to have some extra copies available on the day in case some people forget to bring theirs, or extra people join you.
4. It is essential that the leader has fully prepared the study beforehand. You will find that the background notes are relevant to the answers of the questions.
5. The study questions are divided into two parts. The second part contains supplementary questions. Depending on how much time you have you can choose to not discuss these questions.
6. Where you find multiple questions within the one question read all the questions first and then deal with each individual question separately. This is so you understand the bigger picture before you deal with the simpler breakdown.
7. You can increase participation by asking several people to read the Bible passages aloud for the group. This also provides a variety of voices and helps to keep people engaged with the study. Make sure you ask your potential readers ahead of time to make sure they are comfortable doing this.
8. It is generally better for discussion to sit in a semi-circle than to sit in rows. It is hard to talk to the back of someone's head, and it is generally easier to hear when sitting in semicircles.
9. If you have a large group (twenty or more), consider breaking into smaller groups of about six to ten for the discussion time. The person leading the study could do an introduction, small groups could then discuss the questions with an assigned leader for each group (who has prepared beforehand), and then all could rejoin for a conclusion time directed by the leader.
10. Another alternative for a large group, is choosing several questions that don't just need factual answers but require discussion, and asking the members of the group to discuss those questions with the person next to them. Then, if appropriate, ask if anyone would like to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.
11. All Bible readings are taken from New International Version, as found on the Bible Gateway website <https://www.biblegateway.com>
12. Some Hymns you might like to consider to go with these Bible Studies are:
  - Standing in the Need of Prayer, African American Spiritual Hymn
  - Hear our Prayer by Greg Cooper and Andrew Judd
  - What a Friend we have in Jesus, Joseph Scriven
  - Rejoice the Lord is King, Charles Wesley

**Matthew 6: 5-15**

**5** "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **6** But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. **7** And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

**9** "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,

**10** your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

**11** Give us today our daily bread.

**12** And forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.

**13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

**14** For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

*(For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen)*

**Luke 11:1-4**

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just 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** Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation."

## Background to the Lord's Prayer

Have you ever wondered why prayer is so difficult for some of us? We are truly children of the Kingdom of God yet we continue to struggle to discipline ourselves into regular and frequent prayer times with our heavenly father. When we do pray we feel that our prayers are inadequate and don't reflect what we really want to say. They are shallow and are often simply a shopping list of the things we desire. They certainly don't reflect an intimate relationship with our best friend or more precisely our Saviour.

I read recently in Richard Coekin's excellent book "Our Father: Enjoying God in Prayer," that "*we were created in the image of God therefore prayer is natural to us, part of our DNA. We are designed for prayer by our creator.*" (This made me realise why people who profess no faith at all cry out to God in prayer, whenever they are confronted with a crisis in their lives.) He goes on to say, "*But sin makes prayer unnatural to us for outside of Christ all of us are spiritually dead to God.*" (p.14)

Now it all made sense. I really want, to want to pray! It was now clear that I needed to pray like the disciples did, "Deliver me from the influence of the evil one" and ask the Holy Spirit to take charge of my prayer life.

If we feel inadequate in regard to our prayers, imagine how the disciples must have felt as they listened to Jesus pray. I sometimes hear members of my congregation pray and wish I could pray like them. Just imagine sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing him pray. I can completely understand why the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Jesus is the master of prayer. Prayer was central to Jesus' life and work. Jesus, having been brought up in a Jewish family would have been very familiar with the Jewish practice of prayer in the morning, afternoon and evening. He appears to have the same dedication to prayer as his Jewish family and colleagues.

All throughout the Gospels we find Jesus at prayer. Often he sought a very private place to pray, frequently on a mountain well away from the crowds and even away from his disciples. On one occasion, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he selected three of his disciples to watch as he prayed, he finds them asleep and says to them, "*Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the body is weak.*" (Matthew 26:41)

Jesus is very aware of the fact that we will at times find it difficult to pray. He is aware of our weaknesses. He is aware of the fact that we will be tempted as he was tempted so urges them to pray that they won't fall into temptation. Jesus was also very aware of the wiliness and craftiness of Satan, his ability to make what he says seem credible and true. He therefore urges his disciples (and us) to pray so they won't be tempted to deny their faith and separate themselves from their heavenly father, who loves them.

To be separated from God's love is the last thing a Christian wants to experience. It is also important to Jesus that this does not happen, hence his urging the disciples to pray that they won't fall not temptation and his inclusion of "Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil (the evil one)" in the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer in Matthew falls in the midst of the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' instructions to his disciples on how to live a Godly life. In Luke it is found in the midst of instructions to his disciples on how to pray with the additional notes on the importance of perseverance and the generosity of their heavenly Father.

In Matthew Jesus not only gives the disciples a model or pattern of prayer but he gives them instructions on how they are to pray. He says, *"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full."* It was common for Jewish people to say their afternoon prayers wherever they happened to be, so the Pharisees were often seen praying publicly and loudly, showing off, using religious and pious terminology, setting themselves apart from their brothers in faith to show how holy they were. Jesus is very clear that they already have their reward as they will have the admiration of men, they glorify themselves. Of course, this reward has no lasting power but it satisfies them for the moment.

Jesus goes on to say, *"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."* While most homes did not have an inner room Jesus said this to emphasise the importance of finding a quiet place to pray alone so that you could let your heart open up to your father in heaven. Our heavenly father wants us to pour our hearts out to him. He wants us to worship and honour him from our hearts. He knows our motivations and he knows what we desire and need. He will give us the desires of our hearts for we in Jesus a mediator for our prayers. Jesus will present us pure and blameless to our heavenly father and will ensure that our prayers are consistent with the Father's will. This is how he will reward us.

(The practice of private prayer, of course, does not remove the need for communal prayer or prayer in fellowship with our church family, or family prayer or prayer where one or two are gathered together for a specific need or praise to our God.)

Just before he teaches his disciples a model of prayer he says to them, *"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."*

The pagans had so many gods that they often didn't even know to whom they were praying, hence the prayers to the unknown god that Paul mentions while in a meeting in the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:22-23). As John Stott (Christian Counter Culture p.142) is clear to say our prayers are to be intelligent, thoughtful communication with our God who longs to meet with us. We are not to pray mechanically or ritually or in meaningless vain repetition for this is the prayer of the pagan, of those who do not know the one true God who is our father in heaven.

The Bible gives us two versions of the Lord's Prayer one in Matthew and one in Luke. The authors of these texts were speaking to different audiences. Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience and Luke to a largely Gentile audience. Matthew's audience already knew all about prayer and had a historical library of prayer for all occasions and purposes. So he presented them with a *model* of prayer. While the NIV says, "this is how you should pray," every other version says something along the lines of "pray *like* this," which is much closer to the Greek in the original manuscripts. Luke's audience was of a pagan background and so needed to be taught from the beginning how to communicate with their new God of salvation. So Luke uses this text "When you pray say...." In other words use these very words I've given you here.

It is thought that the Luke text came first as it is shorter than the Matthew text and all of Luke's text is found in Matthew's version. Matthew has the additional words, "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" and "but deliver us from the evil one." It is thought that no-one would dare to take away from the text but they may possibly add to it. Matthew's text in some parts appears to be more original in its language. The truth is we don't know which came first but we do know that the audiences were different so they answered a different need. In the context of Biblical truth it is probably not too important as the additional text in Matthew is very consistent with the rest of Scripture.

Matthew's version is mostly found in the *Didache: The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. This document is a brief anonymous early Christian catechism. It is dated in the first century. It clearly places the Lord's Prayer as a prayer that is to be said only by those who have been baptised into the faith of the early church and profess themselves to be Christian. It was not to be used by those outside of the faith.

The Didache also contains all of the Matthew version and includes the doxology minus "the Kingdom" i.e. "yours is the power and the glory forever. Amen." The Doxology is only found in later versions of Matthew and is not found in the NIV except for in the footnotes where it states that it is included in some later manuscripts.

The use of a Doxology was very common in Jewish prayers which usually started with praise to the Almighty and ended with similar praise. It is also felt that no Jewish Christian believer would have been content finishing this prayer

with 'temptation' or 'the evil one.' It was much better to finish your prayers with praise to the heavenly father who had rescued you and brought you into his Kingdom for all eternity. So we find this doxology in use in the early church and included in the catechism of the *Didache*.

In the context of the following Bible studies we will be studying the text of Matthew including the doxology.

We can be sure that if we use the model of prayer given to us by Jesus himself we will be praying in a manner that truly delights our heavenly Father.

The Lord's Prayer includes an address, two sets of three petitions and a concluding doxology.

The first three petitions relate to our heavenly Father, his name, his Kingdom and his will. The second three petitions relate to us our heavenly Father's children, our need for provision, our need for pardon and our need for protection.

It is interesting that the Father comes first and we come second. It is also interesting that this is a communal or family prayer as the plurals 'us' and 'our' are in use throughout the prayer. Never do we find, 'I', 'my', or 'me' in this prayer. This does not mean that we can't use it by ourselves. Of course we can!

The Lord's Prayer is the ultimate prayer as it is rooted in the ministry and the announcement of the Kingdom by Jesus. Its central message is the coming Kingdom of God and the working out of God's plans and purposes for his creation.

When we use the Lord's Prayer as a model for prayer we can be assured we are praying the way our heavenly Father wants us to pray. When we pray it in the same order as Jesus offered it to his disciples we can be assured we will have our priorities right for our focus will be on the Father's Kingdom and not on our own kingdoms.

Let's now look at the Lord's Prayer itself in greater depth.

## Bible Study 1:

### The Lord's Prayer

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 also forgive those who sin against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.  
Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever!  
Amen.

### Background to "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." The only exception is when he is on the cross and he calls out "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*" meaning, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me."

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.

When Jesus begins this prayer with this word "Abba" he 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 Christ Jesus. Because of Jesus' work on the cross we can now enter into the Kingdom of God and address him as Father.

Our Father is 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 very close to us, he is near, he is not far off. He is with us right now. But he rules in heaven for it is the Kingdom of Heaven where our Father is. He is sovereign. He rules. 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.

He has appointed Jesus as King and it is Jesus who mediates for us and presents us to our heavenly Father.

We say hallowed be your name because 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. When speaking to Moses he revealed himself when he said, "*I am who I am.*"

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.

God's name is hallowed by revelation. Jesus said, "*Those who have seen me have seen the Father.*" The Father is revealed by those who are 'in' him. As Jesus is 'in' us and the Father is 'in' Jesus, the Father is 'in' us. This represents an incredible responsibility.

As human children we generally bear our Father's name. Growing up my name was Karen Lovell. I bore the name of Lovell. Whenever I was away from my family I was usually careful not to bring shame on that name for I was pleased to be a Lovell just as I'm pleased to be Watt now. In bearing those names I'm careful what I do and say under them. Both those names represent good families who stand for good moral standards, and who care for their families, neighbours and friends.

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. We need to ensure that we make his name holy as we bear witness to Jesus in our words and actions. Our lives will 'hallow' our heavenly Father's name.

To 'hallow' God's name is dedicate ourselves to God's plan and purpose, that is the bringing in of the Kingdom of God where his name will be glorified and all honour and glory will be given to him. We will 'hallow' God's name as we do his will.

## **Bible Study 1**

### **Read Passage**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.

### **Bible Study Questions:**

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?

## Supplementary Questions:

1. How do you feel when you call God 'heavenly Father' or 'Abba'?
2. Do you feel you are truly honouring him by using the word 'Abba'?
3. Why do you think God wants us to 'hallow' his name?
4. Phillip Ryker in "The Prayer of Our Lord" says, "Once it was God's holiness that separated us from God. Now it is God's holiness that brings us to God, the holiness of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus offered for our sins on the cross." What do you think of this statement and how does it relate to 'hallowing' our heavenly Father's in name?

## Concluding Thoughts

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. These words evoke in me an awesome wonder that the great God who created this amazing universe and the diverse people he has placed in it to care for it and for one another has allowed me to call him Abba, Father.

It is a privilege to come to God in prayer. It is an honour to call him Father. It is an honour and a responsibility and a privilege to be tasked with doing his work, the work of the Kingdom of God.

How amazing is it to know that as we dedicate and commit ourselves to Kingdom work that we don't have to do it alone. We carry with us the promise Jesus made to his disciples as he sent them out to do the work of the Kingdom. This is the same work we are tasked to do. That commission and promise is in Matthew 28:18-20 *"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. **And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**"*

## **Bible Study 2:**

### **Passage**

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 also have forgiven those who sin  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.  
Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever!  
Amen.

### **Background to "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."**

The coming of the Kingdom of God is the ultimate plan and purpose of God. Jesus' ministry on earth was to announce the coming of the Kingdom of God. Jesus himself through his death and resurrection has inaugurated this Kingdom and God the Father has anointed Jesus as King of this Kingdom but creation and its people continue to groan as we await the full and complete coming of the Kingdom. Romans 8:20-23 says, *"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies."*

We know that Jesus has defeated Satan but we also know that Satan will not lie down and admit defeat until Jesus comes again. At that time the words of Philippians 2:9-11 will come to fruition, *"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

We long for his Kingdom to come and Jesus too is longing for the Kingdom of God to finally be acknowledged by all, so he has included this petition in the Lord's prayer. He knows that it is also the longing of God the Father that the Kingdom of God be fully accomplished.

That Kingdom will not come until all who have been called to worship him have done so. There is much work to be done. In praying "Your Kingdom come" we are actually placing ourselves under the rule of the King. In doing this we are subjecting ourselves as workers in the Kingdom willing to do the work of the King. We know this is true because we know that God has elected to use his own people to assist him in bringing in the Kingdom. We are his tools, his servants. We are Kingdom servants. It is our job to continue with the work of the great commission of Matthew 28:19-20a *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* We want those we love who do not yet know Jesus to be confronted with the Gospel for we want them to be among the crowd that bows down to Jesus on the last day to confess that Jesus is their Lord. So while we want the Kingdom of God to come we also don't want it to come until all God's chosen people have been gathered under him.

In saying your Kingdom come we are also proclaiming a willingness to do God's will in order to bring the Kingdom in. Hence the next words of the prayer: *"your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

As we are the instruments of God's will. We are here submitting ourselves to doing his will. God's will is that his plan and purpose will be worked out. His plan and purpose is the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God.

God's will is already being done in heaven. We are praying that we will do God's work the way the angels do it in heaven. The angels have submitted every aspect of themselves to God. With joy and singing, with grace and good will they perform whatever is asked of them. I have no idea what the angels are asked to do in heaven but I imagine that whatever they do it will be done willingly. After all they chose to be in heaven just as we have chosen to be God's children and long to be in heaven. They will be doing God's work, singing praises to him, recognising his holiness and giving him honour and glorifying his name and offering thankful hearts for all that Jesus did in order that we might join him in heaven.

Jesus has given us the most honourable example of submission to the will of the Father. He made it clear in the beginning of his ministry that this is what he was doing. In John 4:34 Jesus said, *"My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."* Jesus commitment to do the will of the Father was affirmed by him in the Garden of Gethsemane when he said, *"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will but as you will"* and *"My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."* (Matthew 26:39 & 42) Finally it was confirmed by Jesus at his death when he is recorded as saying in Luke 23:46 *"Father into your hands I commit my spirit."*

So just like Jesus our ministry is to do the will of our Father on earth in the same way as it is already being done in heaven, with grace and humility, love and obedience, openly and freely. There is no grumbling in heaven. This, of course, does not mean that the work we are called to do will necessarily be easy. It wasn't for Jesus, it wasn't for many of the Bible characters, it hasn't been for many of God's people through the ages but like Jesus and others we can call on our Father for his help.

In praying "your will be done" we are praying that we are putting God's will before our own wants and desires. We are praying that we want to be obedient to his will in our lives in all that we do and say. We are praying that we want our lives to copy the perfect obedience to God's will that is occurring in heaven. This is a big ask but we don't have to do it on our own. Our saviour is with us and guiding us through the strength and power of the Holy Spirit.

## **Bible Study 2**

### **Read Passage**

Your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

### **Bible Study Questions:**

1. What do you think it means when we pray, "Your Kingdom come?"
2. Do you struggle with praying, "Your Kingdom come?" If so why and what can you do to make this prayer easier to say?
3. We pray "your Kingdom come," and we pray "Your will be done." Yet we know that Satan continues to work in this world to cause God's people to deny their faith and trust in him to bring about the completeness of the Kingdom. Satan does not want us to be doing God's will. What can we do to ensure we are obedient to our heavenly Father's will and not succumb to the wiles of Satan?
4. As one of the instruments of God's will what are you currently doing to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God?

## Supplementary Questions

1. While we wait for the coming Kingdom the Bible says we "groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies." What do you think this means in relation to the coming of the Kingdom?
2. We pray your "Kingdom come" and in doing this we are subjecting ourselves to God's rule over us. Surely we don't dare to pray that God will rule over all the world unless we are ok with him ruling over us. Surely we don't ask God to rule over our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters unless we are happy for him to rule over us. Are you really comfortable with doing this? If so why? If not why not?
3. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." What is your understanding of this verse in the light of the words, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," of the Lord's Prayer?
4. Hemphill in his book "The Prayer of Jesus: The promise and power of living the Lord's Prayer", says "anywhere in the will of God is better than anywhere outside of it." What do you think he meant by these words?

### Concluding thoughts:

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. These can be tough words to say when we fully understand the implications of them. We do know though that these petitions sit very well within the plan and purpose of God for his world and his people. Therefore it is right to pray them.

I long for the world to be a better place and I am grateful that God really is in charge and he has everything under control. I am thankful for that. It will be a great and glorious day when God's Kingdom reigns visibly across the whole of his creation and we are taken to be with him in heaven worshipping Jesus on his throne at the right hand of God the Father with the Holy Spirit. It is an amazing vision to hold and to hang our hope truly on the God who will make this happen.

### **Bible Study 3:**

#### **Passage**

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 also forgive those who sin against  
 us.  
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.  
 Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever!  
 Amen.

#### **Background to "Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we also forgive those who sin against us."**

Give us today our daily bread. With these words we begin the first of the three petitions that relate to us, the children of God, as we participate in family life with him.

The use of the word 'us' reminds us that this is a communal prayer. We as individuals are not just praying for ourselves here.

The use of the word 'bread' reminds us that we are dependant on our heavenly Father for even our most basic needs. Without 'bread' (food), we won't have life. This reminds us also of Jesus' words in John 6:35 where he says, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.*" It is Jesus who gives us life.

We say 'give us.' These words express our confidence that our heavenly Father can and will give us what we need. In Luke 11 after Jesus has taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer he goes on to talk about the persistent friend who is asking for bread and is given it by his friend simply because he wouldn't go away. Jesus follows this up with these words: "*So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

We can ask for what we need with confidence knowing that our heavenly Father will supply our needs.

These words also show us that it is OK to ask for what we need. But they imply we are not to ask for more than we need. We are to ask for our daily bread, or some commentators believe it is a request that really goes like, "Give us today our bread for tomorrow." We can be assured that our God will give us what we need to honour him and to do his will.

In the previous sentence we have asked that our Father's will be done. Now we are asking for the sustenance we need in order to do his will.

We are asking for our bread to come daily just like the manna came to the Israelites in the wilderness. When they tried to store it up it didn't survive. The only time they needed to collect more was so they could preserve the Sabbath to worship God. God was teaching them to be dependent on him. He was teaching them that he could be relied upon to provide what they needed. They did not need to worry about the needs other days. God would give them what they need in order to remain faithful to him.

In Matthew 6: 25-34 Jesus teaches the people not to worry. Jesus says. *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

From this we learn that it is ok to ask for what we need. Jesus himself has given us this prayer with this request but it is not ok to worry about where our food might come from. Our God has promised to look after us and we can be confident that he will do this. We know he wants us to do his Kingdom work so we can be assured that he will provide the resources to do his will.

"And forgive us our sins as we also have forgiven those who sin against us." This is the second petition that relates to our need for pardon. These words are what indicate that this is not truly the Lord's Prayer but a prayer for the disciples, for the children of God. Jesus did not need to ask for forgiveness for his sin as he never sinned. Yet he knows that we have sinned and continue to sin. He also knows that our sin creates a barrier between us and our heavenly

Father. So we need to daily ask for forgiveness for our sins, which will be offered as we forgive those who sin against us.

This is a double barreled request and it is the only one that Jesus qualifies in Matthew 6:14-15: *"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."*

We are to forgive those who sin against us. In Matthew 18:21-35 we have the story of the unmerciful servant (or the unforgiving servant).

*"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, **"I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.***

*"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.[i] He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."*

Jesus is very clear that we are to forgive those who sin against us. However we are to remember that Jesus is talking to his disciples, to those who already know him. This is a prayer for believers. It is a prayer for those who have already been forgiven and are children of our Father's heavenly family. It is to those who are already children of God. Their sins have been forgiven.

You and I both know that even though we have been forgiven our sins we continue to sin. We continue to do things or not do things that separate us from the intimacy that we so long for with our heavenly Father. So while we have been forgiven we daily need to ask forgiveness for our daily sins. One of those sins may very well be that we need to forgive someone who has sinned against us.

Jesus has said that we need to just keep on forgiving seventy times seven times or an infinite number of times. There is to be no limit on the forgiveness we should offer to others just as our heavenly Father placed no limit on the forgiveness he has offered us through Jesus.

Some people do us incredible harm but we are told to offer them forgiveness. We will show best that we understand the mercy and grace of God when we offer forgiveness to those who have hurt us. When we fully understand the magnitude of the cost of our sins that Jesus bore on the cross we will better be able to freely offer forgiveness to others. When we fully understand that vengeance belongs to God and not to us then we will be able to forgive others who have hurt us. There is probably no better way to display to others the mercy and grace of God than to offer them forgiveness for the pain they have caused us and to ask for nothing in return. This gift of love, we know, is only available to us because the Spirit of God lives in us. It is the Spirit that gives us the strength and courage and degree of kindness we need to forgive others. It is the spirit that will work in the hearts of these others to reveal Jesus and his loving kindness to them. We simply need to be obedient to God's will and forgive.

If we choose to not forgive then our sin will cause our fellowship with the Father to be broken. We will not enjoy the intimacy we long for as we will have created a wall between us and the Father. This doesn't mean that he no longer loves us. It means that the closeness that we once enjoyed is no longer available. We have drawn away from our God he has not drawn away from us.

The answer, of course, is to be found in the story of the Prodigal Son. We simply need to repent and ask for forgiveness and as with this parable we will find that our heavenly Father is already on his way to embrace us and return us to the fellowship of his family.

## Bible Study 3

### Read Passage

"Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we also forgive those who sin against us."

### Bible Study Questions:

1. "Give us today our daily bread" reminds us that we are absolutely dependent on God for all we need. Every good gift comes from him, including the gift of our salvation. How comfortable are you in depending on God for everything? What aspects of your life do you continue to want control over? How do you work this out with God?
2. This is a family prayer. We are praying for more than ourselves. Sometimes our heavenly Father is very generous with his gifts for some of us. Is it enough that we just pray that God supplies the daily bread of others or do we in our abundance need to be part of the answer to that prayer? If so how can we go about this work? What is the best way for us to share our abundance responsibly?
3. "Forgive us our sins **as** we forgive those who sin against us." I always find these words quite confronting, particularly as they are linked with verses 14-15 "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." How do these words challenge you?
4. Do you fully understand the grace and mercy that our heavenly Father has poured out on you through Jesus? How can you share this with others?

### Supplementary Questions

1. We know that God will give us all we need. We know that we can ask him for what we need to do his will. Sometimes God has been extremely generous to some of us and has given us more than we need. How does

God's generosity fit with the constant cry that we need to prepare for the future? How does it sit with the worldly wisdom that we need to have a certain amount of money available for when we need our Superannuation?

2. We are told we need to forgive those who have sinned against us. How can we do this when those people will not acknowledge the pain they have caused us and show no remorse or any need for reconciliation?
  
3. We are called to forgive those who have wronged us. Where does the need for reconciliation fit with this command?
  
4. Here is a conversation between John Wesley and General James Oglethorpe:  
Oglethorpe: "I never forgive."  
Wesley: "Then sir, I hope you never sin."

What do you think Wesley meant by his response?

### **Concluding thoughts:**

I am both encouraged and challenged by these two petitions. Encouraged because I can be confident that my heavenly Father understands my needs and my willingness to do his will even though I may be skill and resource challenged. He will supply what I need to ensure I can undertake my responsibilities in regard to the coming of his Kingdom.

On the other hand I am challenged to understand fully the mercy and grace that has been poured out upon me through Jesus' work on the cross. That kind of pain is beyond my comprehension. How do I fulfil Jesus' command to forgive those who have sinned against me? So far that has not been too hard to do but I wonder what I will do if ever I am hurt so terribly that forgiveness is too hard. The thought of limitless forgiveness is troublesome but I do know that I will not have to do it alone. I do know that I can call on my great and wonderful God to help me to forgive as necessary. I also know that I have a great fellowship of believers who will pray with me as I try to work through this hard time should I need to do so. For that I can truly thank God.

## Bible Study 4:

### Passage

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 also forgive those who sin against us.  
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.  
 Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever!  
 Amen.

### **Background to "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever! Amen."**

We know that our heavenly Father will never be the cause of our temptation. It says quite clearly in James 1:13-14, *"When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.'*

So what did Jesus mean when he tells us to pray "lead us not into temptation?" Clearly our heavenly Father doesn't do that.

Carson (in Henderson p.37) says it means: "Keep me away from temptation - don't let Satan ambush us." John Stott says (p.150) he means, "Do not allow us to be so led into temptation that it overwhelms us but rescue us from the evil one."

Temptation it seems is inevitable. It is certainly not a sin to be tempted. Even Jesus was tempted although he never succumbed to the wiles of Satan. Jesus was very aware of the work and influence of Satan. Jesus told Peter to pray while he was in the Garden of Gethsemane, just before his death, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." Jesus knows that Satan is strong, cagey and active that is why we are warned in Ephesians 6:10-13 *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."*

1 Peter 5:8-9a says, *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith."*

Jesus said this of Satan when talking to some Jews, *"He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."* John 8:44.

The Biblical message is clear. There are many references to Satan in the New Testament. Satan exists and his work is to cause us to deny our faith. He wants the children of God to cast their faith in Jesus aside, to worship him and he will resort to any means to cause this to happen.

However, we also know that the Father will not allow us to be tempted beyond our endurance. 1 Corinthians 6:13 says, *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."*

Hebrews 4:15-16 says, *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."* God will help us when we need him to.

Our job is to be aware of the way Satan works and to be prepared so that when we are faced with temptation we will be fully armed with the whole armour of God to deflect his actions towards us.

If we look at how Jesus himself dealt with the evil one we will see that he used the very words of God himself to disarm Satan. In Matthew 4:1-8 we find Jesus in the wilderness being confronted by Satan himself.

*"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."*

*Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from*

*me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"  
Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him."*

We have these same words and we can use them. We can also use the prayers of those with whom we confide our need to resist the evil one. James 5:16-18 *"And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."*

We need to remember that Satan's role is to rob God of his glory and to frustrate God's purpose of grace. Satan wants God's children to worship him instead of God our creator. Satan wants the glory and honour to be his and will do everything in his power to make that happen.

We therefore need to pray for protection from the evil one, or from the evil one as it is translated in some versions. We are not to deny the existence of Satan. We are to be aware of his activities and we are to pray for protection from him and arm ourselves to deal with him when temptations occur.

"For yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever! Amen." What a triumphant ending to this prayer! Despite the fact that it doesn't actually appear in the earliest versions we have of Matthew it remains in our liturgy. It does appear in later versions hence its inclusion in the footnotes of the NIV.

It does in fact appear in one of the earliest Catechism documents of the early first century church, *The Didache: The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. In this document we find most of this doxology except for the words, 'the Kingdom'. It does contain 'yours is the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

Doxologies were a common practice found in most Jewish prayers. Jewish prayers tended to begin with praise to God and end with praise to God. So it is not surprising that the early church added these words to the Lord's Prayer to complete it. It also finishes the prayer on a much better note than sins or evil.

The words that we say each Sunday when we pray the Lord's Prayer as members of God's family can be found in 1 Chronicles 29:11 as a prayer of King David. "Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all." We can be assured that even if the words were added later they are consistent with words from the Bible.

These words are of great encouragement to us and it is good for us to acknowledge the greatness of our amazing God. They are a most fitting end to this prayer.

## **Bible Study 4**

### **Read Passage**

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.  
Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever! Amen.

### **Bible Study Questions:**

1. In the musical "My Fair Lady" Mr Doolittle sings, "The Lord above gave liquor for temptation, to see if man could turn away from sin, but with a little bit o'luck, with a little bit o'luck, when temptation comes you'll give right it." Why do you think it is so much easier for us to give in to temptation than to stand firm in our faith?
2. It is not a sin to be tempted. It is sinful to give in to temptation that causes us to deny or belittle our faith. What can we do to prevent ourselves from succumbing to temptation? The following verses might help you work this out: 1 Corinthians 6:13; Ephesians 6:10-13; James 5:16-18; Matthew 4:1-8
3. By saying the words "Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever! Amen," we are committing ourselves to life in the Kingdom of God. We are submitting ourselves to his rule and acknowledging his great power. We are acknowledging that all glory and honour are his. How can we reflect this acknowledgement in our lives?
4. "Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever! Amen." Do you think this is a fitting doxology for the Lord's Prayer? If so, why?

## Supplementary questions

1. For personal reflection: What temptation do you find really hard to resist? What have you done in the past to overcome it? What will you do now and in the future?
2. We are often aware of the struggles of our friends and family members with temptations that draw them away from their heavenly Father. What can you do to help them overcome these struggles?
3. "Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever! Amen." What is your personal response to these words?

## Concluding thoughts:

While writing these Bible Studies I have been thinking about the fact that all over the world every Sunday God's people will be praying this prayer as a family prayer in their Christian families, in their churches. Regardless of the denomination this prayer is prayed by all of them.

Imagine how delighted our heavenly Father must feel as he hears his children praying the prayer that his own son taught us to pray. Can you imagine the sound of it being prayed as we usually say it out loud. I know there are time differences but even each time space will have millions of people praying at around about the same time. It would be greater than any trumpet blast.

How encouraging is it to be able to say a prayer that we know gives our heavenly Father delight. How encouraging is it to pray a prayer that we know is theologically sound? How encouraging is it to pray a prayer that we know our heavenly Father will take great joy to answer?

When we say this prayer in the future let's remember that in saying it we acknowledge that God is our King, that he reigns in heaven, that he longs for us to do his will and help to bring his Kingdom to its fullness. Let's also remember that our heavenly Father will give us all we need to do his will, that he will provide for us, that he has pardoned us and will continue to pardon us as we forgive those who hurt us. Finally let us remember that he will protect us always, we only have to ask for his protection. Let us rejoice in the greatness of our God as the early church did by adding the words of the doxology, "Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever! Amen."

Maybe a fitting end to the Bible Studies would be to sing Charles Wesley's Hymn, Rejoice the Lord is King.

1. Rejoice, the Lord is King!  
Your Lord and King adore!  
Mortals, give thanks and sing  
And triumph evermore.

Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!  
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

2. The Lord, the Saviour, reigns,  
The God of truth and love.  
When he had purged our stains,  
He took his seat above.

Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!  
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

3. His kingdom cannot fail;  
He rules o'er earth and heav'n.  
The keys of death and hell  
To Christ the Lord are giv'n.

Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!  
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

*Text:* Charles Wesley, 1707–1788

*Music:* Horatio Parker, 1863–1919

## Bibliography

1	Appleton, George	Praying with the Bible	Grosvenor Press, Portsmouth, 1981
2	Coekin, Richard	Our Father. Enjoying God in Prayer	IVP, Nottingham, England, 2009
3	Fasua, Abena Safiyah	Jesus and Prayer	Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2002
4	Green, Michael	The Message of Matthew	IVP, Nottingham, 1988
5	Hagner, Donald A.	Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 1-13	Nelson Word Books Publisher, Dallas, Texas, 1993
6	Hemphill, Ken	The Prayer of Jesus: The promise and power of living the Lord's Prayer	B&H Publishing, Nashville, Tennessee, 2001
7	Hendricksen, William	New Testament Commentary on Matthew	Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1973
8	Jeremias, Joachim	The Prayers of Jesus	W. W.Mackay Ltd, Chatham, 1967
9	Ortberg, John; Harney, Kevin & Sherry	The Lord's Prayer . Praying with Power	Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2008
10	Redpath, Alan	Victorious Praying	Pickering and Inglis, London - Glasgow, 1957
11	Robinson, Hadden	Jesus' Blueprint for Prayer	Discovery House, Grand Rapids, 2011
12	Ryker, Philip Graham	The Prayer of Our Lord	Crossway, Wheeton, 2002
13	Schmackenburg, Rudolf	The Gospel of Matthew	Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002
14	Shoemaker, H. Stephen	Finding Jesus in his Prayers	Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2004
15	Stanford, Shane	What the Prayers of Jesus Tell us about the Heart of God	Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2015
16	Stott, John	Christian Counter Culture	IVP, Leicester, England, 1079
17	Wilkins, Michael J.	NIV Application Commentary: Matthew	Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2004
18	Wright, N. T.	The Lord's Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer	N. T. Wright Page, Internet Article