



## ENTER God's presence

Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

– Psalm 100:3-4

Lord God, you are good and your mercy endures forever. Bless us now as we gather around your word, pour your Holy Spirit out on us so that we might understand what it is you want to say to us right now in this time and place. In Jesus name, Amen.



## SHARE life together

1. Where have you seen God's power at work in your life this last week?
2. Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?
3. How much time have you spent communicating with others this week? Include time spent on social media.
4. Who are the people in your life that you choose to spend most of your time with?
5. How happy are you with your prayer life at the moment?

“Hotspots” – they are places of exceptional connection or reception or as we are discovering in Melbourne at this time, places of increased transmission. What if you could become a “hotspot” for the gospel? What would make your life exceptionally connected or receptive to God’s working in your world or increase your capacity to transmit the good news of Jesus to someone else? Discipleship is an intentional journey in grace where we seek to walk Jesus’ way and become more like him. The behaviours of faith: prayer, reading the Bible, relating to & serving others, and generosity are more than just rote rituals, but are shaped by the depth of love we have received & the breadth of trust we offer in return. The practice of these behaviours is how the Holy Spirit transforms you into a “hotspot” for the gospel. Faith formed prayer opens your life not to more “answers” from God but more intimacy with him and more obedience in return.

Week beginning:  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Worship series:

## The Sweetness of Redemption



## VERSE for the week

“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.”

Matthew 6:9b-10



## REMEMBER this week

Prayer brings us into the presence of a loving Father who aligns us with his will and involves us in his life-shaping purposes. There is nothing more important, dangerous, or strengthening than prayer; it is both life forming and life transforming both for ourselves and others.



**LISTEN** attentively

**Read Matthew 6:5-13**

- 6. What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?**
- 7. What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?**
- 8. Apart from the words of the Lord's Prayer, what else does Jesus teach us about prayer in this passage?**

Prayer is one of those things that everybody has an opinion about. People write books on how to pray for this or that, some people attach the effectiveness of prayer to the level of faith of the pray-er, or on the frequency of fervency of the prayers. There are as many beliefs about prayer as there are Christians. What better place to learn about prayer than from the one person since the fall of humanity who has enjoyed a completely open relationship and communication with the Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ.

Before Jesus taught his disciples what to pray, he taught them something about the posture of prayer. These ideas were not new, but we do well to be reminded of them again and again. Have a look at what Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 have to say about coming before the Lord.

- 9. What parallels do you see between the advice of Ecclesiastes 5 and the warnings Jesus gives in Matthew 6:5-8**



**GROW** deeper

Often one of the ways we are encouraged to learn to pray is to just say whatever comes to our minds. This is an okay way to go provided that we have first taken care to assume a posture of prayer. Jesus helps us to find that posture in the very first lines of the Lord's prayer. When we pray, we come before our Heavenly Father who, thanks to Jesus' death and resurrection, sees us as righteous and holy, as his precious children. Yet we also come before the Holy God, maker of heaven and earth. And we come to him seeking his will, not our own.

- 10. How do you think of God when you come to him in prayer? As a loving Heavenly Father, as the almighty creator, or something else?**
- 11. How does your perception of God influence or change the way you pray?**

If you are doing your LifeGroup via Zoom or have the capacity to have your group watch an online video, check out the following link. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uml GTKU2IE>

One of the most profound thoughts about prayer which I have encountered recently is that we pray not in the hope of changing God but with the knowledge that through prayer, God changes us. Thinking of prayer in this way can be a profound paradigm shift for many Christians who have always thought that prayer was about getting what you want from God. Really we should be looking at it as an opportunity to get what God wants to give us. After all, what God wants for us is always better than what we want for ourselves. The words that Jesus teaches his disciples to pray echo this idea. God wants to give us our daily bread and meet our physical needs and he has already promised in so many parts of scripture to do this. The point of praying these words is to remind us that we depend on God for these things and we can trust him to provide for us. We pray that God's will be done, we pray that he would protect us from evil and help us to overcome temptation. Every part of Jesus' prayer is formed to remind us of who God is, remind us of our need for Him and to increasingly align our will with his. This, then, is how we should pray.

12. What do you think about prayer changing us? Is this a new way of thinking about prayer for you? What might be some of the benefits or drawbacks of approaching prayer like this?
13. There are certainly some example's of people, particularly in the Old Testament, (Abraham in Genesis 18:20-33, and Moses in Exodus 32:11-14) who prayed or interceded on behalf of others before God and seem to have changed his mind. Are there parts of the Lord's prayer that you would consider to be intercessory prayer? (prayer for or on behalf of others)
14. Do you think there a difference between having a personal dialogue with God and pleading with God for the wellbeing of others?



## LIVE purposefully

We are encouraged in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, to '*rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.*' Prayer does not have to be a chore or a task we have to do. Prayer, like a language, can be something that develops into a lifestyle. It can be hard work at first, it takes a lot of practice, and it can get rusty if we neglect to use it for a while, but every language teacher will tell you the best way to learn a language or a culture is to immerse yourself in it. This can also be true of prayer. The more we do it, the easier it becomes, and the more natural it feels to be talking with God throughout the day. But it can still be hard work to get started.

15. One pastime many people have picked up during their time in isolation is to try learning a new language. How could you use the principles of learning a language to help improve your prayer life?
16. Most of us have a best friend, or partner, or parent who are the first people we think of calling or texting when something significant happens in our lives. What would happen if you created a contact in your phone just above or below that persons name that somehow reminded you to talk to God about it, before you make the call to your friend?



## PRAY intentionally

Intentional prayer can be hard at first, dedicating time to sit and pray specifically for certain things. While there is not necessarily a right or wrong way to pray, sometimes a form or guide can be helpful. This week as you pray, consider this acrostic memory device to help form your prayers.

<b>P</b> (praise)	-Praise God for who he is and all he has done for you.
<b>R</b> (repent)	-Hand the burden of your sin over to Jesus in prayer and confess your shortcomings to God.
<b>A</b> (ask)	-Talk to God about the desires of your heart, let him work through them with you.
<b>Y</b> (yield)	-Take some time to give God the opportunity to respond to your concerns and requests. Be open to looking for and hearing from him and yield to his will.



## BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

**[Name], may your life be immersed in prayer. Amen**