



TLC Autumn 2018

Whose Kingdom, Power and Glory? *Jesus teaches us to pray*

This autumn at TLC we will be listening to Jesus as he teaches us how to pray. This isn't just one small part of being a Christian; it goes to the heart of what being a Christian is all about.

<p>Matthew 6:7–13</p> <p>⁷ “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ Pray then like this:</p> <p>“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 this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” [For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen]</p>	<p>Luke 11:1–4</p> <p>¹ Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” ² And he said to them, “When you pray, say:</p> <p>“Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread, ⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”</p>
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Prayer is an essential part of what Jesus came to do for us: for he came so that we can know God:

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

For this reason those being trained in what it means to be a Christian have from very early on been taught the Lord's Prayer as one of three things which it's essential to know to be a Christian (The others are the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed).

The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory

You'll probably be familiar with these words if you've said the Lord's Prayer in church. You'll also probably find that they're not in your Bible in Matthew or Luke! They *are* in most ancient copies of Matthew, but not the oldest ones, which is why most scholars think they probably weren't in Matthew's original. However, they are from the Bible, from 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 where King David prayed them. Whether or not Jesus included them in the Lord's Prayer doesn't really matter; what does matter is that they do sum up the total revolution Jesus wants to teach us in his prayer. Whose Kingdom, Power and Glory matters? We always default to thinking it's ours... but Jesus is going to teach us otherwise.

1. Our Father in heaven

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 189. **What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?**

A. *The preface of the Lord's prayer (contained in these words, Our Father which art in heaven) teacheth us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest therein; with reverence, and all other childlike dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also, to pray with and for others.*

a) Our Father

The most radical words are the first two...

Jesus and the Father

Matthew 11:27; John 5:18; John 17:5

What did people think of Jesus calling God his Father? Why do you think this was? What did Jesus say was the reason he could do this?

Who God is:

Matthew 28:19

Jesus came to do something amazing: John 17:24

So that we can do something amazing: John 14:4-6

How does Jesus do this? 1 Corinthians 12:13

When did this become possible? John 20:17

Children of God: 1 John 3:1

b) Our Father

Prayer is a family business!

The significance of praying together.

And 'our' means *us and Jesus*.

We have no right to have God hear our prayers.

He only does so through Jesus: Hebrews 4:14-16

Which is why we pray *in Jesus' name*.

c) Our Father

Look at Jesus' words in Matthew 6:7-9. How is Christian prayer different to that of the 'Gentiles' (i.e. non-Christians)?

2. Our Father *in heaven*

Look at Jesus words in Matthew 6:5-6. What difference does God being in heaven make to our prayers?

Hebrews 12:28 Remembering who God is

Heaven. e.g. Isaiah 6:1-5

Our Father – in heaven. The twin poles of Christian prayer.

How does it help us to remember that believers could not call God Father before Jesus came?

What are the ways that we forget that God is our Father?

What are the ways that we forget that God is in heaven?

What are the two things about God and the gospel that Jesus wants us to remember every time we pray?

What do we lose if we don't pray 'in Jesus' name'?

What would you say:

Let's get people from all the different religions to pray together.

The thing that all religions have in common is that they all call God 'Father'. (Freud)

Tonight we're going to have a prayer rave

I can't pray about that; it's too small a thing to bother God with.

Prayer is kind of 'chatting' to God, like he's your friend.

I'm too busy to pray.

I haven't prayed for weeks.



Lord's Prayer (2): Hallowed be your name

TLC 7th October 2018

1. Hallowed = 'Holied'

'Hallowed' is hardly a word we use much anywhere else. What does it mean?

What (or who), in the last week, have you praised to other people? (friends, sportspeople, films, books...). Why did you do this?

When you got out of bed last Monday morning, what were the top 5 things you wanted to achieve last week?

Hallowed = honoured and glorified and revered as holy

The first thing we are to pray for is that God's glory will come first.

2. When we pray 'Hallowed be your name', what are we praying for?

1 Chronicles 29:10-13

Does David pray for these things to be true? Should we?

So what are we praying for?

Revelation 15:4

i.e. for all peoples to praise, worship and serve the one true God, using all their lives, efforts and energies to honour and display his glory.

Sabbath-day worship

Six-day worship

Why are we to *pray* for this?

Who would you ask to...

Fix your car? Give an essay extension? Change the law?

Why are we asking *God* to hallow his name?

Ephesians 1:11-12 **Who hallows God's name**

Genesis 1:26; Psalm 99:1-5

Who should hallow God's name? What do you think this has to do with being his 'image'? (Hint: think of your own image in a mirror. What does it do to you?)

But we do not, in fact, hallow God's name.

Romans 3:10-12

Jesus: the Hallower!

John 8:49; 17:4

The true image of God

Colossians 1:15

Only in Jesus do we come to Hallow God's name again.

Glorifying God in Jesus and with Jesus Philippians 2:9-11

The restored images of God Col 3:1-2,10

4. So to pray ‘Hallowed be your name’ means...

a) Praying for the end of idolatry and atheism

And the defeat of all that dishonours God.

This is nothing less than a total revolution in how sinful people think.

At Christ's return

Now, in the growth of the church

b) Praying for people to become Christians

As they come to Christ, bow before him and Hallow God in him and with him

c) Praying for the whole church to serve God to his glory

This is what the church is for! But she never does it perfectly – far from it

Matthew 5:14-16

Worship to God's glory

According to his word

For his glory, not ours

Live to God's glory

1 Peter 2:12

d) Praying for us to live for God's glory

That we will hallow him in all we do

A question of priorities, love, devotion, purpose

We are commanded to *pray* this.

Prayer is not for God's benefit, but ours...

Real Christianity is first and foremost about how we love each other and care for the needy.

Real Christianity is first and foremost about how we accept everyone just as they are.

It's really sad when Christians just seem to want people to be converted.

I love going to church; it's so uplifting and makes me feel so great.

I can't stand going to church; it makes me feel so miserable.

I try to give three evenings of each week, and Sundays, to God.

I didn't get on with that church; they just didn't seem to want to use my gifts.

I'm not scared to be seen, I make no apologies, this is me.



Lord's Prayer (3): *Your Kingdom Come*

Q. 191. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition (which is, Thy kingdom come), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in; the church furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate; that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him forever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.

What is God's Kingdom anyway?

The Kingdom of God / Kingdom of heaven:

Mark 1:15

Matthew 13:11,19,24,31,33,38,41,43,44,45,47,52...

Acts 1:6-8; 28:30-31

Psalm 2 What is God's response to the rebelliousness of mankind (v4-6)? What does God call all of them to do (v12)?

Daniel 2:44

Why God's Kingdom needs to come

The reign of sin, death, hell, the devil

The devil is called... 2 Cor 4:4

Mark 3:27

Revelation 12:10

God's kingdom is God's reclaiming of the world for himself

Under his anointed

incarnate king

Is Christianity political? discuss.

When does God's Kingdom come?

Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

When does the Kingdom arrive?

Past, present and future...

The coming Kingdom of Christ is at the centre of what we as Christians believe in and proclaim.

Revelation 11:15

The Kingdom and the Church

Jesus is the King of the Kingdom and the head of the church

1 Corinthians 12:3 The Church is those who confess Jesus is Lord

So when we pray *Your kingdom come* we are praying for...

The conversion of individuals (delivered from Satan's kingdom into Christ's kingdom (Colossians 1:13)

The driving back of the kingdom of Satan, in his dominant lies and false beliefs for all mankind (i.e. The overcoming of atheism and other false religions)

The growth of the church

The health and flourishing of the church in godliness, Christlikeness, and unity

The day of Christ's return to come swiftly (Revelation 22:20)

We are *praying* for these things

- We are aligning ourselves with God's plan for the rest of history. A radical dethroning of self. We are praying for one other than us to be king. And that act is at the heart of repentance.

- Notice again that it is God who brings these things about. The conversion of nations, individuals, and the growth of Christians in faith, harmony, maturity, is in his power alone to give.

Christians have no right to ask governments to rule in a Christian way.

God has given everyone free will to decide for themselves what to believe.

Basically, what's distinctive about Christianity is that we believe God is in charge of everything.

Christians shouldn't get involved in politics.

I want to be in a church which makes me feel spiritual

Jesus' main message was calling out injustice and oppression.



Lord's Prayer (4): *Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*

Q192. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition (which is, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*), acknowledging that by nature we and all men are not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and to do the will of God, but prone to rebel against his word, to repine and murmur against his providence, and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil: we pray, that God would by his Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness, weakness, indisposedness, and perverseness of heart; and by his grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the like humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy, as the angels do in heaven.

1. God's Will

What is 'will' anyway? = what God *wants* to happen.

But that is not so simple.

Did God want the Jews and Romans to crucify Jesus?

Discuss, and when you have some thoughts, look up Acts 2:23 to get some more ideas.

God's Two Wills

God's will of *decree*
Sovereign will
Hidden
Providence
Never broken

God's will of *command*
Will of *desire*
Revealed
Laws
Often broken

Acts 4:27-28

2. God's will and our will

Sin is choosing our will over God's will.

(Remember we can never fail to do God's *will of decree*)

1 John 3:5

Jeremiah 13:10

John 8:42-44a

Breaking God's will of command never means we escape from his will of decree; but it does bring God's wrath and judgment down upon us and others.

When Jesus tells us to pray for God's will to be done, which 'will' of God is he talking about?

To do God's will means...

3. Jesus: God's will on earth as it is in heaven

John 6:38-39

Does Jesus have the same will as the Father?

Some basic Trinitarian theology...

Some basic Christology...

Did Jesus ever *want* something different to God's will?

Matthew 26:36-42 Gethsemane

4. Salvation from our will, that we may do God's will

The reason we don't do God's will is because *we don't want to*.

John 8:34-36

Galatians 5:4-5

Ephesians 2:3-5

Philippians 2:13

Salvation and Sanctification come by the Holy Spirit transforming our will so that we *want* to do God's will. To do God's will on earth, as it is in heaven.

And note: we *pray* for this to happen!

So to pray 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven' is to pray

- For God to overcome our stubborn wills, soften and change our hearts so that we love to do his will.
- For God to do the same for our fellow-Christians
- For the church to flourish and delight in submitting to God's will
- For God to save non-Christians from following their own wills and open their hearts and minds to see and to love God's will.

Prayer

I'm trying to decide whether I should ask out Gertrude or Hephzibar, so I'm praying for God to show me his will.

I'm trying to decide whether I should go out and get drunk tonight, so I'm praying for God to show me his will.

I'm trying to decide whether I should be baptised, so I'm praying for God to show me his will.

We shouldn't pray for people to become Christians, because God has left that up to them.

The reason that there's evil in the world is because God chose to give us free will.

I'm so pleased I decided to become a Christian – especially because so many people decide not to.

I've tried so hard to do the right thing, and I'm sure God will reward me for that.



Lord's Prayer (5): *Give us today our daily bread*

Q. 193. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition (which is, *Give us this day our daily bread*), acknowledging that in Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them; and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us, nor we to merit, or by our own industry to procure them; but prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully: we pray for ourselves and others, that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means, may, of his free gift, and as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best, enjoy a competent portion of them; and have the same continued and blessed unto us in our holy and comfortable use of them, and contentment in them; and be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort.

1. Give us...

Deuteronomy 6:10-15

What did Moses warn the people of Israel about?

Daniel 4:28-32

What was Nebuchadnezzar's mistake?

This is the 'mundane' line of the Lord's prayer. Praying about bread! Surely there are more important things to bring to God's attention!

Jesus' point is that *the basic things we need for life come only by God's grace – so we must pray for them.*

2. The problem with paganism

Jeremiah 44:15-19

How do these men (and their wives) think the universe 'works'?

How does the universe in fact 'work'?

What does each pair of these three 'worldviews' have in common?

(Think in particular about how we get our daily bread.)

Materialism (= 'atheism')

Christianity

Paganism

Matthew 5:43-48 Why loving your enemies makes us sons of God...

3. More about prayer

What does it take for a slice of bread to end up in your toaster? How many things need to happen?

God's control and prayer...

Matthew 10:29; Ephesians 1:11

And also

Matthew 7:7-11

	God is in control of human decisions	God is not in control of human decisions
Does God know the future?		
Can God be in control and us be responsible at the same time?		
Can I ask God to do things which depend on other people's decisions?		
Can I ask God to give me my daily bread?		

God is sovereign over all things...

That's why we pray to him

Our prayers are part of his sovereign plan

4. The twin dangers: pride and presumption

Luke 12:16-21

Nebuchadnezzar...

So when we pray 'Give us our day our daily bread' we are praying

- That God will give us what we need
- That God will so organise and control all the millions of things that need to be in place for us to continue to live
- That God will humble us from believing that we are in control of this world and our lives
- That God will not let us be proud of our achievements
- That God will not let us presume on his kindness
- That God will make us content with what he chooses to give us.

If God knows the future, then there's no real point praying.

God helps those who help themselves.

I've prayed about my [insert nasty disease], so I don't need to go to the doctor.

When we can't get things we need for ourselves, that's when we need to start trusting God for them.

God never answers my prayers.



Lord's Prayer (6): *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*

Q. 194. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition (which is, Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors), acknowledging that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt: we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his Beloved; continue his favour and grace to us, pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; which we are the rather emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offences.

1. What is forgiveness?

Matthew 18:21-35

How big was the first debt?

Why is sin compared to a 'debt'?

How easy was it to forgive the second debt?

What is forgiveness?

2. Why sin is a debt which needs to be paid

It's about God's justice

Genesis 18:25b

It's about God's glory and holiness Isaiah 24:1,3,14-16a

3. Forgiveness: The heart of the gospel

Luke 23:39-43

Luke 24:46-47

Acts 2:38; 13:38-39

Galatians 3:12-14

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

4. Who gets forgiven by God?

Why must we ask God to forgive our sins?

Forgiveness is not automatic. Forgiveness comes by *faith* in Jesus' name.

Prayer is praying for God to do what he has promised. The raised hands by which we pull down from heaven what God has promised to give; how we dig up the things God has laid in the earth for us. (Calvin)

Luke 18:9-14

Luke 7:36-50

If we do not love Jesus, what does that say about us?

If we do not forgive others, what does that say about us?

Is forgiving others a *condition* of our forgiveness?

Why include 'as we forgive those who sin against us' in the *prayer*? What are we saying when we pray this?

5. So when we pray, 'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us', we are...

- Asking that God would forgive us for our sins
- Asking that God would make us realise that our sins need forgiving, because they cannot be excused
- Admitting that we cannot justify ourselves; we cannot pay the debt of our sins ourselves
- Consciously laying hold of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus as our only saviour
- being reminded by God that true faith always means forgiving others
- surrendering our right to hold others' sins (debts) against them
- asking God to enable us, by the Spirit, to forgive others' sins (debts) against us

Prayer

I know I should forgive people, but if you knew what she had done to me, you would understand why I can't forgive her.

Lord, thank you that we are not evil like the world around us.

We need to confess the big sins of oppression and injustice most of all.

God is all-forgiving, so we really shouldn't talk about God's judgment. It puts people off.

Christians who believe in judgment are so harsh and judgmental.



Lord's Prayer (7): *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*

What does this petition assume about temptation?

What does this petition assume about the experience of a Christian?

'evil' and 'the evil one'

1. The coming deliverance

Revelation 20:10; 18:21-24

But...

2. The reality of the evil one

The devil has not yet been destroyed. Wounded, yes; defeated, yes; but not destroyed.

1 Peter 5:8

3. The reality of temptation

Galatians 5:16-21

What changed in our 'desires' when we became Christians?

Romans 7:14-25

How easy is it to live as a Christian?

What makes it difficult?

James 1:12-15

What 'trials' is James thinking of (v12)?

Where does temptation come from? Whose fault is it?

4. The one who saves from temptation

Matthew 4:1-11 The one who resisted temptation for us

Galatians 5:22-24 The one who crucifies our flesh

What happens to our 'passions and desires'?

Romans 8:12-14 Putting to death the deeds of the body

Why doesn't God just get rid of our sinful desires straight away?

James 1:2-4

5. Why do we *pray* for this?

Because God wants us to depend on him fully for our salvation from sin.

6. So when we pray this, what are we praying for?

Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. 195. *What do we pray for in the sixth petition?*

A. In the sixth petition (which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*), acknowledging that the most wise, righteous, and gracious God,

for divers holy and just ends,

may so order things,

that we may be assaulted, foiled, and for a time led captive by temptations;

that Satan, the world, and the flesh, are ready powerfully to draw us aside, and ensnare us; and

that we,

even after the pardon of our sins,

by reason of our corruption, weakness, and want of watchfulness,

are not only subject to be tempted, and

forward to expose ourselves unto temptations,

but also of ourselves unable and unwilling to resist them,

to recover out of them,

and to improve them;

and worthy to be left under the power of them;

we pray,

that God would so overrule the world and all in it,

subdue the flesh,

and restrain Satan,

order all things,

bestow and bless all means of grace,

and quicken us to watchfulness in the use of them,

that we and all his people may by his providence

be kept from being tempted to sin;

or, if tempted, that by his Spirit we may be powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation;

or when fallen, raised again and recovered out of it, and have a sanctified use and improvement thereof:

that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected,

Satan trodden under our feet,

and we fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil, forever.

Christians should stop worrying so much about sin. The gospel is more about what we're saved for than what we're saved from.

Jesus has saved me! I'm free from sin! I don't need to worry about it any more!

I'm tempted all the time by _____. I can't believe I'm such a terrible Christian.

I'm tempted all the time by _____, but that's OK because temptation isn't sin.

If you try harder, you can stop sinning!

It wasn't my fault, it was the devil who tempted me.

I'm afraid the devil is going to defeat me on this.

What is crucial, though, is this: we need to love and accept who we are. It's about making peace with ourselves. It's about finally feeling comfortable in our own skin, not allowing others to make us ashamed or embarrassed of things that are part of our beauty, our diversity and uniqueness. When we take those pieces, shattered by shame, and dare to be ourselves, we find healing. We're not forced to choose between aspects of our identity. We become whole and "undivided." (Vicky Beeching)



Lord's Prayer (8) Praying the Lord's Prayer

'Lord, teach us to pray'...

Prayer is the exercise of faith.

1. Summarising the Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven

God has made us his children through his Son; which means that the God of heaven invites us to come before him as our Father, with love, reverence, awe and expectation, knowing that this is an immeasurable privilege won for us by Jesus.

Hallowed be your name

The first priority of Christian prayer is for God's name to be honoured and hallowed as holy, throughout the world, through the Church, and in our own lives.

Your kingdom come

We are to pray for Jesus' reclamation of the world for his Father by the Spirit: for the growth of the church, for the conversion of people, for the end of false religion (including atheism), and for governments (ours in particular) to recognise that Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

We are to pray for people to obey God's commands and live in the way he designed us to. That is, to pray for the day when that will fully, totally happen, when Jesus returns; and pray for it to happen more and more today, as the gospel is preached and people are remade by the Holy Spirit – starting with ourselves.

Give us today our daily bread

We depend on God to provide for us everything we need, and so we are to trust that he has all things in his hands and under his control, and ask him to order and organise all things so that we may have what we need, and receive it in gratitude to him.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

We must never forget our need for forgiveness, and we daily need to ask for it afresh. Central to true repentance is the willingness to forgive others; if we don't forgive others, we don't truly believe we ourselves have been, or need to be, forgiven.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one

The Christian life is a battle against sin – the devil tempts us, by means of our sinful hearts. We must cry out to God for deliverance from temptation and sin, because we cannot resist them on our own, but only by his grace.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever, Amen

This isn't part of the original Lord's Prayer, but is a great summary of what it teaches us: for the whole prayer is about *whose kingdom, power and glory?* That's why this line has been included in the prayer from very early in the history of the Church. By praying this prayer we are radically de-centring ourselves in our own lives, and on our knees we are putting God first.

The Kingdom is his; he has made the world, and has redeemed it by his Son, and he will again visibly rule all of it.

The Power is his: for we *ask* God for all these things, because we cannot do them ourselves, and he alone can. To get on our knees before God is the essential act of faith, leaning on him to do what we cannot do for ourselves.

The Glory is his: for the whole world, and the gospel, and all of history, are aimed and intended for God's glory, and will indeed lead to that.

2. Praying the Lord's Prayer

The most important thing to realise about the Lord's Prayer is that... it's a *prayer*.

a) Memorise it

You probably have already (for many it is the only bit of Scripture they know by heart)– but if not, then do so.

How to memorise: 1234567

b) Pray it

Get into the habit of praying the Lord's Prayer regularly. First thing in the morning and last thing at night would be a good start. With your family too, if you live with them.

But isn't just doing things by rote a bad thing...?

c) Pray through it

Make it a structure for your prayers. Pray through it line by line, first word for word and then expanding on each line as you go, putting it into your own words.

d) Pray from it

Each line gives an important part of Christian prayer, so when you're praying about anything you need/want to pray about, think about the line which most relates to that thing and make sure what you're praying for is in line with how Jesus prays.

And remember that it's a package – so that, for example, when we are asking for our daily bread, let's not forget that we should do that with God's honour (hallowing) as our top priority.

e) Pray it with the Church

When we pray the Lord's prayer as a church, we are not just filling time. 'Improve' your praying of it in services by taking it seriously, thinking about the words as you say them, consciously asking God in your heart for these things as you say them with your lips.

3. Prayer

4. A story

Theophilus Proseuchei was on his way to see Pastor Benedict to discuss the problems with his CU. The last meeting had been a disaster. It started when Wanda Worshipful proposed that instead of the weekly prayer meeting they should have a 'Praise Party'. 'It will be amazing!', she gushed. 'We'll spend four hours non-stop singing about how much we love God! What could be better?' At that point Aaron Activist had stood up. 'How self-indulgent!' he said, in his most sonorous tones. 'God doesn't want us to be focusing on super-spiritual stuff like that. Real Christians should be out helping people, working hard, campaigning for a better world. God wants us to be doing things for others, not thinking about him'. At that point things had got really heated. Half the CU shouted him down and immediately struck up a chorus of 'God, you make me feel so goooooood' and rushed off with Wanda for their tambourines and guitars, and the other half had rushed the other way with Aaron to get T-shirts printed saying 'Real Christians do stuff themselves' and started organising a march against puppy farms. An attempted reconciliation meeting the next day hadn't helped. 'You don't do anything for God!' shouted Aaron to Wanda, wincing from the blisters on his feet. 'You don't feel God in your heart!' croaked Wanda through her sore throat.

'And so you see', said Theophilus to Pastor Benedict as he finished explaining the situation, 'the CU is completely divided. I don't know what to do. The two sides have absolutely nothing in common.'

Pastor Benedict thought for a little, and then said that he disagreed. Why?