



Our Father

Date: Sunday 13th November

Speaker: Andrew McNeil

Key Verses: Matthew 6:9-13

Talk Summary:

At the heart of the Christian faith is the offer of a relationship with God. Jesus speaks of a heavenly Father who is knowable, present, interested and engaged. Relationship with God the Father through Jesus is for everyone and prayer is for everyone. The Lord's Prayer is the most famous prayer in history, crafted by Jesus himself. It's a model and a map. Matthew 6:9-13

A Model: It's a liturgical prayer clearly intended for frequent repetition. It teaches us what to pray. As we repeat these familiar lines, we echo the words of Christ Himself, alongside billions of Christians throughout time. In many ways the Lord's Prayer is the earliest Christian creed, given to us by Jesus himself.

A Map: It guides us as we express the things on our hearts to God. It teaches us how to pray and not just what to pray. Just its first two words, '**Our Father**' prompt us to thank God that we are in His family even as we pray for our own families. '**Hallowed be your name**' is an invitation to worship. '**Let your Kingdom come**' is an opportunity to ask for help for the particular people, places and situations on our hearts. '**Give us this day our daily bread**' invites all us to pray about our most pressing and practical needs. '**Forgive us our sins**' is a challenge to name the things that need to be put right with God and others. '**Lead us not into temptation**' but deliver us from the evil one." We all experience life pressure and spiritual powers that want to do us damage. So we remain prayerful and vigilant.

So we get the principles, how about the practicalities? **Keep it simple, keep it honest and keep it going.** Prayer can change us and also the situations we care about. "*When I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don't, they don't*" William Temple Former Archbishop of Canterbury.

Keep It Simple: Don't worry about having the right words; worry more about having the right heart. Simply walking and talking with God about the normal stuff of life. God promises that He is always with us and that He always hears us. I love how this is expressed in the Message paraphrase:

*“Here’s what I want you to do: **Find a quiet, secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God.** Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace. Matthew 6:6-13 (MSG) Prayer might not change your circumstances, but it will change you. Fresh courage or calm to face the day. Maybe a little more understanding or a new perspective on something your facing.*

Keep It Honest: Don’t pretend about the pain and disappointment you are living with. Prayer can be unfiltered and unrehearsed. Sometimes we just don’t know what to say or how to say it. Maybe prayer is sitting in silence, being still but choosing to be with God in the midst of your pain, your doubts and questions. We can come as we are to God. As a parent you want to embrace you kids when they are happy or sad. They don’t need to be a certain way to come to you. You just scoop them up. Because you love them. Prayer is coming home. It’s entering that Fathers house. Coming into His presence and let me tell you your Fathers heart fills with joy even before you say a word. You’ve chosen to come home.

Keep It Going: Keep praying and don’t give up. If you’re busy or upset, that’s when you may find it most helpful to chat to God. Sometimes we’re lost for words. The words of a psalm, some simple liturgy or someone else’s written prayer can act as a guide into the presence of God. Prayer is not just asking. Prayer is putting ourselves in the hand of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts. - Mother Theresa.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don’t spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- How can we use the Lord’s Prayer as a model and a map this week?
- During this week of prayer lets pray for our Church (it’s people, groups sites and ministries) and our city. As we pray we want listen and respond.
- Keep it simple, keep it honest and keep it going. Which of those is in most in focus for me at the moment and what can I do to respond to God?
- Christmas is coming! Let's all pray for three people know to us that we can invite along this year. Let's pray for courage. We do the inviting God does the rest.

Witness - How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don’t know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
 - Upcoming Events (go to bvc.so/whats-on for details)
 - Reflection Service – 26th November