

# WEEKLY REFLECTION

When the disciples approach Jesus in Luke 11 and ask Him to teach them to pray, we are intrigued—out of everything they could have asked Him to teach them, they chose to ask about prayer. These are Jewish boys and men who would have been raised in the temple, with the habit of praying the Shema prayer (Deut. 6:4) three times a day. They knew that there was something different about the way that Jesus and John the Baptist were praying (Lk. 11:1), and so they chose to ask about prayer.

Though Jesus does not explicitly mention this, the Lord's Prayer is a theological framework for how to pray. He is trying to show His disciples who God the Father is, and how they can pray to Him. He models how they can pray earnestly, from His choice to pray *in a certain place* to the wording and terms He uses. For example, the ESV version does not mention "*Our*" but simply starts with "*Father*", yet the intimacy and trust present in the act of prayer is shown. Jesus follows with "*hallowed be your name*": reminding us that God is set apart and different. There is nothing like Him, and we could never truly understand Him. There should be humility and reverence in our approach towards Him from the very beginning. Moreover, He reminds us that in prayer, we die to ourselves as we ask for God's Kingdom to come.

When we ask Him to "*give us each day our daily bread*", we are asking not just for human flourishing on all accounts, but also for a learned dependence on God. Lastly, as we ask for God to "*forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us*", we are reminded of the Law, which Jesus sums up as "Love the Lord your God..." and "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt. 22:36-40). If there is any unforgiveness in our hearts, we must address it, for we would not be doing right by God otherwise (Matt. 6:14-15).

# QUESTIONS

## **QUESTION ONE:**

As mentioned on Sunday, there is no “gift of prayer”. Prayer is a gift for all of God’s children, though it is also a learned discipline that takes time and effort to properly cultivate.

What does your prayer life look like? Are there any things or anyone who has helped to develop your prayer life? Is there anyone that you look up to in the area of prayer? What is it about the way they pray that stands out to you?

## **QUESTION TWO:**

In the Matthew account of the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus talks about some things that we must not do before giving His disciples the framework of the prayer itself.

What are the things that He talks about in Matthew 6:5-9? Are there any “bad habits” which He lists, that you’ve picked up? What about the Lord’s Prayer itself sticks out?

## **QUESTION THREE:**

Apart from talking about and discussing the theology behind prayer, we also want to practice it together, for that is how we grow.

Talk the time now to go through the Lord’s Prayer first as a group, then pause to be silent for a few moments as each person contemplates how they would expand on its framework.

End by having each person recite one line from the prayer, and encourage them to expand and add on their own requests in relation to what they have recited.