

A person in a red jacket and backpack is seen from behind, standing on a vast, white, snow-covered mountain peak. The person is holding a red rope. In the sky above, a large, translucent blue shadow of a person in a similar pose is visible, appearing to be falling or descending from the top of the frame. The sky is a deep blue with some white clouds. The overall scene is surreal and evocative.

Trekking Deeper

DYNAMIC PRAYER



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INTRODUCTION

Prayer is ultimately about being in a relationship with God – talking, listening, and sharing together with our Saviour and Lord. So, the best way to learn about prayer is to pray. There is no right or wrong method of praying, so you won't find any rules in these studies. Nevertheless, there does need to be a commitment of time and effort to praying, along with a high level of expectancy and a recognition that you are communicating with the true and living God.

Prayer is an enormous subject and this booklet is in no way definitive. Whatever the reason you chose this module, please make these studies your own and experiment with prayer.

There are twenty studies in this booklet. The course is designed to take one month, but you can do it at whatever speed you choose. There are two free days each week, but I would encourage you to use these extra days to pray and to look more deeply at any particular topic the Lord has been speaking to you about. Alternatively, you may like to read and reflect on the Bible passages connected with prayer that are listed at the end of this booklet.

Most days I have given a relatively long Bible reading. There are three reasons for this. First, prayer is most effective alongside the reading of God's Word. Secondly, every verse must be seen and read in its context. Thirdly, the Bible is the only perfect and pure word of God. Therefore, the Scriptures are far better for teaching about prayer than any notes could ever be! It is better to take far more time over the Bible readings than these imperfect notes. Please note all Scripture references are from the New International Version.

My prayer for you is that through your Trek experience your prayer life will become dynamic; you will grow in your relationship with God, drawing near to Him and learning more of Him and from Him.

Phil Grasham
January 2004



DAY ONE: GETTING STARTED

READING – LUKE 11:1-12

Verse 1 “... one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray ...’ He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: ...’”

The focus of this booklet is to examine and experience the most famous prayer in existence – the Lord’s Prayer. There is no better resource for us than this prayer and, as our key text shows, the Lord’s Prayer was Jesus’ answer to the disciple’s request to teach them how to pray.

Our motive for prayer should be to glorify God and to ask Him to work in and through us, and in and through others. As we draw close to God we will learn what is important to Him, and when we turn that “understanding” into requests we are truly praying in Jesus’ name. We need to realise that prayer is *the* most significant activity of our lives, whether in times of joy or pain. Jesus prayed both at weddings and funerals, and on every other occasion.

Prayer changes the one who prays. That was true for all the “Bible greats” and it’s true for us. However, we do not pray so that we will be changed; we pray with a desire that God’s name is honoured and His will is accomplished.

On this first day, take time to think carefully about your prayer life and what your expectations are for these studies. What is prayer to you? Is it forced interruptions in your day or exciting opportunities to meet with God? Do you believe that talking with God can actually change things? You may have recently arrived in what seems a strange and awkward culture. Do you believe that the Lord can help you every day of your Trek assignment? Take time now to commit these studies to the Lord and pray that they will have an impact on your life, asking the Holy Spirit to open your mind and heart to the truth and presence of the Lord God Almighty. The whole idea of these studies is not that God will inform you about prayer, but that God will transform you in prayer. Let’s pray ...

**DAY TWO: THE LORD'S PRAYER: THE ABC OF HOW TO PRAY**

READING – MATTHEW 6:5-15

Verse 9 “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name ...’”

In just a few sentences Jesus has given us a profound design for our praying. To pray the Lord's Prayer takes effort and intimacy; it is not a *mantra* to be recited while we think about what else we could be doing!

Jesus states, “This, then, is how you should pray.” The idea is that the Lord's Prayer is a plan or a pattern to help us as we enter the presence of our Lord. The potential of the Lord's Prayer is that if we really get to grips with it, it will not just take a minute to read but will fill our day with worship and intercession. In fact, the Lord's Prayer is not just to be said but to be lived.

God, quite rightly, comes first in this prayer, since we should be concerned with His glory, His kingdom, and His will. Only then do we turn to think about ourselves and our needs. This order is important. We are not to be so wrapped up with ourselves that we rush into God's presence and reel off a list of needs and problems. In fact, as we give praise and worship to our God, we are likely to find that our needs become very much a secondary issue. This is right because prayer is not a self-centred activity but a God-centred one.

Many people treat prayer like a spare tyre in the boot of a car. It lies there largely unnoticed and unused until their lives get a puncture! What was then pretty much forgotten gets pulled out and utilised. That's not much of a relationship. Imagine speaking to your family only when you want something or when you have a problem!

At whatever stage you are at on your Trek assignment and whatever hassles you may be experiencing, ask yourself: “How often do I come before God without any thought of what I can get from Him, but concerned only with how I can give to Him the praise and honour He deserves?”



DAY THREE: THE PRIVILEGE OF ASKING

READING – MATTHEW 7:7-12

Verse 7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Prayer is the most incredible moment-by-moment privilege that we have. You have probably seen the rigmarole that accompanies monarchs and presidents as they talk with “the man in the street”. Very few people are actually introduced to these elevated individuals, yet many people wait hours simply to get a glimpse of them. For us, we constantly have the opportunity to approach and talk with the King of the Universe!

Jesus says, “Ask!” We need to pray seriously and continually. We should note that we do not ask or seek or knock just once. Jesus used a particular grammatical construction in today’s passage which would be better translated as “ask and keep on asking ... seek and keep on seeking ... knock and keep on knocking ...” There is nothing wrong with asking God for things more than once. This is not lack of faith; God has told us to keep on asking as it shows we are really serious about our requests.

Notice that God may answer in a way we did not desire or expect. He is the Sovereign Lord and He knows what is best. We are to ask in faith with real anticipation, but God will not give us everything we ask for, neither will He give us anything that will harm us (see verses 9-10). What He will give us is for our good. Our Father knows what is best for us and He longs to give good gifts to His children. A final point is that this section comes between not judging others and discernment, so it is important that when we pray we ask for, among other things, consideration and wisdom.

As the awe and wonder of being able to talk with your Creator and Redeemer penetrates your mind and heart, you will find that prayer is your privilege and your pleasure. Do you find this amazing, that you can communicate with Almighty God?

**DAY FOUR: PRAYERLESSNESS AND THE PRAYING SPIRIT**

READING – ROMANS 8:18-27

Verse 26 “We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us ...”

During your time abroad, prayer may be a great blessing to you, it may be a great struggle, or it may be both at different times. We all know that prayer is important, but that does not make it any easier. How are you feeling about prayer at the moment? Does it feel like duty or drudgery? Often the most important time to pray is when you least feel like it.

What is important is that we pray even when we have no desire to pray. Maybe since you arrived on your Trek you have not felt like praying. It is important to recognise that you should not base your prayer life on your human emotions. Remember that we can be so personal with God that we can even talk with Him about how hard we find it to pray!

This brings us to today’s passage. We need to recognise that no one can pray without the help of the Holy Spirit. How often have you desired to pray according to God’s will but found yourself perplexed to know what God’s will actually is? Sometimes it is not immediately obvious how we should pray. When we do not know God’s will, the Spirit helps us to pray, and we can ask Him to help us. How often have you found your prayers disintegrating as you try to find the right words? You sort of know what you want to say but then you’re not really sure! When we’re not certain just how to construct our prayers or what we should be praying about, the Holy Spirit is there to help us. He prays with inexpressible groanings. The idea behind this is that in our human sighing for understanding the Spirit groans for us and this is all gathered together and presented to the Father.

How do you feel about praying right now? Keep in mind that prayer is an act of obedience not simply for when everything else is going well. Remember, too, it is important to allow the Holy Spirit to intercede for you and speak to you.



DAY FIVE: IT'S TIME!

READING – JOHN 4:4-26

Verse 24 “God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Let's be practical. Prayer can and should be anytime and anywhere. Some people prefer structure and some spontaneity, but, generally speaking, it is vitally important to have a definite time to spend with the Lord, while recognising that any time is a good time to pray!

People are very different, but the best time to have a prayer time is when we are at our best! It may be personality or practicalities that dictate whether we take time out in the morning, at various times during the day, or in the evening. Jesus set aside specific times to pray and this is a good example for us to follow. We may be tempted to think it was easier for Jesus because of who He was, but, as someone has said, there is no reason for believing that His divinity helped Him to get up in the morning! In your particular situation, it may not be easy to “find” the time, so it is crucial that you “make” the time. It is important to be less concerned with how long you are praying and more concerned with meeting with the Lord.

For some people a particular place to pray is very important while for others it's fairly irrelevant. The Bible has examples of people praying both inside and outside (Daniel 6:10; Mark 1:35), so do not feel restricted to staying indoors. You may not have been in your present overseas location for very long and you are still working out where is a good place to pray. Ask the Lord to help you find a place where you can “be still and know that He is God” (Psalm 46:10).

You will probably need to be creative in finding times and places. All the same, don't harass yourself if your prayer times are interrupted or you need to cut them short. Prayer should be a fundamental activity in our lives, but when disruptions happen, God does understand!



DAYS SIX AND SEVEN: **FROM AARON TO ZOPHAR**

Space below for any thoughts, notes, or doodles!

Did you know that the first person in the Bible, if we go alphabetically, is **Aaron** (Moses' brother) and the last is **Zophar** (the third of the friends of Job)? God spoke to them both and He will speak to you, if you will let Him!

Don't forget the Further Reading at the end of this booklet.



DAY EIGHT: DEFECTIVE ATTITUDES

READING – PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

Verse 6 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests ...”

There are many wrong kinds of attitude to prayer. These include the idea that if someone doesn't pray, God will punish them. Someone said to me that God loves them when they pray. No way! God loves them full stop. God wants us to have strong relationships with Him, which includes talking to Him, but God's love for us is unshakeable and unconditional. Remember, for those in Christ there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1).

Other people feel that prayer is not that important, but it is! Prayer is the bedrock of our faith. Prayer is not on the circumference of our lives, it is the axis. It is absolutely crucial to all that God is doing in us, with us and through us. Prayer is paramount, because we can do nothing outside of our relationship with Him.

Some people think that prayer is confined to one “quiet time” a day, but God does not want us to be spiritual for short periods. He wants to be involved in all that is happening and He wants us to talk to Him about all that is going on. Maybe you are finding it harder to pray than normal because everything is new or you have no privacy. Remember that you can pray absolutely anywhere. Jesus is *Immanuel* – God with us ... everywhere!

Finally, some people think that they are not worthy to communicate closely with a holy God. While it is true that God is majestic and powerful, He is also our Father who delights in us. In Christ we are made righteous, not through anything we have done but all because of Jesus. Remember we are chosen people, holy and dearly loved (Colossians 3:12). It is vital to recognise God's holiness, but at the same time, we need to remember that we are united with the Lord and He wants us to pray! Can you identify with any of the above faulty attitudes? If so, why not talk to your indwelling Creator about them?

**DAY NINE: PRAYER PROBLEMS**

READING – PSALM 73

Verse 28 “But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.”

Look out! Look out! There are prayer thieves about!

We are whole people and what affects us physically or emotionally will also affect us spiritually. Therefore, we need to understand what might be happening when we are physically tired, when we are suffering from culture shock, when we have changes in our routine, when the climate is too hot or too cold and when there are numerous distractions. All of these can and will affect our prayer times. We need to examine ourselves and see if any of these are in any way influencing or disrupting our line of communication with the Lord. Some of the above may be outside our control, but others can be reduced by a healthy diet, regular exercise, and a routine of proper sleep!

There are more self-inflicted hindrances to our prayers. These include sin, indifference, disobedience, pride, selfishness, and lack of faith. We should examine our hearts and bring to the Lord any prayer-blockers! Psalm 139:23-24 says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” John 9:31 says, “We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will.”

Of course, as believers, we have an enemy who takes pleasure in disrupting and disturbing our prayer lives, but we should not immediately think that Satan is behind our prayer problems. We need to make sure that we ourselves are not hindering our prayer times. If it is clear that we are not at fault, then we know where to look and what to do, so that the devil does not interfere with our relationship with God. If we are at fault, then remember that our Father will forgive us when we confess our sins and ask for His mercy. Is this something you need to do now?



DAY TEN: **ONE FATHER, MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

READING – JOHN 1:1-18

Verse 12 “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

For the rest of this module, we are going to consider the Lord’s Prayer. Please note that I am not saying that this is the only way to pray nor am I advocating structure over spontaneity. However, it is important to examine the sort of things Jesus taught His disciples to pray.

It begins “Our Father.” Note that we do not pray “my Father”. We are not “lone wolf” believers, roaming free without ties. We have been created to be in relationships, both with God and with others. Jesus outlined the importance of this truth when He declared that the two greatest commandments are: love God and love other people (Matthew 22:34-40). As individuals, we are vitally important to God. He knows our personal needs even before we tell Him. At the same time, each of us is but one of many in the family of God. As we pray, this should help us to take our eyes off ourselves and to be concerned for others. At the beginning of this prayer, we are stating that we belong to God and to our brothers and sisters in Christ all around the world.

We can call God “Father”. Fantastic! Unfortunately, in some societies, the word “father” has many negative connotations, but God defines what a father truly is. We are in this world because our Father wants us to be in this world (verse 13). God loves us and has adopted us into His family, not because He had to but because He wanted to. As His children, we have free access into His loving presence because of Jesus. God loves us not for what we have or have not done, nor for what we will or will not do, but because of who we are. Equally, we are to love God, not for what He has done or will do, but for who He is. We all come to God, through Jesus, because He is our Father! Dare to call Him Father and reach out to the One who loves you more than you will ever imagine!

**DAY ELEVEN: ALL HONOUR TO THE ALL-POWERFUL**

READING – EZEKIEL 38:10-23

Verse 23 “... I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known among the nations.”

The Lord’s Prayer continues, “... who is in heaven, hallowed be your name.” While God is our loving Father, He is also the Sovereign King of the Universe. Some people have no problem with God being Father, but they do not consider that He is the Supreme Ruler, the Judge of all the earth.

Our God is in complete control of everything that happens on the face of this world He has made. As we look at the troubles and struggles all around, we might wonder what God is doing, but let’s make no mistake – God alone has all the power and all the authority. He is absolute! He is invincible! He is unstoppable! When we intercede, we do so in the confidence that God is able to answer our prayers. The power of prayer does not depend on the worthiness of the one praying, but on the all-knowing and all-powerful God who hears! There is nothing that is impossible for the King of glory.

To hallow God’s name means to give honour and glory to God’s name and therefore to give honour and glory to God. In Hebrew thought, someone’s name represents his or her character, nature, and personality. God’s name is already holy, but we pray it will be treated as holy. We pray that God’s name will be exalted above every other name; that we ourselves will give God’s name a unique position in our lives. In essence, we are saying that we lift God’s name above all others and we want people everywhere, near and far, to join with us in worshipping and glorifying our God!

The Scriptures are full of the names of God. As we discover God’s names and therefore discover who God is, it will increase our devotion to the One who is, for example, the Lion of Judah and the Lamb of God (verses 5-6). How many names of God can you think of? What do they tell you about the Lord?



DAY TWELVE: **TRANSCENDENT AND IMMANENT**

READING – MATTHEW 17:1-13

Verse 2 “There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.”

If we are to have a balanced understanding of our God, then we must hold the last two days in tension. They are not two opposing truths but, in the mystery of our unfathomable God, they are joined together in perfect unity. We pray to our Father, who is Almighty God. We pray to the Sovereign Lord, who has lavished His love on us (1 John 3:1). God is both transcendent (glorious, awesome and far removed from us) and immanent (loving, kind and near to us). Most people emphasise one truth or the other but both sides are fully realised in our Lord, and we need to recognise both sides. God is not One who controls the Universe, but is distant and uninterested in us. Neither is He our Father who truly cares, but is impotent to act and intervene.

We will never fully understand how God can be all He is. But in our prayer lives, as we approach the throne of grace, we can do so with confidence (Hebrews 4:16). This is because in the Lord's immanence He hears our prayers and is concerned with who we are and in what we have to say. In the Lord's transcendence, He is able to answer our prayers as the Supreme Ruler with all authority and power.

Jesus reveals to us this holy paradox: a unique virgin conception yet born as a helpless human baby; a painful physical execution yet an unparalleled resurrection and ascension. Christ walked the dusty tracks of Galilee yet demonstrated incredible power over disease, demons, and death. In our passage, Jesus had to walk up the mountain on his own two feet and was no doubt tired and thirsty at the top. Yet, it was there that He was transfigured in magnificent splendour! This is our God!

Do you overemphasise either God's transcendence or God's immanence? Ask the Lord to reveal Himself to you in all His breathtaking fullness, so that you might know Him completely.



DAYS THIRTEEN AND FOURTEEN: **PRAY FOR THE WORLD 1**

It is crucial we pray for world evangelisation. Let's pray for four of the most unevangelised nations: two now and two at the end of this module.

- The two most unevangelised countries in the world are **India** and **China**. Over 600,000,000 men, women and children remain unevangelised in these two nations alone.
- This figure can seem insurmountable. But, remember, nothing is impossible for our God and Saviour.
- What the figure does represent is an incredible amount of work that still needs to be done. Out of a total of 2,332 people groups in **India**, 2,082 remain unevangelised; and out of a total of 499 people groups in **China**, 406 remain unevangelised.

Pray for

- more workers – both foreign and national – to strategically target these unreached peoples.
 - more resources – money, literature, technology, equipment, etc – to be given to reach the unreached.
 - more prayer – concentrated and focussed intercession – to open the minds and hearts of people from darkness to light.
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DAY FIFTEEN: **STOP AND LISTEN**

READING – 1 KINGS 19:1-18

Verse 12 “After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.”

What do you do after you have prayed? Most people say, “Amen” and jump into other activities. What we all need to do is stop and listen, both during and at the end of our prayers. If we understood prayer as a conversation, we might become more conscious of how important it is to listen as well as speak. Even if the words are there, it is good to simply wait and quietly pay attention to the Lord. If you were in a conversation with someone and he or she did all the talking and then said “Bye” and left, how would that make you feel? We need to give space to allow God time to talk to us! After all, when we pray, we expect God to listen to us! You may even find that as your prayer life develops you talk less and listen more.

It is good to note that while we can consider prayer as a conversation – it can be a two-way communication – we should appreciate that God does not take part in chitchat. God does not speak to us so that we can discuss things. The Lord is looking for obedience and when He gives us deeds to do, He wants us to respond accordingly and not debate His commands.

With all the other noises and voices around us, we may need to learn to listen. Some of us don’t like silence but God will not shout above pulsating rhythms or driving impulses.

In today’s passage, Elijah’s “gentle whisper” would be better translated as “sound of gentle silence”. At an exceptionally low point in Elijah’s life God met with him, reassured him and recommissioned him for the next phase of his ministry. How much better it was for Elijah that He heard as well as spoke.

So, are you a listener in your praying? Do you recognise the importance of letting the Lord speak to you? When was the last time God spoke to you? What did He say? What have you done about it?

**DAY SIXTEEN: HIS PERFECT KINGDOM & PERFECT WILL**

READING – 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-8

Verse 1 “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone ...”

Our Lord’s Prayer continues, “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” God’s kingdom already exists, but we pray that the truth of God’s rule and reign would be evident to people from every tribe and language and people and nation (Revelation 5:9). We are praying that people’s knowledge and experience of God’s kingdom would grow and more people would live under the authority of God. There is another angle, however, in that we are also calling out to God for Jesus to come back soon. We are praying that our Lord would return in His glory to establish God’s kingdom for all eternity. As we consider our world of hatred and cruelty, it is only natural for us to ache for and ask for a new world order.

To pray “God’s will be done” includes in the nations and in society. Pain, poverty, and persecution are rife and we must pray against these things. God’s will is good, pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:2), so we can have confidence that whatever God’s will is, it is the very best for us, for others and for the world. It may be God’s will that your time with Trek is so filled with God’s blessing that you cannot number all the incredible things the Lord does in you and through you. However, it may be God’s will that your time abroad includes a time of illness or loneliness. God’s will is that we are conformed to the likeness of His Son. I can testify that God knows what He is doing and the reasons behind any difficulty are amazingly for our benefit (Romans 8:28).

Finally, we pray that God’s will would be fulfilled on earth as it is in heaven. How is God’s will done in heaven? Immediately and completely. Pray that God’s will worldwide would be fulfilled in this way. If you know that there is something that you need to do to fulfil God’s will, then; in the words of Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the Starship Enterprise, “Make it so!”



DAY SEVENTEEN: WHO DOES HE WANT YOU TO PRAY FOR?

READING – DEUTERONOMY 9:7-29

Verse 19 “I feared the anger and wrath of the LORD ... But again the LORD listened to me.”

One vital aspect of prayer is intercession. The Bible calls us priests, and one of our roles is to stand before God on behalf of men and women. Samuel, one Old Testament hero, said, “As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you” (1 Samuel 12:23.) There may be people in your current situation overseas and/or at home where you are the only one who could pray to God for them. Intercession is working together with God, so ask the Holy Spirit who He wants you to make a commitment to pray for. This may not bring a smile to your face, but the Lord has also commanded you to pray for those who do wrong to you (Matthew 5:43-48). This can be difficult, but there is great release in committing our “enemies” to the Lord.

Think about the following categories, but do not be limited by them. Recognise that who and what we pray for tells us a lot about ourselves. Who does the Lord want *you* to pray for?

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1 Family | 2 Friends at home |
| 3 Friends on your Trek | 4 Mission colleagues |
| 5 People who have wronged you | 6 People groups |
| 7 Nations | 8 Others: |
| 9 Community Leaders <i>(at home and/or on your mission trip)</i> | |
| 10 Government Leaders <i>(at home and/or on your mission trip)</i> | |

In *Biblical Intercession* (p.11) Patrick Johnstone writes: “The world is going to be evangelised only through prayer. This is the ultimate weapon, the master strategy for overthrowing every plan, argument, power structure, bondage and even the gates of Hades ... The major commitment must be to intercession so that every barrier – whether moral, political or spiritual – be broken down and the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ come.”

**DAY EIGHTEEN: PRAY FOR THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD**

READING – COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

Verse 2 “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”

We need to be people who take intercession seriously. We are people of action, not used to spending time alone with God, but we need to bring before Him the salvation of men and women everywhere. Remember that Christ is interceding for us (Hebrews 7:24-25)! Jesus does not pray instead of us; He prays for us and we pray for ourselves and for others. We live in a world where there are still millions of people who have never had a proper opportunity to respond to the Good News of Jesus, and all the while the Church pours its resources into working with those who have already heard the Truth!

The following quote sums things up brilliantly: In the *New Dictionary of Theology* (p.323) Clowney writes: “What the Christian mission needs more than anything else is a revival of prayer. Our generation has lost its sense of dependence on God. We have more knowledge, expertise, tools, money, committees, land, and buildings than the church in any previous age. We have ecclesiastical power, economic power and political power – everything but spiritual power ... Human effort and ingenuity have displaced prayer.”

Paul writes that we should devote ourselves to prayer, particularly that the Gospel would be made known and God’s truth would go out to people with receptive minds and hearts.

Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to move in power. Let us pray that men and women, boys and girls, would find faith in the Lord Jesus, for there is no other name given to people by which they can be saved (Acts 4:12). Let us also pray for those who work among the unevangelised and for those who will work among them (Luke 10:2). Pray, too, that you would live and proclaim Christ on your Trek. Finally, ask God “What’s my role in world evangelisation?” and respond to His answer!



DAY NINETEEN: PLEASE AND THANK YOU

READING – MATTHEW 6:25-34

Verse 34 “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

The Lord’s Prayer now switches emphasis from God to the one praying. This seems to be an enormous shift from praying for God’s glorious kingdom to praying for food! This first request is “Give us today our daily bread.” God is a God of details and while He is concerned with the affairs of nations, He is also concerned with individual needs. When Christians in developing nations ask for daily bread, they may mean exactly that. This might be true where you are. People all over this world are looking to God to supply their direct physical needs.

In other situations, bread is symbolic for whatever is needed for us to live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28), whether that is emotional, mental, physical or spiritual. What do you need today? What are the challenges and opportunities that you will face today? What do others around you need today?

When we ask God to give us “daily bread”, we are expressing our ultimate dependence on Him. In Exodus 16, we read that God graciously provided the Israelites with daily manna. Likewise, we must come daily to receive from the Lord all we need each day, for we need Him every day! It is right and proper that we also pause to give thanks to God for His presence and for all of His provision, protection, support, and intervention in our lives. Who are we? What do we have? What have we done where God has not been involved? John 1:16 says, “From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says “give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

We should be truly grateful for all that the Lord has done in us and for us. We are nothing and have nothing outside of Him. Let us ask God for the things we need, but remember to give thanks!



DAYS TWENTY AND TWENTY-ONE: **PRAYING DIFFERENTLY**

Don't forget the Further Reading, page 27.

If you are in a cross-cultural situation: how do the local Christians pray? Is there anything that is particularly different? Is there anything specific you can learn and put into practice?



DAY TWENTY-TWO: **GOD DOES KNOW BEST ... EVERYTIME**

READING – LUKE 18:1-8

Verse 1 “Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”

Do you believe God answers prayer? Let’s not be too hasty. Do you really believe that God answers *your* prayers? Why then are some prayers seemingly unanswered?

God does answer every time, but according to His will and not ours. God sees everything in eternity and we see only a thin slice of here and now. Our passage gives us a glimpse as to why some prayers are not answered. It may simply be a matter of timing and the believer needs to persevere in prayer. However, God is not going to be won over by a verbal battering! God will accomplish His will in His time, but we do need to make prayer a consistent part of our lives and not give up. When the Lord does hold back, we need to have confidence that He really does know best, even when everything points in the other direction.

When things go squiffy and God seems to remain silent, we must recognise that sometimes things take place which God did not initiate but He does allow to happen. These trials and tussles can be the very things that draw us closer to the Lord. We may question what is happening or be anxious. When we do, we need to be honest with God. Tell Him exactly how we feel. He knows anyway, so we may as well be truthful! There is no point in praising God for our circumstances if we feel angry, frustrated, or indecisive. Faith in God means that we trust not only in God’s ability to answer our prayers, but also in God’s total power and complete wisdom and understanding of our situation. Therefore, we can believe that any refusal to answer our prayers is, in fact, for our good.

When we pray, we don’t insist or demand, but we ask believing that God knows best ... every time! Ask Him to help you to see your situation as He sees it and grant you grace to accept everything that is happening.

**DAY TWENTY-THREE: FILTHY SINS AND SWEET FORGIVENESS**

READING – 1 JOHN 1:5 - 2:6

Verse 9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.” Why do we pray for forgiveness? In short, because we can be forgiven! Someone has said that confession is not telling God what you’ve done wrong – He already knows that – it is agreeing with God that it’s wrong and asking for forgiveness. All that we have done, and all that we will do that is wrong can and will be forgiven when we go to the cross and ask for mercy. Jesus’ perfect sacrifice means we now have the privilege of coming to God and asking for His forgiveness and cleansing. Our passage also says that if we believe we have not sinned then we have completely misunderstood God’s holiness and our sinfulness (1:8, 10).

Have you “messed up” either before or since you arrived overseas? Have you said or thought or done things that you shouldn’t have? How about things that you have not said, not thought, or not done? Do you need to spend some time clearing away the filth of sin that stands between you and your holy God?

Did you notice there are two parts to this petition? We need to recognise that God only truly forgives those who truly forgive others. To receive mercy, we must be merciful. We do not earn God’s forgiveness by forgiving others, for we are saved (and therefore forgiven) by grace alone (Ephesians 2:4-10), but we cannot ask Him to release us from our sins while we still cling to feelings of resentment against others (Matthew 18:23-35). When we recognise all the many ways we have sinned against God, the faults and failings of others are put in their proper perspective and they become so much less significant. Is there someone we need to talk with, someone we need to contact? If so, let’s do it!

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your sins to you, so that nothing is forgotten and all is forgiven.



DAY TWENTY-FOUR: CHRIST OUR CHAMPION

READING – EPHESIANS 6:10-20

Verse 18 “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers ... always keep on praying for all the saints.”

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” As believers in Christ, we are in a war against the world, our “flesh”, and the devil. In our own strength, we don’t stand any chance against the forces either within or without. However, God will help us and that is why He tells us to pray! There are temptations everywhere in this corrupt and immoral world, but with the Holy Spirit’s strength and discernment, we can fight and win! When temptation is knocking at our door, let us immediately pray to keep that door triple bolted! All of us are weak in some areas and if we know that certain people, places, or circumstances are our Achilles heel, then we should be particularly on our guard and ready to run away from evil towards holiness.

Our fight is not against people, societies, or institutions, but against the spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12). Our battle is harder because our enemy is unseen, but do not be afraid or discouraged. The victory is won! The victory belongs to Jesus Christ, our Champion and the Ultimate Holy Warlord!

We resist the devil by submitting to God (James 4:7). With our lives surrendered to the Lord, we will find the devil flees from us! Remember the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work (1 John 3:8). We have God’s authority, because we are His people in Christ. It’s possible that in your current situation there are fetishes or idols, plus a level of witchcraft that you have never experienced before. But as powerful as Satan is, he is no match for our God and you are His child! Turn to the book of Revelation and see that in the end it takes only one angel to put the devil out of action (Revelation 20:1-3). Take time to praise the Lord for the victory already won and pray for protection both for yourself and for others.

**DAY TWENTY-FIVE: GOD IS WORTHY TO BE PRAISED**

READING – PSALM 145

Verses 1 “I will exalt you my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.”

The familiar grand finale of “for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever,” is not recorded in the Gospels. However, it is certainly appropriate to finish the Lord’s Prayer where we started and that is with our eyes fixed on the Lord. One idea, if you have not done so already, is to praise God for His creation. Certainly, this world groans as it waits for its redemption (Romans 8:19-22), but it is still a wonderful world. If you are in a rural situation, look at the plants and animals. What colours, what variety! If you are in an urban situation, look at all the people. Amazing! Each one made in the image of God with a unique personality. Our world belongs to God our Maker. Praise Him for love and light and life.

Worship is our joy and our strength. Archbishop William Temple wonderfully defines worship like this: “Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by his holiness, the nourishment of mind with his truth, the purifying of the imagination by his beauty, the opening of the heart by his love, the surrender of the will to his purpose and all this is gathered up in adoration to the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centredness which is the original sin and the source of actual sin.”

You may be incredibly busy while you are on your Trek. The days ahead may be filled with all sorts of known – and probably all sorts of unknown – situations and circumstances. It may be you have some real problems that must be dealt with. Whatever you face, remember that you can go to God in prayer, bold and confident that your God reigns! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and strength belong to God (Revelation 7:12).



DAY TWENTY-SIX: THE END AND NOT THE END

READING – PSALM 103

Verses 11 “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him.”

As we come to the end of the Lord’s Prayer, we close with a booming AMEN! *Amen* means “so be it”, but maybe some more exuberant exclamations are “Alright” or “Yee-ha!”

What is needed, having spent time with our Father, is a shout of triumph! But before you jump up and bounce off into something else, just pause a moment and listen to make sure there is nothing else the Lord wants to say to you. In addition, recognise that saying “Amen” does not sever the line of communication. It is worth asking God to help you see Him and hear Him in the ordinary things of life and as you go about your normal duties.

Remember, as someone has written, pray as you can, don’t pray as you can’t! There is no one way of prayer that is better than any other. In addition, we mustn’t measure our prayer lives against the people around us. Of course, we can learn from others, but prayer is not about comparing clarity or verbosity! For each of us, we must cultivate our praying in ways that are best suited to developing a vibrant relationship with the living God.

If this booklet has served as a kind of beginner’s phrase book on the language of prayer, commit yourself to becoming fluent! It is so vitally important that we know our Lord and God, above and before anything else. The way to do that is to spend time with Him, talking openly and honestly, and listening intently, open to being challenged, changed, or corrected.

At the end of these studies, think back over what you have learnt and how your prayer life has developed. What has God been saying to you? Praise the Lord, give thanks to Him for all He has taught you, and pray that He would continue to teach you and guide you in your relationship with Him. Do you remember a comment made right at the beginning: the best way to learn about prayer is to pray. Let’s pray ...



DAYS TWENTY-SEVEN & TWENTY-EIGHT: **PRAY FOR THE WORLD 2**

It is crucial we pray for world evangelisation. Let's pray for two more of the most unevangelised nations. We have already considered India and China. Now it is time for two more:

- The combined unreached populations of Pakistan and Bangladesh show there are more than 212,000,000 men, women and children who remain unevangelised.
- Once again, this enormous figure should not discourage us but motivate us to get involved somehow to see this figure slashed! We cannot do it but with God can!
Out of a total of 401 people groups in Pakistan, 386 remain unevangelised. And out of a total of 370 people groups in Bangladesh, 336 remain unevangelised.

Pray for

- more workers – both foreign and national – to strategically target these unreached peoples.
 - more resources – money, literature, technology, equipment, etc – to be given to reach the unreached.
 - more prayer – concentrated and focussed intercession – to open the minds and hearts of people from darkness to light.
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FURTHER READING

We can learn much about prayer by reading and studying the prayers we find in the Scriptures. How did Moses, David, and Paul pray? Why did they say what they said? What can you learn from their prayers?

Below is a small selection, but do not be limited by the ones listed:

Moses – Deuteronomy 9:25-29

Hannah – 1 Samuel 2:1-10

David – 2 Samuel 7:18-29

Solomon – 1 Kings 8:22-61

Hezekiah – 2 Kings 19:14-19

David – Psalm 25

Daniel – Daniel 9:4-19

Habakkuk – Habakkuk 3:1-19

Jesus – John 17

Paul – Ephesians 1:15-23

Paul – Philippians 1:3-11

Paul – Colossians 1:3-14

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NOTES

Trekking Deeper is a devotional discipleship programme specifically written for short-term volunteers. The aim of the Course is to help “Trekking Deeper” keep their focus on Christ and to grow spiritually during their placements.



Trekking Deeper consists of a series of nine booklets:

The ABC of Preparation
Costly Discipleship
Dynamic Prayer
Exploring God’s Word
God’s Guidance

Practical Faith
Living Holiness
United in Discipleship
Returning & Advancing

“Refreshing, stretching, packed with helpful insights, I found the Trekking Deeper booklets an excellent tool for personal discipleship.” **Glenn Myers (author of the Briefings series)**

“I learnt a lot about prayer and it was good to have notes with short-termers in mind.” **Gillian Thom (Mexico)**

“I learnt stuff I didn’t know before.” **Jeremy Estabrook (Senegal)**

“The questions made you analyse and pray about your feelings rather than just pottering on.” **Lindsey Hale (Mexico)**

“I learnt things that I could apply and think about and they weren’t boring!” **Alison Davey (Sierra Leone)**