

WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Christ Church, Crouch End Hill

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No: 51

LORD TEACH US TO PRAY II

Introduction

Our aim in this study is to learn how to listen to God through his creation, his word and prayer. But first we will consider the next phrase in the Lord's prayer of Jesus:

"Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven."

The teaching of the kingdom of God is at the heart of the Christian gospel, and formed a regular part of Jesus' teaching.

In Jesus' teaching, the kingdom has a present and future aspect. The present aspect manifests itself in all manner of ways in the person and deeds of Jesus. His teaching, healings, miracles and supremely his victory over sin and death demonstrated the presence of the kingdom of God on earth. This kingdom is a holy kingdom, and is of greater power than the kingdom of darkness which grips this world.

To pray *Your kingdom come* therefore has two dimension—there is prayer for the establishing of God's kingly rule in this world in the here and now, but there is also an expression of the future hope expressed in the New Testament prayer, *Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus!*

Read Psalm 19

- Who speaks in verses 1-4?

- Is the truth about God in nature obvious to everyone?

- Why don't some people hear it?
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- What six names does David give the Jewish law in vv7-10?
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- What does the revelation through Scripture do for us that the revelation in creation does not (v.11)?
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Spend some time with this Psalm. Note the close connection between God speaking through his creation (19:1-6, the sky, the sun) and through his written word (19:7-11, the laws and precepts). Spend some time today listening to God through his word, through aspects of his creation around you, and through the moving of the Holy Spirit.

Read Acts 2: 14-18

- What is the point Peter wants the people to understand about current events (vv. 13, 17, 18)?
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God poured out his Spirit on the first Christians ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven, and he has been releasing his Spirit on his church ever since. Notice in this passage quoted from the prophet Joel that all are given ability to hear God and speak forth what they hear: sons, daughters, men, women, young, old, servants. Spend sometime today breathing in God's Holy Spirit, asking him to open your eyes and ears to his voice.

Read **Matthew 7: 7-11** and list the assurances we have concerning prayers.

But: what are the hindrances to answered prayers?

- Isaiah 59: 2 _____
- Matthew 6: 14,15 _____
- 1 John 3: 21,22 _____
- James 4: 2,3 _____
- Matthew 7: 11 _____

Lessons from Elijah's prayer

Read 1 Kings 18: 21, 22-29, 36-39, 41-45

- What was Elijah's passion as he challenged the priests of Baal (vv. 18, 21) ?

- Are you wavering between 2 opinions right now with regard to obeying God's will?

- Which one will you follow and why?

This Mount Carmel contest is one of the most famous stories in the Bible. But look closely today at how Elijah prays. Elijah is not interested simply in people being entertained by the miraculous. His longing is for people to be so moved by God working in power that their hearts will be turned back again to him. Notice how he prays in verse 42—he bends down on the ground and puts his face between his knees. Try doing this: it's not easy! It is a sign of utter beseeching. In humility, but also with confidence, he persistently prays for rain, until the dark clouds come with the promise of rain. Elijah is not afraid to be desperate and persistent in prayer.

Take home exercise

How do we pray?

A ——— Adoration

C _____ Confession

T ——— Thanksgiving

S ——— Supplication

Prayer exercise

Allow God's Spirit to speak to you about an urgent matter for prayer. What is desperately needed in your life, in the life of a friend, in your church, your community or nation today? If you are feeling agile, then kneel before God as Elijah did, with your head between your knees and feel the intensity of this expressive position for prayer. If you are unable to adopt this position, find another that suits you, but which speaks of urgent prayer. Now let the Spirit intercede through you for this need. If you have the time, persevere until you sense you have completed this particular prayer task.

Before you start praying, give time to listening to God for that particular need. God may well be wanting to show you some specific areas of need that is right for you to be offering in prayer today. He may also want to speak to you about action you can take as part of the answer to your own prayer.