

Lord's Prayer: Youth Led Reflection

Blake: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

This line alone holds two key fundamental aspects of our Christian faith within it. That God's relationship with us is presented as paternal, as our father, as well as the significance of the instruction to "hallow" his "name".

I find the idea of God being our father comforting. That he guides us, not as a giant, unreachable being, but as one who forms a personal relationship with us. A relationship that we can develop through prayer and worship. As I meet people from different backgrounds, cultures, countries and ideologies, the fact that all these people are loved individually by God is, what I would call, monumental parenting. Monumental is the best word I could think of to describe our father's love because it is that all-encompassing.

There have been instances that I'm sure many of us can recall, where God's presence has graced either us individually, or a congregation. Whether it was in a time of deep worship, or individual prayer, our father's personal connection with us is evident in those moments, and that guidance can define the trajectory of our lives, so I believe we must be willing to accept it as it arrives.

Then there is the invitation to "hallow" God's name. I was unaware of what it really means to "hallow" God's name. I would say the words of the Lord's Prayer every Sunday and be done with it. But I know now how much depth these words have, and how attentiveness to God can form amazing new opportunities for us. "Hallowed be your name" directly means "Holy be your name". It's an instruction to continue to lift up our father's name.

This is what I have taken from the opening line of the Lord's Prayer: that the Lord really is "our father in heaven", the one who is there for us and relishes in personal connection, and therefore his "name" must be "hallowed."

Reflection Questions

1. In what ways are you relating to God in this season, and how has it changed?
2. Have you been experiencing God as more intimate and present, or more holy and other?
3. Do you need a fresh revelation of who God is to you?

Invitation

I invite you now to pray out a prayer of praise.

Liturgy/Prayer

*Creator and Redeemer,
we draw near to you as beloved children to a
loving parent.*

*We acknowledge that some days
you feel as near as family,
and some days we can't get our heads
around how big you are.*

*But we trust that like a loving parent,
you know us, and delight in us.*

*We glorify your name when
we make you the centre of our lives.
Help us to do this.*

*Help us to live our lives
aware of your presence. Amen.*

Carys: Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven

As much as I don't want to admit, saying the Lord's Prayer is often just a motion I go through, whether it's the passive prayer at the end of a school chapel service or on a Sunday morning, I have very rarely stopped to think about what I am truly saying and the power these words hold.

The line; Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven is one we all know and incredibly easy to say, but I think, one of the most difficult lines to live out.

Jesus said, "the kingdom of God is amongst you." (Luke 17:21). If God's kingdom is among us, then we are called to be portrayals of what God intended for this world to look like, displaying the love, joy and peace within us all. As Christians, we are called to be walking representations of His Kingdom, so that the people who meet us can also meet Him. In this prayer, as we ask God's kingdom to come down to earth, we are asking him to shape our lives in order to reflect his intention for our lives. And when we give up our own will to allow God's will into our lives, we are welcoming more of God's kingdom down onto earth.

Maybe it's the influence of society, or our need to control things, but the idea of letting go of my own will and allowing room for the unknown of God's, admitting that I don't know where I will be led, scares me a bit. As a year 12 in high school, I am beginning to look ahead to life after leaving school, and as I think about the direction I head, it is tempting to create a set plan, an ideal on how my life is going to look and how I am going to make it a reality. It's easy to forget to allow space for God's will and Kingdom to fill my life.

However, as we look at the world around us, it is impossible to deny that the world needs more love, more joy, and more peace. More of God's kingdom.

Reflection Questions

1. Where in your life are you longing for God's kingdom to break in?
2. Is there an area where you're holding onto your own will instead of surrendering to God's?

Invitation

I invite you now to name out loud one place you want God's kingdom to come.

Liturgy/Prayer

*Lord Jesus, you command us
to seek your kingdom first.
Break into our disordered world
and our stubborn hearts.
Shape our actions, our community,
and our society
by your righteous love.*

*We admit we'd rather
hold onto our own plans than trust yours.
Reveal where our will
might be in opposition to yours.*

*We open our hands now.
We give you what we're holding onto,
and we ask you to have your way in it.
Amen.*

Josh: Give us today our daily bread

To be honest, it's hard for me to relate literally to this phrase, because I am very fortunate to live in an environment that provides me with all the food I need. So the way I connect with this is more metaphorical rather than literal. I know that God provides for me in other ways, giving me experiences and situations where I can learn and grow closer in relationship to him. A key way is with music. Music gives me the opportunity to express emotions and ideas that otherwise wouldn't be expressed. As Josh loves to say, music is very spiritual, and even music that isn't necessarily worship music can be helpful in connecting with God. Noticing the beautiful sounds and harmonies in music gives me an appreciation for being able to hear.

In **Ephesians 5:19** Paul says, "Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord." Music is a gift we have that allows us to express our true selves, and to individually connect with God in the heart. Jesus himself is our true bread, and we can 'feed' on him through worship and music.

Ultimately, "Give us this day our daily bread" reminds me that God provides for us in many different ways, not just through the physical food we need each day. I am grateful that I have access to food, but I also recognise the other gifts God provides that help me grow, learn and develop my relationship with Him. Music reminds me that God's provision can be found in everyday experiences and talents that we might otherwise take for granted. Whether I am playing music or listening to it and simply appreciating its beauty, I recognise it as another way God provides for me and brings me closer to Him.

Reflection Questions

1. What do you actually need from God today?
2. Where do you find it hard to trust that God will provide?
3. Who might God be inviting you to *be* daily bread for?

Invitation

I invite you now to share with the person next to you one need that you have, pray for the other person's need. (Give a minute for this)

Liturgy/Prayer

*Father,
you know what we need before we ask.*

*Some days we run ahead
trying to secure our own future,
instead of trusting you for today.*

*Thank you for your provision for us before:
for the ways you've fed us, held us, carried us.
We ask you now for what we need today.*

*Teach us to receive
each day as a gift,
not something we earned.
Amen.*

Ollie: Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors

Forgiving is one of the simplest yet most powerful things we can do in our lives. It is so easy to forgive and takes only 3 words, "I forgive you." It takes 1 second to say, but can have a major impact on someone's mental and spiritual health. Personally I find that forgiving others for their wrong doing, no matter how big or small it is, helps me feel at peace and release any anxiety knowing I have done the right thing.

It is important to understand what forgiveness truly is. Cliffe Knetchtle, a well known pastor says: "Forgiveness is not saying, 'nothing wrong happened, lets forget everything and act like everything is just fine.' Forgiveness is saying, 'that was wrong what you did, but I forgive you.'"

The Bible tells us in Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." This helps us understand the importance of forgiveness as forgiving others is a mirror of God's forgiveness towards humanity.

I believe that it is vital to bring all our debts and wrong doings to God first, as how can we truly forgive others, if we are not forgiven for our sins. Likewise, how can we ask God to forgive us, if we are unwilling to be forgiving ourselves?

Reflection Questions

1. Is there something weighing on you that you haven't brought to God?
2. What would it feel like to be fully forgiven?
3. Is there a wrong you're still carrying that you would like to lay down today?

Invitation

I invite you now into a silent prayer of confession, where do you need forgiveness? Is there anyone you need to forgive?

Liturgy/Prayer

*Father,
we bring to you what we're carrying:
the things we've done,
and the things done to us.*

*Forgive us.
And help us forgive others
the way you've forgiven us.*

*We let go now
of what we've been holding onto.
Amen.*

Amelia: Lead us not into temptation

Temptation is when we have the urge to fulfill a desire that we know isn't good for us and is the wrong thing to do. Temptation comes in different forms for all of us, can be big or small, and can be incredibly difficult to resist.

Temptation exploits our weaknesses and gives us a glimpse of something we want. Temptation for me consisted of wanting to be like others, to 'fit in with the group'. There were always the trendy fashions and the coolest hair styles and the latest slang, and I used to want to be in the group of people who were caught up on everything. We can all be pulled to have the image of *who* we want to be and *what* we want to be. I figured that the only way to be in the group was to change myself, hair, clothes, style, everything. We can get caught up in the desire, the moment where you feel as though this is the dream. However, giving in to temptation does not fulfil us.

The line: Lead us not into temptation is an important prayer because we need God's help in resisting temptation and to be happy as the creation that God made us. The moment we give into temptation, we actually move away from the person God has created us to be. I think that God can help us resist temptation by showing us that these desires aren't what we truly want. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says: "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." I believe that God is always there to help us resist temptation and offer us a way out, because temptation lures us away from God and robs us of the fullness of life God intends for us.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do you feel weak or vulnerable right now?
2. Who do you have in your life who knows your struggles and can be there for you when you most need it?
3. What passages of Scripture or wisdom can you turn to before the moment of temptation?

Invitation

I invite you now to pray silently a prayer asking for God's help and protection, naming a particular temptation or struggle.

Liturgy/Prayer

*Father,
we're not as strong
as we like to think we are.*

*There are places we keep stumbling,
things we keep going back to,
even when we know better.*

*We ask for your help
to be led away from temptation.
Guide us toward what's
good, pure and true.
Amen*

Tom: Deliver us from evil

This is a really deep and powerful part of the Lord's Prayer. There has been evil around since the beginning of humanity, but today it can take on new forms. For me, I think that social media is a potential new avenue for evil. Also drugs and alcohol can be used to cause horrible things, like the crash that happened the other day. We don't know exactly why it occurred, and I don't think that the driver was really evil, but we could describe the outcome as evil, especially for those affected. I think he was someone who needed praying for and needed someone that would care for him.

I wish we lived in a world where these things never happen. Of course, we know we live in a broken world. So, this line of the Lord's Prayer enables us to express to God what we are afraid of. And to ask God for deliverance from these things.

Reflection Questions

I am going to now invite you to quietly reflect:

1. What in the world right now makes you want to pray "deliver us"?
2. What helps you keep hope when things feel hard or dark?

Invitation

I invite you now to share with God an honest lament, naming what scares you, and asking God to deliver us from it.

Liturgy/Prayer

Now let's pray together:

*Father,
there is real evil, real suffering,
and real fear in this world, and in us.*

*We bring you what scares us,
and we ask you to deliver us.*

*Give us the courage and peace we need
to face what is before us.*

*We trust that you are stronger
than what threatens us.*

Amen.

Seth: For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

In the closing line of the Lord's Prayer, we circle around from, 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name', to, 'For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen.' This template of prayer that Jesus gave his disciples covers all our needs: our need for provision, for forgiveness and relational restoration, for strength to resist temptation and deliverance from the forces of evil. After all the prayers focused on our needs, Jesus reminds us to bring back our attention to God and his Kingdom. This prayer reminds us that life isn't about us and we are not at the centre of the universe, and it invites us to entrust all of our needs into God's care.

Reflection Question

1. I invite you to take some time now to consider, what is the one area from this prayer that God is highlighting for you?

Liturgy/Prayer

*Father,
everything we've brought to you now:
our hopes, our needs, our failures, our fears,
it all belongs to you.*

*The kingdom is yours.
The power is yours.
The glory is yours.*

*So we end in trust:
you are still God,
forever and ever.*

Amen.