

WELCOME TO OUR NEW SERIES OF  
HOMEGROUPS

**The diary for this term looks like this:**

Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b>PRAYER MEETING</b>
Week beginning 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Home-Group session 1
Week beginning 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Home Group session 2
Week beginning 25 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Home Group session 3
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b>PPAYER MEETING</b>
Week beginning 9 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Home Group session 4
Week beginning 16 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Home Group session 5
Week beginning 23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	Home Group session 6
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	<b>Informal Communion Service</b>

LORD, TEACH  
US TO PRAY

CHRIST CHURCH  
HOMEGROUPS  
AUTUMN 2009

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” Luke 11:1*

In response Jesus gave his disciples what we know as ‘The Lord’s Prayer’

Our Father in heaven,  
    hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
    your will be done  
    on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread  
Forgive us our sins  
    as we forgive those who sin against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
    but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory  
    are yours, now and forever.

## 1. OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

### WELCOME

What was your best day this summer?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 34 is a song of David, after God had rescued him. Use it together to thank God for what he has done for you.

### WORD

Almost everybody prays at some time. But for most people, prayer is restricted to times of trouble – when all else fails, people pray that God will help them! But that is so different from what the Bible tells us about prayer. For the Christian, prayer is rooted in the relationship that we have with God. Of course within that relationship we will ask for God’s help, we will ask him to give us what we need. But no relationship can flourish if that is all that is involved in it. And our relationship with God has to begin with recognising how amazing it is that he should care for us. Prayer has to begin with the God we pray to.

## READ PSALM 97

- What picture of God does this give you?
- What different ways does the psalm use to describe his greatness?
- How do you respond to this picture – love, fear, awe etc?
- Do you find it easy or hard to believe that when you pray God is actually listening to you?

## READ LUKE 15:11-32

- Do you find it easy to relate to God as Father?
- Although this parable isn't about prayer, how does it help us to be more confident in coming to God in prayer?
- What warning is there in the second half of the parable?

Having focussed on the God we pray to, the first request deals not with our wants or needs, but with God.

To hallow means 'to make holy, to honour as holy'.

- What do you think '*hallowed be your name*' means?
- In what ways might our actions as individuals and as a church result in God's name being hallowed, or in God's name being dishonoured?

### WORK

It seems that when it comes to prayer, most of us are happier reading about it, or talking about it, than actually doing it. But as we study the Lord's Prayer this term, we will be spending time praying as well as talking.

Maybe the biggest challenge with praying as the Lord's Prayer teaches us comes with the first word – **Our**. It is a prayer to be prayed together. And so we need to learn to pray together.

For some Christians that is a really daunting thought. But over this term, please put aside your anxieties about praying together, and try doing it.

So spend some time bringing your praise to God. If you can't think of your own words, find words in the Bible which say what you want to say. (The Psalms are great for this) And ask God to give you deeper love for him, and a desire for his name to be honoured.

## 2. YOUR KINGDOM COME YOUR WILL BE DONE

### WELCOME

What are you most looking forward to in life?

### WORSHIP

One of the titles that the Bible gives to God is that he is the King. Psalm 95 encourages us to praise his majesty, and also warns us not to resist what he says. Use the Psalm together.

### WORD

Although we are so used to praying 'Your kingdom come', we live in a society which has a very different view of kingship to that of the New Testament world. In most countries today where there is a king (or queen) the position is mainly symbolic. Power lies with the people (exercised through Parliament), and the monarch merely implements what the people have decided. That is democracy, and most people assume that it is the only right way for society to be run.

But in Biblical times, democracy was almost unheard of. Kings had absolute power, and anyone who dared to oppose them came to a quick (and usually painful) end.

The Bible tells us that God is King. He doesn't impose his will on us by force, but that doesn't mean that he is only a symbolic

king who is there to do our will. To recognise that God is King means that we must see ourselves as his subjects, and submit our lives to his will.

### READ MATTHEW 14:24-46

- What do these 4 parables tell us about God's kingdom?

The first 2 focus on the way that although the kingdom has broken in through Jesus, we still wait for its completion.

- What differences will there be when the kingdom has fully come?
- Is this something that you look forward to? Or worry about?

The second 2 parables point to the value of the kingdom.

- What does it mean to sell everything that you have to gain the kingdom?
- What would it mean to pray 'your kingdom come' in our own lives?
  - In our church?
  - In our community?

## READ PSALM 1

In a world where we are surrounded by pressures to do what we want, how can we learn what God's will is?

The psalmist describes the person who **delights** in God's law (v.2)

- What do you think this means in practice?
  
- How does meditation – listening to God speak to us through Scripture – prepare us for prayer?

To pray “your will be done” in our own lives involves turning our back on any activities, habits, attitudes, that are sinful. It means accepting that what God wants is best.

- Are there areas of your life where you find it hard to pray “your will be done”?

Psalm 1 begins by saying that the person who is in line with God's will is *blessed*.

- Does that help you to pray more enthusiastically?

### WORK

Tonight, share with each other situations in your lives (family, work, leisure, personal) where you long for God's will to be done, and his kingdom to come. But don't just talk about them to each other – spend time bringing them to God. Support one another by praying for one another (it is a great thing to hear someone praying for you!)

## 3. GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

### WELCOME

What is the best meal you have ever had?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 111 tells us that, among his other blessings, God *provides food for those who fear him*. Use the psalm, and then thank God for the things which he has given you.

### WORD

I'm sorry to mention it, but if you are doing this study in the week set for it in the diary, it is just 2 months till Christmas. Even by the start of October Christmas decorations were on sale, Christmas presents being advertised, and apparently there had even been Christmas Carols on the radio!

With all the hype which surrounds the season, it is hardly surprising that children begin to make lists of presents that they want, and that by the time Christmas arrives, they will expect to get everything they have asked for.

I fear that is how we are with God sometimes. But although he graciously invites us to bring our requests to him, that doesn't mean that he is like a genie in a magic lamp, who will give us everything we want.

## READ PSALM 103

- What is the best thing that has ever happened to you?
- Do you find it easy to think of this as having come from God?
- What different things does this psalm see as having come from God?
- In what ways does God '*satisfy our desires with good things*'? What sort of good things has he given to you?
- In what ways does this psalm describe God's love for us? How is God's love reflected in the things he gives us, and the things he doesn't give us?
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## READ MATTHEW 7:7-12

Jesus says that God will give good gifts to those that ask him'

- What are the good things we can ask God for?
- How can we know whether we are asking God for something 'good'?
- Do you think that we miss out on some good things God wants to give us because we don't ask him for them?

## READ PROVERBS 30:8-9

- Why might both wealth and poverty be seen as dangerous?

### **WORK**

When we pray in our home-groups, we don't only pray with each other, we pray as part of the world-wide church, and in that sense we pray with our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.

Tonight, as well as praying for your own needs, spend time praying for those who are facing hunger or starvation. Pray 'give us today our daily bread' on their behalf.

## 4. FORGIVE US OUR SINS AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US

### WELCOME

What is the most embarrassing thing that has happened to you?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 32 is a reminder of how wonderful God's forgiveness is. Use it to thank him for forgiving you.

### WORD

There are some words which we all use regularly which turn out to be very difficult to define. Everyone knows what words like 'that' and 'which' mean, but when it comes to defining them ....

Other words we think we know what they means, but sometimes the general usage of a word can be misleading. Nowadays we use the word 'gentleman' as a compliment, meaning a man who is considerate, polite, generous etc. But originally the word referred to a man's social position, and had nothing to do with how he behaved.

Another word which has a similarly confused meaning is 'sin.' People often do use the word, not only in church but in ordinary conversation. But what does the word actually mean?

### READ PSALM 51

- What different words for sin does this prayer use?
- What might this tell us about the nature of sin?

If I have been a sinner from birth (v.5), sin must be something more than just doing wrong things.

- What else could it be?

Verse 10 is the heart of the psalm.

- What does David ask God to do for him?
- In what way does this go beyond just asking for forgiveness?
- What is '*a broken and a contrite heart*'? Have you ever felt like that?

### READ MATTHEW 18:21-35

- Why do you think it is so important to forgive those who sin against us?
- What does it mean to forgive?
- Forgiving those who have sinned against us is often very difficult. How does this parable help us?

➤ Finally – how can we be sure that God will forgive us?

## WORK

Is there a Christian you know who is holding on to a grudge against someone else? It might be within your family, or at work, or at church. It might even be you.

Whoever it is, pray that God will give them grace to forgive, so that they can enjoy again his forgiveness of them.

## S. LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

### WELCOME

What is your favourite self-indulgence?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 141 prays for God's help in time of temptation. Praise God that he does help us when we are tempted.

### WORD

Oscar Wilde once said 'I can resist anything except temptation.' I suspect that many of us are aware how easily we can give in when tempted to do wrong. Of course, even if we were tempted, we would never go out and kill someone, or steal, but when it comes to 'smaller' things ....

How easily we find ourselves telling a little white lie to get out of trouble. How easily we allow inappropriate thoughts to find a home in our minds. How easily we end up doing what we know is wrong, and then wondering afterwards how we could have been so weak.

God knows that we are like that – and he encourages us to seek his help. Having prayed for our material needs (daily bread) and our spiritual needs (forgiveness), we now pray for our moral needs.

- But first – why do we find it so easy to give in to temptation?

### READ PSALM 23

In this well known psalm, God is like a shepherd.

- In what ways does the shepherd care for his sheep?
- How does the setting of verse 4 contrast with that of verses 1-3?
- Do you think that the shepherd leads his sheep into the valley of the shadow of death?
- ‘*I fear no evil*’ is a bold statement. How can the writer say such a thing?
- Are there particular temptations which you fear? How might this psalm help?

### READ JAMES 1:13-15

- What does this tell you about the source of temptations?

### READ EPHESIANS 6:10-18

We looked at this passage last term when we were studying Ephesians. But it is still worth going back to.

- The passage talks about God providing us with armour. But why do we need it?
- How might each piece of the armour help us in our battle against temptation?

### WORK

One of God’s provisions for us when we face temptation is one another – we need each other to *spur one another on towards love and good deeds*. (Hebrews 10:24)

Throughout this home-group series we have seen that we should be praying together. Certainly all of us need to be spending time daily in private prayer, but we also need to be regularly meeting to pray with others.

Home-group is one place where this can happen, but not the only one. Many Christians have found it helpful to meet with a couple of others as a ‘Prayer Triplet.’ Often this will be to pray for family and friends who don’t yet know Jesus.

Whilst there are no fixed ‘rules’, ‘Triplets’ function best when they meet together weekly. One of the strengths of doing this is that it helps us to resist the temptation not to pray – if you are committed to meeting with someone else, it is a great incentive to pray.

So – what about you? Will you plan to join a ‘Prayer Triplet’?

## 6. FOR THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY ARE YOURS, NOW AND FOREVER

### WELCOME

What is the best thing about Christmas?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 145 reminds us of the many reasons we have to praise God – his power, his goodness, his compassion, his faithfulness, and many more.

### WORD

We started our series by seeing that prayer should begin with a realisation of the character of God – he is our Father, he is the Holy One. As we recognise those things, it will not only help us to draw near to him, it will also influence the things we want to ask him for.

And having started with God; the Lord's Prayer ends by focusing our attention back onto God, and praising him.

These words don't appear in the Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew's and Luke's gospel, but seem to have been added at a very early stage as a fitting way to end the prayer.

### READ 1 CHRONICLES 29:10-13

David used very similar words as those found at the end of the Lord's Prayer.

- What do you think it means to say that '*the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour*' are God's?
- And to say that '*yours, O Lord, is the kingdom*'?
- Why might 'for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever' be an appropriate way to end all our prayers?

### READ PSALM 150

- According to verse 1, **where** is God to be praised?
  - What do you think these 2 expressions mean?
- Verse 2 tells us **why** God is to be praised. What reasons does the psalmist give?
  - What reasons of your own can you add?
- Verses 3-5 tell us **how** to praise the Lord. As you read these verses, what kind of scene do you imagine?

- How does this kind of worship compare with your own?
  
- Verse 6 tells us **who** should praise the Lord.
  
- Again, what do you think this expression means?

It is significant that the Lord's Prayer ends in praise, just as the book of Psalms does. Eugene Peterson has written 'Prayer almost never begins in praise (it usually begins in hurt), but if pursued long enough, it will finally develop into praise.'

- Have there been difficult circumstances in your life that have ended up in praise?

## WORK

Has this study of the Lord's Prayer made any difference to your prayer life? Is there anything that you want to make sure is different in the future?

*Christ Church*  
*Theme verse*  
*for*  
*2009*

Just as you received Christ  
Jesus as Lord, continue to  
live in him, rooted and built  
up in him, strengthened in  
the faith as you were taught,  
and overflowing with  
thankfulness

*Colossians 2:6-7*