

Sermon Bramley 7 March 2021  
Reading Luke 11:1-13  
Aim To deepen prayer lives

## Introduction

Title slide

Moved today from lectionary readings  
Consider prayer  
Link to our Lent+ course, looking at LP  
(Lord's Prayer)

## Lent+ Course reminder 1

Slide 2

Some helpful images:

- Toolbox: many different types of prayer. LP itself is full of these
- Telescope, not microscope: can become too focused on our own situations & needs = microscope. Encouraged to lift up our heads & worship God = telescope.  
**'Hallowed be your name ...'** (v2)
- P.R.A.Y. = how we approach prayer. Yes, we rejoice / reflect and we ask but pay more attention to how we begin & end
- Pause = take time to be aware of God's presence, let go of all the rush / bustle
- End well = yield / say yes to God. To be changed by the encounter!

## Lent+ Course reminder 2

Slide 3

- Tumbling dominoes: asking God for our own needs. Keep going / incremental prayers as well as big prayers. Break it down. So: healing becomes ... quick appointment, good news at it, treatment options, recovery, etc
- Globe: intercession. What a privilege! What scope. **‘If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land’** (2 Chr 7:14)
- Unanswered prayer: expected challenge but received encouragement = surprise! **‘Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning’** (Ps 30:5). Pete Greig’s honesty about his wife almost dying & going thro’ difficult surgery, etc.

3 more sessions to go.

Those of us on the course = enriched

If you’re not doing it, hope this has been a good taster. Link in sermon notes if you want more! <https://prayercourse.org/home>

## Teach us to pray ...

Slide 4

St Francis once spent a whole night in prayer  
Next morning his face glowed

One of his followers wanted to learn &  
watched him; heard him pray just 4 words all  
night 'My God my all'.

People have always learnt from others who  
prayed – no more so than from Jesus

Not about your ability

About your availability, your hunger

You can grow in this / never too late to learn

## A pattern for prayer

Slide 5

I am sure some of you will have heard this,  
but it bears repeating:

- Lord's Prayer can be a 'set prayer'. Like a Collect, a piece of liturgy. Say these words
- We use it that way in services, in 2025 Prayer Community commitment
- But it could also be said: Jesus intended it as a pattern for prayer
- Begins to resource us to persist in prayer

2014 Article for Reader Magazine praying LP

Came from experience of doing so on  
pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela

Pilgrimage route = have hours to pray daily

Not got distractions – house, phone, email  
Luxury of space but also the terror ...  
How am I going to use all that time!

Using LP at as template was a blessing:

- Break it into phrases
- ‘Our Father in heaven’
- Or, better ‘Our Father’ – intimacy, adopted into family of God, Abba
- Then ‘In Heaven’ – no earthly parent, power, majesty, glory
- 2 sections = focus for praise & thanks
- More difficult for those who had -ve xp of human father but perhaps part of healing: to relate to a 100% good Father in Heaven
- Your kingdom come: local, national, world, 5 marks of mission – **Tell, teach, tend, transform, treasure**. Make prayer an adventure / privilege. **‘If my people, who are called by my name ...’**
- Your will be done: can use this to focus on God’s will impacting YOUR life = challenge to engage with God, let prayer shape you
- Give us ... today ... daily bread: not wrong to pray for personal needs. Recalls manna in desert, pointless to collect 2 days’ worth; this prayer can teach us reliance on God

- And then the section on being forgiven, forgiving others & handling temptation ...

Hopefully you get the picture

- Praying LP as set prayer = like learning scales as a musician
- Using LP as a pattern = improvising; opens up a world of limitless possibilities
- I would argue: enough in LP alone to last us a lifetime!

Keep going

**Slide 6**

**So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened**

You may have heard it said before:

Greek language has TWO forms of command

To do a thing ONCE

To do something continuously / go on doing

Here = second one

Keep on asking ... seeking ... knocking

## 2025 Prayer Community

Slide 7

Good example of the value and challenge of persistent prayer:

- Calling people to pray daily
- Commitments = on the slide
- Not onerous when you analyse them
- Why? Dependence: cannot do this alone
- Why? Persistence. God, we mean it!
- Who? You'd think ... every minister, every congregation member! Common goal
- How? Do I need to sign up? Yes!  
Otherwise how do we know you're in ...
- How? What if I slip up / miss a day? That's OK. It's about aim, not perfection
- How? Isn't it hard to pray the same for 6-7 years. Yes! But fresh resources each week
- Quite a few signed up here. Could be more. Could do some praying for our own parish / Silverwood mission area.
- Going to be looking for local link people soon

## A final encouragement

Slide 8

**If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him**

This is how Jesus ended his teaching

Fish / snake; egg / scorpion

Argument: from the lesser to the greater

WE respond kindly to our children when they ask for help, though we're not perfect

HOW MUCH MORE is this true of Father in Heaven

Important when talking about persistence

Can seem like God is reluctant / twist arm

'You're a good, good Father; it's who you are'

So, come: with expectation, with trust