

Praying to Your Father

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 March 2019

Preacher: Chris Thornton

[0 : 00] The scripture reading comes from Matthew, chapter 6. Please follow along in your bulletins or on the screen. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others.

Truly, I say to you, they have received a reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Pray then like this. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[1 : 10] For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This is the word of God. Thank you, Pui. Welcome again. My name is Chris. I'm one of the leaders here. If you don't know me, it's just exciting to welcome you this morning.

We're continuing in our series in the Sermon on the Mount. And if you've been following along, Jesus has been saying, He's not looking, God's not looking for us to have an outward religion in our lives.

He's looking not for a religion that just obeys the rules and does the right thing on the outside, but he's looking for a religion from the heart. And Kevin last week said, outward religion leads to a situation like a parent who has told his child to sit at the dinner table for repeated attempts, and finally manages to get them sitting down.

And the child then says to them, I'm sitting down, but I'm standing up on the inside. And Jesus says, religion like that is dead religion.

[2 : 25] I want to transform your heart to love me from the inside out. And so in Matthew 5, Jesus has been applying this principle of the heart to anger, to lust, to many areas in life.

And today he's going to come to the area of prayer. And as we did when we looked at salt and light and evangelism, we're actually going to camp out on the idea of prayer for the next four weeks.

Because this is, we want to really get deep into what Jesus is actually talking to us about. Because this is important. And so we're going to talk about prayer. How many of you feel like you are good at praying?

Overwhelming response. You know, I think that's where most of us are. You know, Fiona and I, my wife and I, we pray usually just briefly before we go to bed.

And I remember one time I started praying. And then I realized I was dozing off. Only to hear myself at one point saying, Father, would you bless Mickey Mouse?

[3 : 30] I don't know why I was praying for Mickey Mouse. But the whole thing is prayer is difficult. You lose concentration. You get distracted. There's Facebook.

There's food. There's sleep. Whatever it is, it all seeks to draw us away from prayer. And we live in an age where we've got to be productive. And doesn't it feel like if you've got 15 emails to do right now, or the choice to pray for the next 15 minutes, what seems to be more productive?

Because prayer sometimes feels like you're not really doing anything. And we also live in an age of entertainment where we have to have instant gratification. So then you have a choice.

I either look at YouTube or I pray. And YouTube normally wins, right, if we're honest. And prayer is hard work because we want instant things.

If your prayers were answered within 30 seconds of you asking for them, I reckon all of us would be constantly on our knees in prayer. But it doesn't.

[4 : 37] And so we don't pray as much as we should. And the Bible continually calls us and says prayer is vital, is totally about spiritual vitality.

It's like what oxygen is to breathing. You may believe in your head that God loves you, but you'll not experience the depth of his love if you do not talk to him and pray.

You know, Jesus in this passage, he says, when you pray, he didn't say if you pray. Jesus says he expects Christians to pray. But you know, in Hong Kong, we're like a diver that's often starved of oxygen, who's drowning and gasping for air, seeking to find rest in our holidays, in yoga, in meditation, in whatever, when we don't realize that there is an oxygen tank available for us, which is called prayer.

Tim Keller says this, prayer is the only entryway into genuine self-knowledge. It's also the main way we experience deep change, the reordering of our loves.

Prayer is how God gives us so many of the unimaginable things he has for us. Indeed, prayer makes it safe for God to give us many of the things we desire.

[6 : 01] It's the way we know God. It's the way we finally treat God as God. Prayer is simply the key to everything we need to do and be in life. Wow.

So how's our prayer life? Because if we're honest, most of us actually feel a little bit guilty about prayer. We know we should pray, but we know that our hearts often choose other things rather than spending time with the God of the universe.

And some of us, if we're actually honest, we're actually a little cynical that prayer really makes any difference anyway. Sometimes it feels like you're praying to the ceiling.

That's why as a church, we need to talk about prayer for these next four weeks. Because the whole spiritual vitality of Watermark depends on it. It depends.

If this church is to be a place filled with God's power and his love and his presence, presence, both individually and corporately, then prayer is the key which opens the door to invite God to come in in power to us.

[7 : 12] So we're going to look at prayer today. Are you ready? Okay, three people. Great. So to get an understanding of prayer, we need to understand what it is to pray rightly.

And to do that, Jesus is going to show us how not to pray, and then he's going to show us how gospel praying reorients our prayers to God, to others, and to our need for him.

Okay? So if you've got the passage with you, we're just going to go through a little bit, and we're really just going to go through the first few verses together. We're not going to do the whole thing today. So how not to pray.

And when you pray, Jesus says, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others.

Jesus says, one of the wrong ways to pray is to pray like a hypocrite. A hypocrite literally means someone who puts on a mask in their lives.

[8 : 11] Hypocrites are more worried about what others think about them than what God thinks about them. You know, in Jewish culture at the time, if you prayed beautiful, eloquent prayers, everyone would be amazed at how holy you were.

That had street cred. And so the Pharisees, the religious people, they prayed long, they prayed loud, they prayed so everyone could see. But their prayers were more about what other people thought about them than actually what God thought about them.

You know, I had a friend. He was a great guy. He was a godly guy. But he would never pray in public. In our community group, he would never pray. He'd serve, he'd do anything else except pray.

And one day I asked him about it and he said, I'm just not very good at praying. He said, my words kind of come out wrong and everyone else kind of prays these amazing prayers and then I just feel like I'll look stupid if I pray because I don't know how to say it.

And I challenged him because I asked him, who's at the center of your idea about prayer? Because it's how other people will see him. You see, the Pharisees, you can wear a mask, you can be like a mask wearing prayer by praying very eloquently all the beautiful words.

[9 : 34] Or you can be a mask wearing prayer by not praying at all. But the focus in both of them is the same. You're both worried about what everyone else will think rather than what God will think.

Anyone like that?

And Jesus says to us who struggle with that, he says, what you need to do is to shut the door and pray in a secret place. What he doesn't mean is that the only place you can pray is in your room. Because he's talking about where your reward is in prayer. Whose eyes count for you? Is it God's or other people's? That's what he's saying.

And so we need to be those who learn how to shut the door in prayer. So when we come to pray, whether it's praying together with other people or by yourself, you shut the door so you actually stop thinking about what everyone else is thinking.

You shut the door of other people. Forget about that. You shut the door and forget about yourself, about constructing beautiful sentences. And then you focus on talking to your heavenly father.

[10:42] And others may overhear and be encouraged by that. But our focus is on his eyes, not everyone else's. That's the first wrong way to pray.

The second wrong way to pray, and this really actually fills a lot of Christian books on prayer, is to think that prayer is like a sales pitch. Okay? It's like God is your potential customer and you've got to kind of come up with the right technique to persuade him to get the deal to give you what you want.

You know, the Gentiles had this special kind of formula. They kind of had magic words that they would repeat many times, kind of like abracadabra, abracadabra, abracadabra. And they would say that and they thought if they prayed long enough or they prayed hard enough, then their God was surely going to listen to them.

You know, when Christian pray, sometimes we can do exactly the same thing. Have you ever noticed that Christians sometimes change their tone of voice when they start praying? Kind of very holy.

And then sometimes, you know, we start using a whole lot of very spiritual kind of language which you never use any other time. And then there's other times where some people say you can only pray in Jesus' name if you didn't say in Jesus' name it's not a real prayer.

[11:58] Or some others, it's like you have to get very loud and emotional because the more emotional and loud you are then God's going to hear you more. Now emotion's good.

You should get excited about prayer. But that's not what actually makes God hear you. God's not interested in how great your presentation is. You know, if a two-year-old child says go toilet, the parent doesn't stand back and say I'm not taking you anywhere until your grammar improves. No, they want to hear. It says your father already knows what you need. God calls us to pray because he's inviting us into relationship with himself. Tim Keller again says this the power of our prayers lies not primarily in our effort and striving or in any technique but rather in our knowledge of God.

Rather in our knowledge of who we're praying to. And so what you see is in the Lord's Prayer you'll see the first half of the Lord's Prayer is actually all focused upwards on God.

You notice that? It's about your name, your kingdom, your will. And then the second half is focused on us. Our daily bread, our sins, lead us not, deliver us.

[13:18] You see the order that he puts it in? And what Jesus is doing he's not giving a magic formula to repeat. He's looking internally at our hearts and he's wanting to reshape not just our prayer list but our loves of who we want the priority in our life.

Because prayer is always a personal conversation where we respond to who God really is. So we're going to focus on the first line of that prayer and see how that reorients us in our lives.

So here's my second point. That's how not to pray. We don't pray by just praying to be seen. We don't pray by trying to get a special technique to God hear us. But we pray, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Our Father in heaven. You know when you hear the word Father, I don't know what comes into your minds. I had a good Chinese friend of mine say to me once, My boss is like a father to me.

Every time I make a mistake, he shouts at me and points out all the things that I was doing wrong. And I listened to that and I thought, that's not the image I get of a father when I hear that. And so what I realized is that we need to understand what Jesus means by the word Father.

[14:44] Otherwise, we're going to project our own fathers, whether they're good or bad, onto God and we're going to miss completely what he wants to see of who God truly is. You see, when Jesus was praying Father and calls us to pray Father, he's telling us that God is the source, the sovereign

source of our life.

You see, Deuteronomy 32, 6 says this, Is he, is God not your Father who created you, who made you and established you? He's your maker.

He's your sustainer. Every facet of your life is in his hands. He's sovereign. That's why we pray to him, not anyone else.

He's not like our earthly father because he's our father in heaven. What that means is he sits at the control center of the entire universe.

I don't know if you know in the Old Testament, kings were often called the father of the nation.

Sometimes they still are today. But the kings had the power of life and death in their hands.

[15:57] If someone said, if they said someone dies, they died. If they said someone lives, they lived. They had power and authority. When we say Father in heaven, we're talking to the one who has ultimate power to determine and to change lives and to change everything in this world.

We don't pray because he's like a therapist who cannot really change our situations but it's just nice to get things off your chest. Prayer is not a crutch to make yourself feel better.

No, in prayer, we come before the one who has the resources to make the global autonomy tick, the one who has your marriage, your singlehood, your grades, the conversation you've got to have with your boss tomorrow all in his hands.

And so when we pray, we remind ourselves that the source of our life isn't on getting our to-do lists done. It's not in getting in our holidays. The source of our real life is God himself.

That's why we pray our Father. And you know, if as a church we don't pray, we're also saying functionally, our hard work, our organization, all the other things, the busyness that we do, that's really where our life comes from, not God.

[17:21] And do you know in a church that's the road to spiritual death? That's the diver holding a breath and refusing to put on the oxygen mask. But prayer recognizes the sufficiency of God in every situation.

That's the first thing that prayer, that Father means. He's the sovereign source of our life. But it's not just that. It also means that he is the close and personal. He's not distant and detached.

You know the word Father in Aramaic, which is what Jesus would have spoken, is the word Abba. Abba. He uses it in the Garden of Gethsemane.

It's this very personal word. For a Jewish boy, and actually, if you ever see Ethan running around here, he's a Jewish boy.

When he calls out for his dad and to come to him from the other side of the room, do you know what he says? He says, Abba. Abba.

[18:26] And when he's in trouble, it's Abba. When he's suffering, Abba. Abba. It's Abba. And do you know what happened? His Abba, even from the opposite side of the room, even if it may be noisy, when he hears his voice, do you know what?

His ears are tuned to his son because he's his Abba. And so he comes to him and he picks him up and he walks with him.

You know, Romans 8 says, you have received, if you're in Christ, you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry to the God of the universe, Abba, Father.

You know, in prayer, we come as the adopted children of the one who is sovereignly over everything. I don't know if you realize how incredible that is.

like, if a stranger walks into my parents' house, goes up to the fridge and starts trying to help themselves to some dessert from the fridge, do you know what's going to happen?

[19:34] They're going to either experience the wrath of my mom or she's going to call the police because strangers can't just walk in. But if I, as their son, walk right into the house, walk right up to the fridge, my mom will call out to me from the back.

She'll say, hey, I left you some extra dessert at the back of the fridge. Help yourself. How can I do that? I can only do that because I am a son. I am part of the family. I belong.

I have access. You know, no one gets the president's ear like their child does. No one has access like a son or a daughter of the king does.

You know, at the heart of the gospel message is the idea that you and me are just like those hypocrites and Gentiles that we talked about at the beginning.

We make life all about ourselves and we actually have no right, no access into God's presence. No human being, listen to this, no human being has any right to ever be heard by God in prayer.

[20 : 44] Did you know that? We have no right at all because our performance does not merit an audience with the king. We don't have righteousness enough to enter.

Now, God is so gracious that sometimes he allows the prayers of non-believers to kind of pass through security but actually there's no right for him to hear them automatically.

But if you are a believer here in Christ, what you have is God through Christ coming to die on the cross for you, he has made a way that you have access into his presence like no one else does.

We say Christianity is not a religion, it's a relationship. Right? So where is that relationship with our Father to be expressed?

In prayer. In prayer. Can I put it like this? Jesus died for you so that you can pray. Jesus died for you so that you can come in and you can cry to God, Abba, and he will hear you.

[22 : 00] That is not just a duty that we have to do, that is a privilege of sons and daughters of the living God. Isn't that amazing? But sometimes we forget that, right?

Which is why practically before we pray, Martin Lloyd-Jones, he said this, if you want to make contact with God and if you want to feel his everlasting arms around you, before you pray, put your hand upon your mouth for a moment.

Recollection. Just stop for a moment and remind yourself of what you're about to do. We can put it in a phrase. Do you realize the true essence of prayer is found in the two words in verse 9, our Father.

So before you even come to prayer, remind yourself of whose presence you're coming into. I'm coming into the one who controls the universe. I'm coming to the one who loves me so much that Christ died that I could enter into his presence and I can come with confidence to the throne of grace to receive mercy and grace in my time of need.

Prayer reorients us to the presence of God right in the midst of our busyness. Next, prayer reorients us to God.

[23 : 35] Prayer reorients us also to others. You know, did you notice there are two words in prayer in the first line? Our Father.

You notice he didn't say my Father, right? He said our Father. You see, intrinsic in the idea of prayer is that when we pray through Jesus and that the Father has made us his children, when he did that he also made us brothers and sisters.

He gave us brothers and sisters the church. You know, prayer can be done in groups or by yourself but it's never individualistic. Do you know, a church that doesn't pray is a church that doesn't love.

Do you know that? Because if we do pray, if you're like me, my natural tendency is actually to be wrapped up in myself because my prayer revealed my priorities and most of my priorities about me.

But when we say our Father, we're instantly reminded of our responsibility towards each other, our brothers and sisters. You know, Hong Kong is incredibly busy.

[24 : 49] I get so distracted by so many things. I know I'm supposed to love people but when it comes to pray, I need to have something which will remind me of how to pray for people.

I need a prayer list. I actually have one on my phone. So if I have a minute waiting for the bus or the MTI, I can open it up and I can see, oh, there's Archie or there's Theo or whoever it is and I can pray for them.

And so when I start to pray, do you know what it does? It actually reminds me of them. Most of the time I forget about everyone else except me. But you see, what happens is when you start doing that, then you think, oh, maybe I can send them a text and see how they're doing and how can I pray for them.

And then when you send them a text and they tell you about stuff that's going on in your lives then it gives you an opportunity to think, how can I love them? How can I encourage them? Maybe I can meet up for them for coffee. And when you do that, then what happens is you realize very quickly that you often don't have the resources to love them as you should.

And so what it does it fuels you to pray for them again because you realize that only our sovereign Abba who cares for that person has enough to truly change their life and change their circumstances.

[26 : 11] And so what you see is that prayer is the fuel for love and love is the fuel for prayer and it's this cycle. And if we don't pray for our church family we won't love our church family with God's resources as he calls us to.

You know, when we don't pray we just get centered on our own little worlds, our own little tiny narrow little concerns for others.

But a church that is constantly praying our Father will radiate God's Father's, His fatherly love and care for each other. Do you see?

Prayer orients us not to just who God is. It reorients us to each other. Thirdly, prayer reorients us to see our own need for God.

You know, one of the problems when we pray, when Jesus says, when you pray, pray our Father, what does that make us?

[27 : 14] That makes us children, right? Generally. Okay, one person agrees. Okay, we might have to have a conversation about this. Yeah, children.

Now, just like we mentioned about sheep a few weeks ago, the images that Jesus uses for human beings are not flattering. They're actually about weakness and humbleness and dependence.

How much we're in need. Someone said it like this, helplessness is the real secret and the impelling power of prayer. Nothing so furthers our prayer life as the feeling of our own helplessness.

Some of you know what that's like. Jesus knew what that was like. You know, in John 5, he says, I can do nothing, nothing by myself. The Son can do nothing by himself, but only what I see my Father doing.

The guy, Paul Miller, puts it like this. He says, if you had a 35-year-old man who came and said that to you, I only do what I see my dad doing, you would think he had some boundary issues with his dad.

[28 : 28] Right? You'd think he needs to get a little bit of independence there, probably. Because that's just like a child, right? But we're so adult that we don't want to be children.

We don't want to feel helpless. We don't want to feel like we can't do it. We want to feel like we're in control. That's why we often only pray when we're desperate, like before your exam or before that job interview, because you feel helpless then, right?

It's amazing how your prayer life just takes off at those moments. But if we're children, and I'm going to embarrass her this morning, but we went to Turkey last year with Rhoda.

And one of the things that really struck me during our trip is that every while we'd be looking for something like a car park space. And I'd be kind of, I'd be stressing out because someone just got in that parking space just before we get there.

I'm like, oh, that's just the one we needed. And Rhoda would be going, help us, Father. Help us, Father. Help us, Father. And I'd be going, oh, like this. And we'd be going further along, and then finally we'd get into like a car parking space and we'd be going, oh, it's so annoying.

[29 : 43] It's like 200 meters away from where we were before. I can't believe it. And she'd be going, thank you, Father. Thank you, Father. Just kind of, she was calm. I was stressed. And you know, what I realized, I realized how little I pray as a child.

Because a child comes to their father about the most minute details of their life. They're bothering them all the time. That's why if you're parents, you just get so annoyed by like, are we there yet? Are we there yet?

You know, that's what children are like. But in their messiness and in their self-centeredness, they keep coming to their parents, to every little thing.

But I don't think God would be that interested in the little things. I think he's, I'm kind of more adult than that. And you know what adults do? We do what men do when they're driving and they're lost. And we don't want to admit it. We go, oh, do you need help? And we go, no, I'm fine. I'm going to fix this by myself. Thank you. And then we kind of desperately trying to make sure we can navigate our way all the way to the end.

[30 : 51] And you know, in that process, we're hardly the most loving, kind, gracious people on the way. And even if we do make it to the end, we've been stressed the whole way. And isn't that exactly like most of us are in life?

That much of our stress in Hong Kong is due to us trying to figure out our lives by ourselves. The big things and the little things. Just look at your stress over the last week and then look at your prayer life and see if there isn't a direct correlation between your stress levels and your prayerlessness.

Because we have this oxygen tank that God is wanting to give us and our whole city is drowning in stress and anxiety because it doesn't know that we have a father, an Abba, who knows what we

need, who cares for us and he wants to be present with us in the midst of every little thing. Whether it's even you just can't find your iPhone cable or whether it's you can't find your car parking spot or whether it's your kids' education, whatever it is, he wants to be involved in our lives because he's our father.

The old hymn says, Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pains we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

[32 : 14] Isn't that so true? And so like with little children, little children don't give up until they get an answer.

Are we there yet doesn't stop until you're actually there. But that's how our father wants us to pray to him again and again.

And some of us get disillusioned because we've been waiting a long time for our prayers to be answered. And one of the things that is amazing in our prayer is can children pray with selfish motives?

The answer is yes. In fact, we pray all the time with kind of mixed motives. So if you're waiting to have a pure motive before you pray for something, you're going to wait a very long time.

but that's why Jesus, when he tells us to pray, he puts this little safety valve. You know, like on a gun, you have a little safety catch to stop it kind of just causing chaos.

[33 : 21] In the safety catch, he says, hallowed be your name. Hallowed means holy. It means may your name be made holy. May you be glorified in my life.

So as children, you come with any kind of requests and then with the safety valve you say, but Lord, I want you to get glory more than I even want to get this thing.

With all of my life. So it doesn't matter. If you get more glory from answering this immediately, that's great, God. I want you to do that.

Please do that right now. But, if you get even more glory, by me having to wait or you answering in a different way, then Father, even though that's kind of not exactly what I'd like right now, I know I can trust you because I know that you are my Abba.

And you love me more than I can ever imagine. Do you know, sometimes God gets more glory by making us wait. You know, I've had, I've prayed for jobs and got nothing for month after month after month.

[34 : 36] And just as I was giving up hope, totally out of the blue, I received job offers from jobs I've never even applied for. It's true. And then, you know, it's only God who's done it.

It's not my hard work. He gets the glory. Some of you have had family members, family members recently, you've been praying for years for them. And you've wondered, when could they ever come?

You've just got no hope and then God has just broken through into their lives and you've seen their lives just turn around you like it's only God. Because then he gets the glory. A good parent will never give their children everything they ask for.

If you're parents, you know that is true. But God gives us everything that we would pray for if we knew everything that he knows. And so, the opposite of a praying church is a self-reliant, busy planning, organizing church with lots of programs and just prays for God to bless our plans.

But it doesn't have a desperate sense of our own need of God as his children. Tim Keller said this, to fail to pray is not to merely break some religious rule.

[35 : 59] It is a failure to treat God as God. It is a sin against his glory. It is to say, I don't need you. But our Abba wants us to come to him with everything of our lives.

For our church, for us individually. if we see what Christ in the gospel has done for us to make his children, what would that mean for us as watermark if we started praying as children of our Father, not as hypocrites, not as Gentiles?

Well, I think many of us struggle in prayer as we've seen. Many of us feel like we actually really, if we're honest, we don't have any real desire to pray. We've tried and it just didn't seem to work and so we've given up.

There's plenty of other things we want to do. And so I think the place where we need to start as a church is actually to repent of our prayerlessness. It's actually to come and say, God, we've been self-sufficient.

It's actually to say, I think I've been religious in my praying. Maybe I've prayed, but I haven't prayed with you as my Father. I've prayed with you as my genie just to get stuff from you.

[37 : 19] That God has called us into relationship with himself, but I've just wanted his stuff and I haven't wanted him. And so we start by asking God to make us desperate for him.

God, let us want you more than I even want that job offer or whatever else it is. Change my heart. That's where we start in prayer.

That's where I want us to start this morning. And then I think we make a plan to pray. This is the final thing. Don Carson said, the facts remains that unless we plan to pray, we will not pray.

The reason we pray so little is that we do not plan to pray. Wise planning will ensure that we devote ourselves to prayer often, even if for brief periods. It is better to pray often with brevity than rarely at length.

I know that's true. If you don't plan your prayer, you have all the greatest intentions in the world to pray, but it never happens. I know that is so true. There are so many, there's so many great YouTube videos out there to distract you.

[38 : 30] But that's why as a church, at 10.05, on a Sunday morning, we have a time where we come together to pray. It's not just something we do because we're Christians and Christians should pray.

This is oxygen tank time. This is spiritual vitality time. This is awaken the dead bones and bring us to lifetime. This is the time where we say, God, we need you.

We need your spirit to awaken us. We will not have your spirit's presence as you want to bring it unless you come in your power. So we're asking Abba, thank you for this privilege we can pray.

Now please come and be manifested amongst us. So come and join us at 10.05. It may mean you wake up early, but that's okay.

And in your own life, set a time to pray. Read scripture. Remind yourself of whose presence you're entering. The one who loves you so much that he died that you could enter.

[39 : 36] And remember, above all, Jesus died that you could say, our Father, our Abba in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Let us pray that as a church. Let's pray. Let's pray. Abba, Father.

Father, we just admit that sometimes prayer, we find prayer difficult. Sometimes our hearts are just, we kind of know we should pray, but we kind of don't, and then we feel guilty that we should, but that never motivates us to come to you.

Show us how amazing your generosity is towards us. Show us that you are both the one who is all sufficient for us, but you are the one who is so tender and close to us.

Show us that you're at Abba. I pray as a church that you'd help us to be a church that prays. A church that knows our need of you.

[40 : 57] A church that's going to love each other by praying for each other regularly. A church that doesn't just plan all the other things in our lives, the things that we find important in our lives, and forgets to plan to pray, to pray for each other, to pray for your kingdom, to pray for those around us, to pray with our children, to pray, Lord, because we know we need you.

Would you just fill us again with your spirit? Would you open our eyes to see the privilege that it is to pray to you?

In Jesus' name, Amen.