



**Looking Inwards** (15 mins)  
*Caring For Each Other*

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an **opportunity to share**, not something you have to do, however, 'it's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:*

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



**Looking Outwards** (15 mins)  
*Concern For Others*

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours; or church, which you would like to share (please be careful not to pass on anything that is **confidential** or which you think the person/people concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



**HG61: Living The Lord's Prayer (8/8)**  
*Perspective: Living Life God's Way*

**Matthew 6:5-15**

**Home Group Study Notes**

11<sup>th</sup> December 2011 - Revd Paul A. Carr



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN  
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION  
**BEFORE THE MEETING!**

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful.*



**Welcome** (10 mins)  
*Ice Breaker*

If you have the possibility of owning a single item from anywhere in the world (work of art; car; a gadget; even a national treasure ...) what would you choose and why? Will this be on your Christmas list?



**Looking Upwards** (10 mins)  
*Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...





## Looking Upwards (40 mins) *Bible Study*

Read through the text for this study, and any references given below, alongside those in the sermon notes, then answer the following questions - you may find it helpful to read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, of your answers with your Home Group.

**Yours is the Kingdom:** What would it mean to have God's kingdom as the central priority in our lives? How can we help each other to make God's kingdom more central in our lives?

**Yours is the Power:** How can we trust more in God's strength in our lives? How can we help each other to make God's strength, not our own resources, the thing that we rely upon?

**Yours is the Glory:** Is God glory and honour a major focus of our lives? How can we encourage each other to be more concerned about God's praise and glory and less about our own?

When we say it, we challenge all media giants, all armies, all governments, all multinational corporations and all empires of technology. In praying these words, we tell them all that to God and God alone belongs all praise, majesty and rule because his alone is the kingdom, the power and the glory. These words could easily be the most subversive statement ever written!

In praying these words, we want to proclaim this truth, not just in our lives, in our homes or in our churches, but also in the world. We want to tell out across the entire world the good news of how the kingdom and the power and the glory of God can be known in Jesus Christ. In praying these words, we are proclaiming to all creation the joyful certainty of God's ultimate victory. We have been shown the future and it belongs to God. The victory of Jesus is certain. Anything that does not belong to him is temporary and will soon pass away. One day, to say: 'Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory' will not be a statement of faith; it will be the triumphant acknowledgement of a completed and eternal fact. And until that great day dawns may we allow this prayer to shape our worship and our lives to the eternal glory of God Father, Son and Holy Spirit - to whom belongs the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. *Amen.*

**The Present: *Living The Lord's Prayer:*** Cheryl Sachs has written a very challenging and eye open book entitled: 'The Prayer Saturated Church' and in this she highlights different aspects of a church that would consider itself to be a praying church - it's a very uncomfortable read, I have to say. However, as we reflect on this series and think about what it means to 'Live The Lord's Prayer' Sachs has several suggestions which 'set apart' a praying church, which are well worth considering - both personally, but, also, as we consider where we might see ourselves in this list:

1. *Its members have a strong devotional life and invest time praying for others.*
2. *They understand who God is and how they can relate to Him through prayer.*
3. *Leaders model the importance of prayer before the congregation.*
4. *Prayer permeates church life and is not viewed as another activity in a busy schedule.*
5. *A high (first?) priority is placed on corporate prayer meetings.*
6. *Investing time in God's presence results in humility, unity, and Christ likeness.*
7. *The most distinguishing mark is that the presence of God fills His house.*

**Conclusion:** At the beginning of this series I suggested that we mature and develop as Christians through the experience of prayer. I also suggested that, at the end of this series, our understanding of prayer would be enlightened as we begin to understand, more fully, what our priorities in prayer should be. I hope that has proved to be true. And, I've no doubt that, for each one of us, our prayer life, both individually and corporately, has been enriched as a result of this Home Group series. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that praying the Lord's Prayer won't ever be quite the same again for each and every one of us. Cheryl Sachs writes: "***A praying church is not just a good idea; it is the foundation from which everything else flows.***" My prayer is that we won't put this Home Group series to one side. My prayer is that each one of us would do all that we can to be the church God is calling us to be. My prayer is that we will continue to strive towards being a Prayer saturated church. *Amen?*

### ***The Lord's Prayer***

***Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name,  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
Now and forever. Amen.***

The Westminster Catechism says: *The chief end of man is to glorify God ...* and so it is. It is God who is to be praised - not us. Alexander White: *"Earth is at its very best; and heaven is at its very highest, when men and angels magnify their office of prayer and of praise before the throne of God."* In a culture where seeking our own glory is a normal priority, this is a desperately needed perspective. God alone must be glorified. If what we do results in us being forgotten and God's kingdom and the name of Jesus being praised, then that is sufficient. Contrary to what everyone else says, we do not have to make a name for ourselves. God expects us only to lift up the name of Jesus! *For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory* puts our lives - past, present and future - into true perspective. In the light of the eternal kingdom of the all-powerful and eternal God, all our hopes and tears, ambitions and cares seem small and temporary matters.

**Amen: Our Agreement and Commitment:** 'Amen' is a Hebrew word that basically means 'be true'. It was a word that Jews used to confirm or agree with something, whether it was a prayer, a blessing or even a curse. In modern English, it means 'so be it', 'let it be so' or even 'let what we have said be binding on us'. 'Amen' is like the signature at the end of a contract. Until a contract is signed it is merely words and has no value. It is only binding when a signature is put at the end. By signing our name we are saying, 'I personally approve of what has just been written. I agree with it and I allow myself to be bound by its terms.' So when we say 'Amen' we are adding our verbal signature to what we have just prayed. Saying 'Amen' is a decisive act of commitment to or agreement with what has been prayed. It is not to be done lightly.

We need also to remember that the word 'Amen' has practical implications attached to it. By signing a contract with your signature, you are committing yourself to a course of action. You are bound by it. You cannot subsequently back out and say, 'Oh, that isn't what I meant!' When we say 'Amen' to the Lord's Prayer what we are praying: 'Lord, fulfil your promises. Make them come true. Bring in your eternal kingdom, power and glory! Next time you say a prayer, or hear a prayer, don't just say 'Amen'. Pause and ask yourself some questions: Am I really serious about what I have said or heard? Am I prepared to commit myself to what I have prayed or heard? Am I prepared to live in a way that is consistent with that prayer? Am I prepared for God to answer my prayers? If you are, and only if you are, then go ahead and say 'Amen'.

**The Future: God's Kingdom, God's Power; God's Glory:** God should be the priority, the strength and the purpose of our lives. *For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever* is one that strikes to the very depths of who and what we are as followers; disciples; servants of Jesus. It is a statement that should, when we pray it, make our spirits rise and our pulse quicken. This is a phrase that we want to be sung by the best music group or choir and orchestra imaginable, at a volume to rattle the church roof and windows. In praying these words we are making a glorious and wonderful statement of praise about God. Yours, we say, is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Yours is all the majesty and authority, yours is all the power and energy, and yours is all the magnificence and splendour. God, we cry, it all belongs to you. In praying these words, we are humbly and joyfully worshipping God and proclaiming that at the very heart of the universe lies God's rule, God's splendour and God's majesty.

In a world where we are surrounded by enemies and lies, we need to praise God in this manner. It is the pattern not just of this prayer but of the entire Bible. The book of Psalms ends with a great exultant shout: 'Let everything that lives sing praises to the LORD! Praise the Lord' The book of Revelation is full of great songs of triumph echoing this theme. In praying these words, we are also defying all the powers that are opposed to God. Can you imagine how the devil hates this phrase - all the kingdom and all the power and all the glory belong to God and to God alone? There is nothing left for anybody else. By saying this phrase we go against all other powers, structures and organisations that seek to rule this world.

The Future: How should we *feel* when we pray: *For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever?*

The Present: According to Cheryl Sachs' list, how confident can we be to consider ourselves to be a 'prayer saturated church?' How can we encourage each other to be intentionally committed to these seven points?

And Finally: There's no doubt that our series on 'Living The Lord's Prayer' has touched the hearts and minds of many. What, for you, has been the most significant aspect of this series of studies? What has encouraged you the most? What will you 'carry' with you into your future Christian life as a result of these studies?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



## HG61: Living The Lord's Prayer (8/8) Perspective: Living Life God's Way

Matthew 6:5-15

### Home Group Sermon Notes

11<sup>th</sup> December 2011 - Revd Paul A. Carr

**Introduction:** This final part of the Lord's Prayer: *For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.* Doesn't appear in the early NT manuscripts; consequently, most modern translations place it as a footnote. However, I think it should be part of our model for praying for four reasons: 1) It appears to be a very early addition to the Lord's Prayer and was almost certainly used by the church within a hundred years of Jesus giving the prayer to the disciples; 2) Jewish prayers of Jesus' time generally ended with some sort of blessing to God; 3) I think it's extremely unlikely they would have ended the prayer on the note of 'protect us from the evil one'. The devil shouldn't have the last word! We must never forget that we are in a battle "... *against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms* (Ephesians 6:12). We are engaged in a spiritual battle which is won in prayer; 4) This ending takes us back from spiritual warfare to praise. It's a model of the triumphant, jubilant and hopeful note upon which all our prayers ought to end.

By praying this ending, we enclose our own concerns within a framework of praise to God. We covered praise in our second instalment and so I won't repeat what was said – read through the notes! However, I want to mention how vital it is for us to leave our prayers on a note of praise because expectant praise puts our concerns and our lives into the right perspective.

**Yours is the Kingdom: The Priority of our lives:** We live in a world of unprecedented choice. We have limitless opportunities around us: supermarkets stocked with thousands of brands, a hundred television channels, a thousand things to read, a whole world of technology at our finger tips. Endless products and services compete for our attention, and a never-ending number of activities struggle for our limited time.

For Christians, the kingdom is to be our main priority. As we think about how we live, how we spend our money and our time, what we must always remind ourselves that God has placed us here on this earth and allocated us all the time we have to serve him and work for the extension of his rule and authority. We may be successful in life, perhaps reaching the top of our profession, producing some great work of art. And all these things are worthwhile, but the really pressing question we must all ask ourselves is this: What are we doing for the kingdom of God?

One of the most remarkable things I've noticed about the resurgence of Ugandan life, during my several visits there, is how, in the aftermath of the bloody reign of Idi Amin, it's a resurgence centred on the Gospel. Christians have had a tremendous influence on the political; social and spiritual infrastructure of the country. Clergy are greatly respected by all parts of the community and their insights and opinions carry great weight. What a contrast to the church in UK, which continues to be in steady decline and continues to be pushed to the margins of our society. The Bishop of Manchester, Nigel MacCulloch, offers this reason in his book 'A Gospel To Proclaim':

*The issue that the churches must live up to ... is not so much that people do not believe in God, but that they do not find churches credible.* I'm becoming increasingly aware how important the 'kingdom of God' should be in our Christian lives. Both as a representation of all that church should be, and how it should influence our relationships with each other. It's so important that we characterize what we are: saved, redeemed, Christ-like, kingdom people and not allow ourselves to be caught up in the peripheral inconsequential arguments and selfish requirements. We should be living as kingdom people seeking to establish the kingdom of God here on earth by making the kingdom of God our priority and being open to God as the King of our lives and bringing God's standards to bear wherever he has called us - at home, in the office or in our families.

#### A Theological Point

I'm not suggesting that we can usher in the return of Jesus by establishing an earthly kingdom – I don't believe the Bible teaches that and I don't agree with those who say it does. However, if we pray: *Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*, then part of being a Christian and belonging to a Christian community must be to live with kingdom values and to ensure kingdom values are at the centre of all that we do.

God's kingdom is forever! Everything else - worldly powers, business empires and political regimes - will pass away. Psalm 145:13: *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and your dominion endures through all generations.* Daniel 7:14b: *His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

As we look back through the centuries we see that to be so true. We've seen many civilisations and world powers that have risen only to fall into oblivion. They've long lost their impact and, at best, are legendary forgotten kingdoms and Empires. The Egyptians; Aztecs; Inca's; Babylonians; Persians; Greeks; Romans; British Empire; Nazi Germany; USSR; Apartheid; Communism; and many others beside. All these kingdoms of earth have come and gone - but God's kingdom has stood the test of time and will, undoubtedly, stand forever. We are inheritors as the family of God, of the Greatest King and the Greatest Kingdom the world has ever known. The kingdom of God goes on forever. We need to remind ourselves of this as we conclude our prayers.

**Yours is the Power: The Strength of our lives:** The reference to power is a reminder that God's strength is eternal. It's also a reminder at the end of our prayers that everything we do we do in God's strength. This should remind us that we can never turn round to God and say, 'Lord, look at what I have done for you!' We can never boast that we have put God in our debt. All we have ever done and all we will ever do for the kingdom is because of God's strength working in us. This is a tremendous encouragement to us as we face the challenge of living out our prayers in our lives. God's awesome strength, that unbelievably vast energy that keeps the universe going, is the power that is available for us. In Ephesians 3:20 Paul writes: *Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.* God's Holy Spirit is the gift God gives to all Christians and it is only through that almighty Holy Spirit that we can hope to live out the sort of life that brings honour to God. Here, and nowhere else, is the power to praise God and to work for the kingdom, to forgive and to overcome sin and the devil.

**Yours is the Glory: The Purpose of our lives:** The reference to glory reminds us of the ultimate purpose of what we are and what we do. God (Father, Son and Spirit) is to be glorified in our thoughts, words and actions. And this has been a constant thought on our minds this year, I hope, with our Church Text. Colossians 3:23: *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.* The purpose of our lives, as the Lord's Prayer reminds us, is to give Glory to our Heavenly Father.