

Radical prayer

discussion guide

based on **Matthew 6.5-18** (Linked to sermon of 1/3/26)
www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This was part of a series on the Sermon on the Mount

Intro: There are different types of prayer – eg adoration, confession, intercession, listening. Which do you find easiest and which do you find hardest? Why do you think that might be?

Read Matthew 6.5-8

What was the mistake the (Jewish) hypocrites made in prayer? Are there ways in which we can fall into the same trap now?

What was the mistake the pagans made in prayer? Are there ways in which we can fall into the same trap now?

If our heavenly Father knows what we need before we ask him, why should we bother asking?

Read Matthew 6.9-15

What did you think of Jen's suggestion that "If your earthly example of a father is negative, you might find it helpful to pray to 'All loving God' or 'Loving One' rather than 'Our Father'?"

This prayer is designed to be a springboard to further prayer. What sort of things should we include as part of praying for God's kingdom to come and his will to be done in Southampton as in heaven?

Jen said "When we learn we're completely dependent on God, we learn God is completely dependable." Can you think of times that's been true / not true in your life?

Forgiving others is hard and sometimes a process. Jen commented that when we realise we're all flawed and broken people, and when we focus on how much we ourselves have been forgiven, it enlarges our compassion for others, and helps us forgive them. Do you agree / disagree? Why?

There was a story about a monkey, a cage and an orange. The monkey thinks he's free, but is actually trapped because he won't let go of the orange. "Sometimes we hang on to anger and hurt and that makes us unable to receive God's love and peace." Can you think of times when you've seen that happen – either in other's lives, or in your own life?

Read Matthew 6.16-18

"When you fast ..." Do you? Why / why not? What might be some of the benefits of fasting?

Personal reflection:

Head – what have you learned in this session that you need to ponder on more?

Heart – what has spoken to your heart in this session that you need to pray through more?

Hands – what actions do you need to take to put this into practice?

Is there anything from this reflection you want to share with your group (or one or two others in the group) so they can pray for you specifically, and encourage you in the days ahead?

Prayer suggestions:

- Pray that we'd grow in our prayerful dependence on God – as individuals, as groups and as a church community
- Give thanks for the new people who are coming to church at the moment, that God would do a deep work in their lives and draw them into ongoing discipleship.