

# Learning to pray: sermon notes

## discussion guide

based on **John 17:1-26** (Linked to sermon of 14/11/21)  
which can be accessed at [www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks](http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks)



*This was part of a series: Being an apprentice*

*Introduction: We are going to look at the longest prayer ever recorded of Jesus and what is so amazing is that at the end of his life, knowing he was going to suffer and die very soon, he took time to pray, not just for his disciples but for you and I. How precious that is!*

*Begin with worship, either reading 121 or listen to <https://youtu.be/o-UkkiHR7v8> Above All. Spend a few minutes meditating on the words and then pray and praise God for His sacrificial love and protection.*

*Head:*

*Begin by reading through the passage. Then individually jot down some of the words or themes which seem to come up in the passage regularly or at least more than once.*

- 1. What words or phrases did you come up with?*
- 2. Why do you think Jesus focussed on these in his prayer?*
- 3. Is there anything you are surprised that Jesus didn't pray for?*

*Now read the passage again and discuss the following questions:*

- 1. The word "world" is mentioned a number of times. You might like to tot up how many times in this passage. What do you think is being referred to? What word might you substitute here to help you understand better?(If you listened to Andy Sawyer's sermon you may well have some ideas)*

2. What does Jesus pray for
- a) the disciples (verses 11,13,15,26)
  - b) Us (verses 20, 23,24,26)
  - c) Himself (1,5)

*Is there anything surprising to you in what Jesus prays?*

*Heart:*

*Jesus is concerned for three main things for his disciples and those of us who will believe in the future: protection, unity and love. When you pray for others, what do you focus on? Is there anything you can learn from Jesus' prayer to help us pray more effectively?*

*Jesus asks God to protect his disciples from the evil one (verse 15). Look at 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and Ephesians 6:10-18. We are encouraged to do battle against evil in our prayers. How often do your prayers reflect this? How could you begin to include spiritual warfare as a more regular part of your prayer life?*

*Jesus also prays that his disciples will be united and experience Christ's love (verse 11,23,26). Where do you see disunity in the body of Christ today, in your own church, in your own Christian relationships? Perhaps you could begin to pray regularly for the areas identified.*

*Hands:*

*Finish with a time of prayer. You might like to try this creative way of praying. Give each person a piece of paper. Ask everyone to write a brief prayer of protection at the top (this could be for someone you know, a church, a country). Now fold over and pass on to the person on your right. Now write a prayer of unity (this might be for friends who have fallen out, family or wider issues in the church or world). Fold this over and pass on again. Finally write a short prayer of love (for someone you feel really needs to experience God's love). Fold over and pass to the next person. If you have time you can pray through these prayers. If not, take them home to pray over later.*

*"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen"*  
*Ephesians 3:20*