

PRAYER

AND YOUR **WORKPLACE**

10 x 15min

BIBLE BITES

SHORT REFLECTIONS TO
GET YOU FOCUSED ON
FAITH AT WORK

Andrew Laird

INSIDE

| | |
|--|-----------|
| THE GOAL OF PRAYER: HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME | 2 |
| PRAYER: SPEAKING TO YOUR FATHER | 4 |
| PRAYER: ENABLED BY THE SON | 6 |
| PRAYER: EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT | 8 |
| | |
| WHY BOTHER PRAYING? | 10 |
| WHY PRAY WITH OTHERS? | 12 |
| | |
| PRAY FOR WORKPLACE FRIENDSHIPS | 14 |
| PRAY FOR YOUR LIVING WITNESS | 16 |
| PRAY FOR YOUR COLLEAGUES' SALVATION | 18 |
| PRAY FOR A FLOURISHING WORKPLACE | 20 |
| | |
| FURTHER READING | 22 |
| Lessons in workplace prayer from John Calvin | 22 |
| Five reasons why you should pray with others | 22 |
| Hallowed be your name...in my office | 23 |



Bible Bites are short small group reflections where we let the Bible focus our thinking and discussion on how faith intersects with our work and workplace witness.



CITY BIBLE FORUM
Ask the bigger questions

THE GOAL OF PRAYER: HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

1

“The Lord’s Prayer is a short prayer, given as an alternative to long prayers. But it’s also a big prayer, given as an alternative to small prayers... This is a big prayer that expands the lives of all who meaningfully pray it.”

- **Tim Chester**, *You Can Pray*¹

Matthew 6:9

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”

Exodus 34:5-7

Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with Moses and proclaimed His name, the LORD. And he passed in front of him, proclaiming, ‘The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he doesn’t leave the guilty unpunished.’

Psalms 115:1

Not to us O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory because of your love and faithfulness”

Reputation and names are very tightly connected. If we speak of someone having a “good name” we usually don’t mean that we like the collection of letters that make up their name, but rather that they have a good reputation.

This is true of God and His name. In Exodus Moses asks to see God’s glory (His reputation). God agrees, but what does He do? He tells Moses His name (Exodus 34:5-7)! The rest of the Bible is about God making His name (glory/reputation) known in all the earth.

This is how the Lord’s Prayer begins. When Jesus teaches His disciples to pray He says the starting point of all prayer must be asking for God’s glory and reputation to be made known in all the earth. That His name might be “hallowed”. To hallow simply means to make holy, to set apart and establish as different from all the rest. Jesus says it must be the first request that we make in

¹Tim Chester, *You can pray*, 170

prayer and the request which shapes all our other prayers – “God would you respond to this request, would you do this thing, would bring relief to that person ultimately for the sake of your name and reputation. Father, hallowed be your name”.

This is a radical perspective to take into our workplaces, where daily labour can be undertaken not for the sake of God’s name and reputation, but for our own name and reputation. So we join with the Psalmist in praying, “Not to us O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory”. Why? Because of who He is – His extravagant love and faithfulness.

Discussion

1. What usually motivates you to pray?
2. How might it change all your prayers if you took every prayer and prayed it in light of “Hallowed be your name”?
3. In particular, what might you pray for your workplaces and colleagues in light of Jesus instruction to let “Hallowed be your name” shape all our prayers?

“Strong Christians do pray more,
but they pray more because they realise how weak they are.”
- **Paul Millar**, *A Praying Life*²

Matthew 6:9

“Our Father in heaven...”

Luke 11:11-13

Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 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!

The Lord’s Prayer is so well known that we can sometimes overlook the significance of what Jesus instructs us to pray. In particular, the significance of its first two words, “Our Father”. Jesus says we are to address the sovereign, holy, majestic God of the universe as...Father.

The reformer Martin Luther recognised the extraordinary privilege of calling God “our Father”. “You have taught us to regard you and call upon you as one Father of us all...although...you could rightly and properly be a severe judge over us”. And yet Jesus says we don’t address Him as “Judge”, or “your Honour”, or even “your Majesty”. Rather, prayer starts with addressing God as Father.

This means that prayer is simply a child speaking to their father, asking for his help. While this is easy to say, it is another thing to believe and live, for it requires us to acknowledge our child-like weakness and need for help; to admit that we can’t do everything, we can’t control everything. Like a child, we need the help of our Father, who can do everything and controls everything.

Elsewhere Jesus assures us of the goodness of the Father and that He desires what is best for us. If earthly fathers can give good gifts to their children, then how much more our heavenly Father (Luke 11:11-13)! He is a generous, good, loving, extravagant Father. And if you are ever in doubt of this then look to the cross, where a Father who so loved you gave His son for you. And in doing so, paved the way for you to call Him Father. “Who would break forth into such a

² Paul Millar, *A praying life*, 56

rashness as to claim for himself the honour of a son of God unless we had been adopted as children of grace in Christ?" (John Calvin)

Discussion

1. Do you find it hard to admit your need for help? How does the modern workplace discourage an attitude of childlike weakness?
2. Do you find it hard to trust that your heavenly Father desires what is best for you? If so, why?
3. How might addressing God as "Father" change what we ask for?
4. Luther, recognising our need to be reminded of the good and loving Fatherhood of God, suggested we begin our prayers by asking God to "implant in our hearts a comforting trust in your fatherly love". Pray now that God might convict you afresh of His loving Fatherly nature.

“What a man is alone on his knees before God, that he is, and no more.”
- **Robert Murray M'Cheyne**, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*³

Hebrews 10:19-22

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Colossians 1:21-22

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation

In life we value what is costly. A free newspaper I pick up at the train station I'll happily discard once I'm finished with it, But a \$10 magazine I will keep for longer – I value it because it cost me something.

How highly do you value prayer? Prayer is immensely valuable because it cost so much – the blood of Jesus. Hebrews 10 literally says that it is “by means of Jesus' blood” that we can “draw near” to God. Jesus bled so that you can pray. That's how much it cost. That's how valuable it is.

Once we were “enemies” of God, “alienated” from Him (Colossians 1:21). But Jesus' death has made us “holy...without blemish and free from accusation” (Colossians 1:22). So not only can we approach God, but we can do it with great “confidence” (Hebrews 10:19).

When we are keenly aware of our sinfulness we might not feel like praying. We think “How can I possibly approach God in prayer when my sin makes me feel so dirty”. But we must not think this way. Jesus bled so that you can pray. In Him you are “without blemish”. So don't hesitate from approaching God in prayer, rather go confidently to Him and be restored. Jesus bled so that you can pray.

³ Robert Murray M'Cheyne (quoted in *A call to spiritual reformation*, 16)

Discussion

1. Reflect on how much time you spend in prayer and how quick you are to pray about things. What does this say about how much or little you value prayer?
2. Does your sin ever hinder your prayers? What do you need to remind yourself of next time this occurs?

“The best prayers have often more groans than words: and those words that they have are but a lean and shallow representation of the heart, life and spirit of prayer.”
- **John Bunyan**, *Praying in the Spirit*⁴

Romans 8:15-16

You received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children

Romans 8:26

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express

Why does God hear our prayers? Why are they not just words spoken into the air, but are actually heard by our heavenly Father? Because of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit confirms that we are God’s children and that He is our Father (Romans 8:15-16). It is by Him that we call God Father. And it is by Him that God is present with us always and so hears our prayers. “There is no man nor church in the world that can come to God in prayer, but by assistance of the Holy Spirit” (John Bunyan).⁵

But the Spirit does more than simply ensure that our prayers are heard; He “helps” us pray (Romans 8:26).

Do you know the experience of not knowing what to pray? Faced with trouble or a certain difficulty and not being sure of what needs to be said. In that moment the Spirit helps us. “The Spirit takes our intent and translates it to God. Or he takes our mistaken request and corrects it to God” (Tim Chester).⁶

So don’t feel burdened by praying because you don’t know what to ask. Just start praying, confident that the Spirit “helps us in our weakness”.

⁴ John Bunyan, *Praying in the Spirit*, 33

⁵ John Bunyan, *Praying in the Spirit*, 23

⁶ Tim Chester, *You can pray*, 44

Discussion

1. What are some of the issues that you face in the workplace which leave you unsure of what to pray?
2. How might knowing for certain that God hears our prayers be an incentive to pray even more?

“Prayers are not a limit to God’s sovereignty, but the ultimate expression of it.”
- **Tim Chester**, *You can Pray*⁷

Proverbs 16:9

In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps

Exodus 32:9-14

‘I have seen these people,’ the LORD said to Moses, ‘and they are a stiff-necked-people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation’. But Moses sought the favour of the LORD his God. ‘LORD,’ he said, ‘why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth?’ ‘Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.’ Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened

James 4:2

You do not have because you do not ask God

A foundational truth about God is that He is sovereign. The God who made the world controls everything. He knows everything before it happens. We may make our plans, but ultimately God determines what happens (Proverbs 16:9).

So why bother praying? If God has already determined everything that has and will happen what is the point of asking Him in prayer to do things?

This is a complex question, but a simple answer is that God has chosen prayer as a means He will use to bring about His purposes. “God expects to be pleaded with; He expects godly believers to intercede with Him. Their intercession is his

⁷ Tim Chester, *You can pray*, 79

own appointed means for bringing about his relenting".⁸ An example of this is God withholding planned judgment because Moses asks (Exodus 32).

But notice exactly what Moses prays. He appeals to the reputation and promises of God. His request is not born out of selfish gain, but God's fame. His request appeals to the sure and certain promises that God has made and why his request is in-line with them. And our prayers should too. As we ask the sovereign God to do things, His reputation and promises should shape what we ask. These are the prayers that God longs to hear and respond to.

Indeed there is a sense in which we might not experience God working in a particular way in our lives, in our cities, and in our nation because we haven't asked (James 4:2). This is not to say that God's plans are thwarted – He will always accomplish His means, perhaps instead through the prayers of others. But, as Tim Chester explains, "It might be that we don't see more of God's blessing because we don't pray. If God did bless our prayer-less work, then we might think it was our achievement and not His".⁹

So God's sovereignty should not be a hindrance to our prayers, but an encouragement to pray. If He can do all things, and controls all things, then why would we not ask Him to act!

Discussion

1. God's sovereignty should be an encouragement to pray more boldly. What are some bold prayers that you could pray for your workplace and colleagues?

⁸ D. A. Carson, *A call to spiritual reformation*, 164

⁹ Tim Chester, *You can pray*, 80

WHY PRAY WITH OTHERS?

6

This study draws heavily on David Mathis' excellent article *Nine profits of praying with company*,

"When we share the joy of prayer, we increase our joy in prayer."
- **David Mathis**, *Nine Profits of Praying with Company*¹⁰

Matthew 6:9, 11, 12, 13

Our Father in heaven...Give us...Forgive us...Lead us...deliver us

Matthew 18:19-20

Again I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Acts 1:14

They all joined together constantly in prayer

Have you ever noticed the corporate nature of the Lord's Prayer? When Jesus teaches His disciples to pray He doesn't say "My Father" but "Our Father". Throughout the prayer all the requests are plural too – not "Give me" but "Give us". When Jesus teaches us to pray He says we should pray with others. Interestingly, this was a hallmark of the early church (Acts 1:14).

But why is praying together so important? Here are five suggestions. Firstly, there is added power in corporate prayer. Matthew 18:19-20 is a passage primarily about agreement over church discipline. However Jesus does say, "if you agree about anything", implying that the truths of this passage are bigger than just church discipline. Namely, that there is added power in joining with others in Jesus name.

Secondly praying together fosters unity. You must be of one mind if you are to ask Him together for something, hence fostering single-mindedness.

Thirdly praying with others teaches us how to pray. As we hear the prayers of others we learn the kinds of things that we might pray for and the manner in which to pray. To listen to an older Christian brother or sister who has spent years in prayer before God is a wonderful blessing, and a great opportunity to learn!

¹⁰ David Mathis, "Nine profits of praying with company", desiringgod.org

Fourthly praying with others means that you can be blessed and encouraged by the way that God answers the prayers of others. By praying with others we open up the possibility of seeing more ways that God is at work in the world in many lives, not just our own.

Finally praying with others can help us know Jesus better. C.S. Lewis wrote that in order to understand his friends better he needed other friends to help him do that. "By myself I am not large enough to call the whole man into activity; I want other lights than my own to show all his facets". As Tim Keller writes, "If it takes a community to know an ordinary human being, how much more necessary would it be to get to know Jesus alongside others?"¹¹

So don't make prayer a solo activity. There is a time and a place to pray on your own. But if you never pray with others you are missing out.

Discussion

1. What are the obstacles to you praying with others? How can you remove those obstacles?
2. What other blessings have you experienced when praying with others, especially about your workplace and colleagues?

¹¹ Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing awe and intimacy with God*, 119

“Can we expect to pray aright unless we are oriented to the world to come?”
- **Don Carson**, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*¹²

Luke 16:9

I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings

1 Thessalonians 2:8

We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well

How many of your work colleagues would you call “friends”? Not merely acquaintances, but *friends*?

It’s all well and good to want your colleagues to come to know and love Jesus, but oftentimes what is necessary for this is friendship. Why is friendship so important? Perhaps in part it’s because we want to share the story of a person with our colleagues; the story of Jesus. So we need to know them and their story, and they need to know us and our story, so that we might tell them His story.

But also, having a relationship of trust helps as we seek to speak about Jesus. In all situations in life, relationships of trust are necessary before we can speak deeply into the lives of others. Sharing the Gospel is no different. The Apostle Paul knew this; he wasn’t simply concerned with telling people the Gospel; he shared his life with them as well (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

It’s for this reason that Jesus then encourages His followers to make friends with the goal of seeing people come to faith. How does He suggest we do this? By using our money (Luke 16:9). At first this might sound strange; is Jesus suggesting we buy friends, or buy people into His kingdom? But really His message is very simple – use your money wisely and generously to develop deep and genuine friendships, friendships into which you can speak the Gospel. Our money is to be used for relationships.

¹² D. A. Carson, *A call to spiritual reformation*, 50

So today, why not invite a colleague out to lunch and pay for them. Get to know them, Find out their story. And in time tell them your story, and ultimately His story.

Discussion

1. Make a list of three colleagues who you would like to develop a deeper friendship with. Pray for them now.
2. What are the obstacles to you developing friendships with those you work with? Pray now that God might remove those obstacles.
3. Do you think about friendships in the light of eternity? How can you remind yourself of eternity more often?

“Beauty of life causes strangers to join our ranks.
We do not talk about great things – we live them”
- **Christian believer**, 200AD¹³

Matthew 5:13, 14, 16

You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

1 Peter 2:12

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

What does it mean to witness to our colleagues about Jesus? Of course it involves telling them about Him. At times it might involve defending the Christian faith with apologetic arguments. Declaring with our lips is essential to Christian witness.

But the New Testament teaches that Christian witness is bigger than just our words. We do not just declare the Gospel with our lips, but we also display it with our lives. The New Testament teaches that the people of God are living witnesses. There is a direct correlation between our “good deeds” and people being led to “praise our Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12).

How we live and work each day forms an integral part of our witness. How we work might be the very thing that wins the respect of our colleagues (1 Thessalonians 4:12) and makes them willing to hear the message of the Christian faith.

So remember this each day at work. Regularly commit your living witness to God in prayer. If we want to tell our colleagues about a sovereign God, then it’s no

¹³ Quoted in Alan Kreider, *Worship and Evangelism in pre-Christendom*, 16.

good being a control freak in the office. If we want to tell our colleagues about an extravagantly generous God, then it's no good never being generous with your time and money. If we want to tell our colleagues about a forgiving God, then it's no good holding grudges against colleagues and clients.¹⁴

How you live matters. Your colleagues are watching.

Discussion

1. What areas of your work life are you particularly aware of at the moment that don't bear a good witness to the Gospel? Commit them in prayer to God now.
2. Think of other examples of how the way we live might bear witness to truths of the Gospel (for example not being a control freak is one way we bear witness to trusting in a sovereign God).

¹⁴ To consider your living witness in the workplace in more detail see *In God's service: Being a distinctive disciples in the workplace* (Laird & Naoum).

PRAY FOR YOUR COLLEAGUES' SALVATION

9

“Prayer is itself a frontline missionary activity”
- **Tim Chester & Steve Timmis**, *Everyday Church*¹⁵

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost

Ephesians 6:19

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel

Colossians 4:3

Pray for us that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance

God has a heart for the lost. You might say that the whole Bible is the story of His pursuit of the lost, those without Him, culminating in the sending of His Son “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). He is a God who hates to see the wicked perish, but wants “everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). This is the heart of God. Is it your heart also?

Time and time again in the New Testament we see that this was the heart of the Apostle Paul. Like the one who saved him, Paul also longed for all people to be saved. So much so that it shaped both his prayers and the requests that he asked others to pray for him. He prays for several things in relation to telling people about Jesus – that he will have the right words to say (Eph 6:19), that he will be fearless in testifying about his Lord (Eph 6:19) and that God might open up opportunities for him to speak (Col 4:3).

¹⁵ Chester & Timmis, *Everyday Church*, 174.

So as we seek to share our faith with our work colleagues, prayer is a critical. Ultimately mission is God's work – He is the one who opens people's hearts to the Gospel. So get on board with God's mission, ask Him to give you a heart like His for the lost. And ask Him to give you the words to say as He opens to doors to conversations with your colleagues about life with Him.

Discussion

1. Do you have a heart for the lost like God? Does the "lost-ness" of your colleagues concern you? Pray that God might give you an ever-increasing concern for those who don't know Him.
2. Share the names of two of your colleagues that have previously shown no interest in Jesus. Pray specifically for them now that God might open up opportunities to speak to them about Him.

“Embracing the truth that God accepts us apart from good works is the precise thing that causes us to excel in good works”
- **Matt Perman**, *What's Best Next*¹⁶

Jeremiah 29:4-5,7

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ‘Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce...Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper’.

Galatians 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers

1 Peter 2:11-12

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us

Who am I? It's a question that elicits a number of responses. Indeed the Bible gives many answers to that question. An important one is found in 1 Peter 2. Who am I? I am a “foreigner and exile” in this world. That is, I'm not like those around me. I'm different, distinct.

How do Christian exiles live? The book of 1 Peter unpacks this in some detail. They live holy and “good lives among the pagans”, so that by their very distinct living they might call attention to the difference that God makes. They are not at war with the world around them, seeking to be unnecessarily disruptive and antagonistic, but rather they seek to bless and selflessly serve...and so stand out from the self-seeking, self-promoting world around them.

At the back of Peter's mind in giving this instruction is the exile of God's people in the Old Testament. As a punishment from God, He carried His people into

¹⁶ Matt Perman, *What's Best Next: How the Gospel transforms the way you get things done*, 104.

exile, to a land where they were not like those around them. They were distinct, different.

How were they to live? Not at war with the world around them, seeking to be unnecessarily disruptive and antagonistic. Rather they were to “seek the peace and prosperity of the city” (Jeremiah 29:7). They were to “build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce” (Jeremiah 29:5). They were to work and to do good so that they, and the nation around them, might benefit and flourish. Indeed they were to even pray for this!

The New Testament makes it plain, Christians are to be people who do good (Galatians 6:10), who seek to serve their neighbour, blessing and serving those around them. This is good in and of itself. But as 1 Peter shows us, it forms a key part of our witness. So work to see the flourishing of your work and your workplace. Indeed “pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers you too will prosper”.

Discussion

1. What specific aspects of your work serve and bless others? Do you pray that God might cause those good aspects to flourish and prosper?
2. In what ways might you be able to do more good through your daily labour? Commit those ways to God in prayer, asking that He might prosper the work of your hands which is done for others.

FURTHER READING

MORE

Visit lifeatwork.org.au for more articles like these.

Lessons in workplace prayer from John Calvin

Written almost 500 years ago, this prayer by Swiss reformer John Calvin is still profoundly relevant to work and life today. It contains many great truths about work, as well as helping shape how we think about the purpose of our daily labour. Consider making it a regular prayer as you begin each work day.

“My good God, Father, and Saviour, grant me aid by your Holy Spirit to now work fruitfully in my vocation, which is from you, all in order to love you and the people around me rather than for my own gain and glory. Give me wisdom, judgment and prudence, and freedom from my besetting sins. Bring me under the rule of true humanity. Let me accept with patience whatever amount of fruitfulness or difficulty in my work that you give me this day. And in all I do, help me to rest always in my Lord Jesus Christ and in his grace alone for my salvation and life. Hear me, merciful Father, by our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen”

Five reasons why you should pray with others¹⁷

By Andrew Laird

Our Father in heaven...Give us...Forgive us...Lead us...Deliver us” (Matthew 6:9, 11, 12, 13).

Have you ever noticed the corporate nature of the Lord’s Prayer before? When Jesus teaches His disciples to pray He doesn’t say “My Father” but “Our Father”. Throughout the prayer all the requests are plural too – not “Give me” but “Give us”. When Jesus teaches us to pray He says we should pray with others.

This was a hallmark of the early church. “They all joined together constantly in prayer” (Acts 1:14). But why is praying together so important? Here are five suggestions:

¹⁷ This article draws heavily on David Mathis’ excellent piece [“Nine profits of praying with company”](http://desiringgod.org), desiringgod.org.

Firstly, there is added power in corporate prayer. Matthew 18:19-20 is a passage primarily about agreement over church discipline. However Jesus does say, “if you agree about anything”, implying that the truths of this passage are bigger than just church discipline. Namely, that there is added power in joining with others in Jesus name.

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Thirdly praying with others teaches us how to pray. As we hear the prayers of others we learn the kinds of things that we might pray for and the manner in which to pray. To listen to an older Christian brother or sister who has spent years in prayer before God is a wonderful blessing, and a great opportunity to learn!

Fourthly praying with others means that you can be blessed and encouraged by the way that God answers the prayers of others. By praying with others we open up the possibility of seeing more ways that God is at work in the world in many lives, not just our own.

Finally praying with others can help us know Jesus better. C.S. Lewis wrote that in order to understand his friends better he needed other friends to help him do that. “By myself I am not large enough to call the whole man into activity; I want other lights than my own to show all his facets”. As Tim Keller writes, “If it takes a community to know an ordinary human being, how much more necessary would it be to get to know Jesus alongside others?”¹⁸

So don't make prayer a solo activity. There is a time and a place to pray on your own. But if you never pray with others you are missing out. “When we share the joy of prayer, we increase our joy in prayer.”¹⁹ Join with others to pray, especially to [pray about your work](#).

Hallowed be your name...in my office

By Andrew Laird

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray he began with a simple request. After addressing God as Father, he taught his followers to pray, “hallowed be your name”. Because “hallowed” is not a very common word in our culture today we perhaps don't give this opening request of the Lord's Prayer the attention that it is worth. But this opening line could not be more important...and more relevant.

To “hallow” means to make holy, to set apart, to establish as different from all the rest. So to ask for the hallowing of God's name is nothing short of asking God to set apart His name in all the world. It's asking Him to make His name known throughout all creation, to display His fame and glory to all the nations. And it is a prayer that God is only too

¹⁸ Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing awe and intimacy with God*, 119.

¹⁹ David Mathis, “Nine profits of praying with company”, [desiringgod.org](#).

happy to answer, because it aligns with His greatest plan and purpose – to spread His fame, reputation and glory throughout all the earth, that people everywhere might know His name.

In the Old Testament the words “glory” and “name” are almost interchangeable. To speak of knowing God’s name is to speak of knowing what makes Him glorious. God connects His name with His glory in the book of Exodus. Here he agrees to a request from Moses to show Moses His glory (33:18). But when it comes time to show Moses, what does God do? He tells Moses His name. “Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished’” (Exodus 34:5-7).

Throughout the rest of the Old Testament God works to make this name known. All of His actions are designed to display His name and glory. For example, He creates for the sake of His name and glory (Isaiah 43:6-7), He elects for the sake of His name and glory (Jeremiah 13:11), He saves for the sake of His name and glory (Psalm 106:7-8), and He measures His judgement for the sake of His name and glory (Isaiah 48:9). Indeed everything God does is for “the sake of my holy name” (Ezekiel 36:22). ²⁰So when we pray, “hallowed be your name” we are praying a missionary prayer that God is only too happy to answer. It is a request that is aligned with His purposes, that everyone everywhere might know His name and His glory.

But not only is this opening request of the Lord’s Prayer important, it is also profoundly relevant to everyday life, including our work life. That’s because God wants His name hallowed in your daily life and mine. That is, in praying, “hallowed be your name” what we are praying, in part, is that God might enable and empower us to live every moment of every day to make His name look great. To not damage the reputation of His name by how we live, but to live in such a way as to promote His name and reputation. It is a profoundly relevant and practical prayer.

What might it mean then to pray, “hallowed be your name” in your workplace? It might mean that as a frustrating colleague walks into your office with a request, that you quickly pray, “Father in this interaction, hallowed be your name. Help me to act with patience and generosity even though they frustrate me, and so make your name look great. Father, hallowed be your name”.

Or it might mean that when we make a mistake and let down a colleague or boss we quickly pray, “Father in the way that I handle this error, hallowed be your name. Give me the courage to not cover it up, but to admit my fault. Help me to admit that I can’t do everything, and so make you – the God of truth and transparency who helps me in my weaknesses – look great. Father hallowed be your name”.

²⁰ For many people, God’s desire for His fame and glory is a significant stumbling block to the Christian faith. For a helpful response see [“Is Jesus an egomaniac?”](#) by John Piper.

Or it might mean that when the opportunity arises with a colleague, perhaps while sharing lunch together, we actually speak the name of God, quickly praying, "Father in this conversation right now, hallowed be your name. Give me the wisdom to speak a fitting word about you so that this colleague of mine might know your great and powerful name. Father hallowed be your name".

The author of a prayer displayed in England's Coventry Cathedral understood this very practical, relevant aspect of the request "Father hallowed be your name". Displayed on prayer panels around the cathedral building is the following prayer:

Hallowed be Thy name in industry.
God be in my hands and in my making.
Hallowed be Thy name in arts,
God be in my senses and in my creating.
Hallowed be Thy name at home,
God be in my heart and in my loving.
Hallowed be Thy name in commerce,
God be in my desk and in my trading.
Hallowed be Thy name in suffering,
God be in my pain and in my enduring.
Hallowed be Thy name in Government,
God be in my plans and in my deciding.
Hallowed be Thy name in education,
God be in my mind and in my growing.
Hallowed by Thy name in recreation,
God be in my limbs and in my leisure.
Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Hosts;
Heaven and earth are fully of Thy Glory

So let this be your daily prayer as you begin each day at work: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. May it be hallowed in my life. May it be hallowed in my office. Amen."

To consider this issue further, listen to "[The honouring of God's name](#)".