

The Methodist Church

Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit

Worship at Home



Brought today by Deacon Nigel Perrott

Week beginning Sunday 7th February 2021

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we are thinking about prayer. Prayer is our telephone line to God, it is at the centre of our faith. All our hymns will have the theme of prayer and we will be looking at ways in which we can help others to find ways in which they can pray and connect with God.

We begin in prayer now.

An Opening Prayer

Loving and almighty God
we come to you in this moment to bring our
praise and worship

We are your sheep, in your fold.
Thank you, dear shepherd, for how much
you have taken care of us
you always have our needs at heart.
You give us the best of everything.
May we never stray from your fold

Even in our darkest of times,
how wonderful it is to be loved by you.
You've connected us to you- the fountain of
living water
so when we are thirsty, we can be satisfied.
We never run out of the water to drink.
May we stay connected forever.

Creator of the universe we bless you.
When we consider the works of Your hands
The sun, the moon and the stars.
We are left in awe of who you are and what
you can do.

Oh Lord of forgiveness, in these days we find
ourselves,
How easy it is to stray from your presence
How easy it is to be blind to the needs of
others
How easy it is to be still when we need to
move
How easy it is to stay silent when we need to
speak out
For all our failings, forgive us Lord.

O God of restoration.

You have mended our broken relationship
with you.
You've restored our free access to your
presence through Jesus.
You've called us into the same ministry- the
ministry of reconciliation.
We thank you for the assurance of your
forgiveness through Jesus
May all hearts in the world be reconciled to
you.

In his name, the name of Jesus we pray, and
we say together the pray he taught us to
pray.

Modern Form

Our Father, who is 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 sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
are yours,
now and for ever **Amen.**

STF 370 – Breathe on me oh breath of God

- 1 Breathe on me, Breath of God ;
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.
- 2 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.
- 3 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,

until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

- 4 Breathe on me, Breath of God ;
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

Edwin Hatch (1835–1889)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words
Edition, number 370

Reading: Matthew 6:5-16

The Message Translation

⁵“And when you come before God, don’t turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for fifteen minutes of fame! Do you think God sits in a box seat?

⁶“Here’s what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

⁷⁻¹³“The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They’re full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don’t fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what’s best—
as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You’re in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You’re ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵“In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can’t get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to

do your part, you cut yourself off from God’s part.

Reflection – Try Praying

In this passage from Mathew’s Gospel, Jesus continues with his teaching. It follows that well known passage known as the Beatitudes, or as some know it, the Blessings.

At this point in the account Jesus turns his attention to prayer. For the average Jew at the time, it was often the Rabbi who led the prayers, and those who stood to pray were eloquent and well thought of. Jesus is pointing out that this is not needed, fancy words and showmanship do not impress God! Within our Christian tradition there are millions of beautiful prayers, written to pour out our worship, praise and requests. I believe they honour God, and bring reverence to our loving Father. I am sure that you too have certain prayers that you have found really helpful in your times of personal and church life.

I think Jesus is showing us all, that prayer can also be a personal thing, done quietly on your own. I often find my personal prayer is done when I am walking with my dog. In quiet reflection, I find the things I want to say just seem to flow, it’s my quiet time with God. The translation we have read in The Message sums up so well what Jesus was saying, keep it simple and use the words from his prayer.

I often get asked by people who don’t go to church, “*say one for me will you!*” my reply is often, “*say one yourself!*” Of course this is a light hearted response, and I will explain that God hears prayers from everyone.

In these dark times we have found ourselves, prayer is so important, and yet for many, they have no idea what prayer is and they have no idea where to start. Prayers of adoration or prayers of intercession are words not normally known to those who don’t go to church. Many of our news headlines often say “Pray for this” or “Pray for that” It sounds easy doesn’t it? Well for many people it can be more difficult. As Christians we often just

take prayer in our stride, it is part of who we are in God.

It was these thoughts that led someone to think more about this. David Hill is a church leader in Scotland and he has a passion to help people understand what prayer is. David started an initiative called "Try Praying".

Try praying is designed for people who do not go to church, people who may not think of themselves as religious. It consists of a small booklet, written in accessible language and is a challenge to try praying for 7 days and see what happens. It has short information articles and stories of answers to prayer. There are things to do each day as well as a short prayer to pray.

It is not a preach: but it does help people to open their lives to their maker and find his influence and truth. Significantly it has the good news of Jesus explained throughout the seven days and anyone who works their way through the booklet runs the risk of becoming a Christian!

How can you get involved?

It works in two ways: Firstly, a banner is displayed outside a church with a small per spec box containing the booklets. If people see the banner, they can take a book and give it a go.

Secondly: You may know someone who you might like to give the book to. Read the book yourself over the seven days, and give it to that person. You can pray for that person during the seven days. "Use it and lose it"

Try praying is also a statement: a logo with the potential to start people on a journey – or at least to start a conversation. Across the UK, churches in various towns and cities have come together to display it on buses and banners and billboards, resulting in some amazing stories. Here in the Dales, churches from different denominations are taking part. Imagine what people will think when they keep seeing "Try Praying" all over the Dales! As a circuit we want to join other circuits and denominations and pray that others will Try Praying for themselves.

Try Praying will run during Lent and run until

Easter. Later in the year we will have another opportunity to give it a go.

What an amazing opportunity it is for us, to help someone find the love of God through prayer.

If you want to see more about Try Praying they have a web site: trypraying.co.uk

Amen

In a moment we turn to our prayers for others. Our next hymn, is another prayer that helps us to reflect as we bring our requests to God.

STF 707- Make me a channel of your peace

1 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love ;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord ;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you :

*O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console ;
to be understood as to understand ;
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

2 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope ;
where there is darkness, only light ;
and where there's sadness, ever joy :
Refrain

3 Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving unto all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sebastian Temple (1928–1997)
from the *Prayer of St Francis*

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Prayers of intercession

This week I am going to leave the prayers of intercession up to you! We can pray with simplicity and God still hears us. Here are some of my thoughts for prayer this week, what are yours?

The Lonely
The Sick

The bereaved
On Going Corona Pandemic, here and
around the world.

Charities
Our Circuit and The Methodist Church

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers
Amen

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you
peace at all times and in every way.
The Lord be with all of you.

Amen

Closing Hymn

We have been thinking about prayer today,
and what better way to close our time ...

STF 531 – What a friend we have in Jesus

- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear !
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer !
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer !
- 2 Have we trials and temptations,
is there trouble anywhere ?
We should never be discouraged :
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share ?
Jesus knows our every weakness :
take it to the Lord in prayer.
- 3 Are we weak and heavy-laden,
cumbered with a load of care ?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge —
take it to the Lord in prayer !
Do your friends despise, forsake you ?
Take it to the Lord in prayer ;
in his arms he'll take and shield you,
you will find a solace there.

Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819–1886)

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A Blessing

A blessing from the second book of
Thessalonians....