

# The Lord's Prayer

Janice Scott *reflects on* Luke 11:1-13

The Lord's Prayer is part of what defines Christians. All Christian communities, no matter what their differences, are bound together by the reciting of the Lord's Prayer. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. The Lord's Prayer was the result, yet it is very short and seems to bear little relation to the long periods of silent meditation which so characterised Jesus' ministry.

Luke's version of the prayer is shorter than Matthew's (the one we normally use), yet it still contains everything that is necessary for Christians to commune with God. We are invited into a personal relationship with God our Father and we respect his name. In the ancient world names were thought to be extremely powerful and to act as a manifestation of a person or deity. Hence the Jewish reluctance to use the proper name of God in Hebrew writing or speech, as well as the belief that spiritual power could be summoned by invoking a god or spirit by name. We look forward to the coming of God's kingdom where barriers of wealth, gender and ritual cleanness will no longer exist. The two final petitions are concerned with our everyday needs: our need for food and for God's protection from evil forces.

What else is necessary? Perhaps only to recite this prayer often, slowly and meditatively. 🙏

**God our Father, help us to pray the Lord's Prayer with meaning and understanding, and through it, to grow closer to you. Amen.**

## Shared prayer

### Part III – prayer partners

by Caroline Fletcher

While whole church prayer meetings are important, they are rarely suitable for sharing personal worries. Prayer partnerships enable two or three people to meet regularly. So how can we form successful prayer partnerships? Like all relationships they need working at, but they are worth the effort.

- Pray for God's guidance about suitable prayer partners. They need to be people you feel

comfortable with, can relate to and trust.

- Everyone needs to consider whether they have time to meet regularly and, if so, how often (weekly or fortnightly is usually best) and for how long – an hour is generally ample.
- The meetings need to offer a safe environment where people can share openly without feeling judged or criticised.
- Build things slowly. You may need to start by simply having a chat and getting to know each other. 🙏



## Characters from the lectionary

### James the Apostle

by Caroline Hodgson

James and his brother John were among the first disciples to join Jesus. It was they who asked Jesus to grant them seats on his right and left in his glory (Mark 10:35-45), although Matthew's Gospel (20:20-28) tells this slightly differently, in that the request comes from their mother. In both accounts Jesus rebukes them, asking whether they were ready to drink from the cup from which he was going to drink. The brothers were also rebuked by Jesus when they

proposed calling down fire on the Samaritan village which didn't recognise Jesus.

It's easy to sit in judgement of James and John, to think we would have done things differently. But it's also wonderful to have flawed role models. Had they never put a foot wrong we would have no hope of following in their footsteps. And Jesus evidently bore them no grudge, for it was James and John who, along with Peter, were chosen by Jesus to witness his transfiguration. 🙏

“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Job 1:21