

## “Your Kingdom come . . . ”

We are offering a series of reflections for individuals and churches who may be finding it difficult to provide midweek prayer and shared learning from Scripture. You can use these by watching the YouTube video, reading the relevant Bible passage and then reflecting on the questions below. To help make this a shared activity, you are encouraged to reflect on this together with friends using an online conference package, or simply arrange with a friend for them to watch it too. Then ring each other up, share your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

**Read Matthew 6:7-13**

If you can, watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/2HBzkJaq7UI>

With the many uncertainties we continue to face, we have been particularly encouraged to embrace the words of Jesus “Seek first the Kingdom of God” [Matt 6:33] This follows on a few paragraphs after Jesus teaches us “the Lord’s Prayer” – which includes the words “your Kingdom come”. Given that this prayer is addressed to “our Father”, we might assume that it is God’s Kingdom whose coming we are encouraged to pray for. These are easy words to speak, but what do we mean by “the Kingdom of God”? We might find something of an answer to this question through the words that Jesus encourages us to pray. We are reminded of three things about this Kingdom:

**A Kingdom of people in relationship:** The phrase “our Father” expresses two profound relationships – our relationship with God as a loving parent and our relationship with one another. The Kingdom of God identifies us as belonging together and creating a place of belonging for those who might yet find their way into becoming part of that Kingdom too. Jesus spoke of God’s Kingdom against a religious backdrop defined by the Scribes and Pharisees who saw it as one for those who met their expectations – a Kingdom of people just like them. Jesus spoke of a Kingdom where the marginalised and excluded could belong too. What are the relationships that you are called to invest in as a seeker of the Kingdom? How do you invest in your relationship with God? How do you invest in your relationships with those who may be very different but are invited to call God Father just as much as we are?

**A Kingdom of people called to persevere:** Jesus speaks of seeking the kingdom – a Kingdom that is coming. Each conveys a sense of journey, something that takes time and requires commitment. But it is not an impossible dream; at the beginning of Mark’s Gospel, Jesus declares “The kingdom of God is at hand” – it’s within our grasp – but if something is within our grasp, then we need to make the effort to reach out and take hold of it. This also suggests that we always have further to go, more to discover – we are not the finished product but are called to be ready to see signs of God at work, to make new discoveries of God’s nature and purpose. Take some time to consider: How am I seeking God’s Kingdom? Where am I seeing signs of God’s presence? How am I praying for God’s Kingdom to be even more fully recognised and realised? This is also a message of hope – there is much that does not conform to the justice and righteousness that Jesus came to declare. As Kingdom seekers we are not indifferent to that – but nor are we despondent, because we believe that God’s Kingdom is coming.

**A Kingdom of people who listen and learn from God:** When Jesus teaches us to pray, he doesn’t invite us to present God with all the things that we might will to be done, but rather invites us to plead for God’s will to be done. We only discover and discern the will of anyone by listening to them and learning from them. Those who seek God’s Kingdom are not intent on God to delivering on their ideas, but desperate to know God’s will and purpose. Jesus underlines this when he introduces this prayer. “Don’t babble on like the pagans do – who think they will be heard because of their many words” – Our Father already knows what we need - prayer is not about telling God what he already knows, it’s about listening to God so that God can teach us more of what we don’t know.

**PRAYER:** Faithful God, as I pray for your Kingdom’s coming help me to recognise the signs of its presence in the here and now. Make me one with all those who call you Father, grant me the resolve to seek your kingdom’s cause even when the road is demanding and make me always ready to learn from you. AMEN