Corps Resources
for small groups

FOUNDATIONS IN PRAYER

SESSION THREE THE LORD'S PRAYER

How should we pray? What does God want to hear? The religious people of Jesus' day had very definite ideas about what prayer should look like. In fact, in one parable Jesus compared the prayers of a Pharisee with the prayers of a Tax Collector, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get" (Luke 18:11-12) the Pharisee prayed. In comparison, the tax collector beat his chest and prayed "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). Jesus said that it was the tax collector, not the Pharisee that went home justified (Luke 18:14). So what should the prayer of a disciple of Jesus look like?

{notes}

QUESTIONS

Read: Matthew 6:5-15

1. What are the characteristics of prayer that Jesus says we should not imitate? How does Jesus say we should pray? What should be our attitude?
2. Does God need us to tell him what we need? What assurance does that give us for prayer?
3. What do you think is the significance of praying to "Our Father" rather than "My Father"? Why does the prayer use OUR daily bread and OUR debts rather than MY daily bread, MY debts?
4. Why do you think we start by "hallowing" or honouring God's name? What does that tell us about a core concern of prayer? What is the link between prayer and worship?
5. What do you think it means to pray for God's kingdom to come? In what ways could his will be done on earth as it is in heaven that is not currently happening? What issues in our world does this highlight that needs prayer?
6. Why does Jesus ask us to pray only for "daily bread" rather than for all our material needs in the long term? What does this teach about dependence on God in prayer?
7. Given that this passage starts by Jesus saying not to be hypocritical, why do you think he says at the end that we should forgive others their trespasses if we want God to forgive us?