

### July 3. Closer as We Ask (Matthew 7:7-11)

Before you read, take some time to put your worries into God's hands...

...Then ask Him to speak as you read his word

<sup>7</sup> "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

<sup>9</sup> "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? <sup>11</sup> 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 good gifts to those who ask him!

#### To Think About

Supplication is one of those old-fashioned words which we very rarely use. However, it does fit well in the ACTS framework for prayer that many people have found helpful.

Asking God for things is a part of our relationship with Him. It is healthiest when it is alongside appreciating Him, saying sorry as we need to, and being thankful to Him.

What good gifts do you think that God would want to give you?

Is there anything that you feel you cannot ask God for?

If there is, then why is that?

What things would you really like to ask God for? Why not ask Him now?

- Adoration
- Confession
- Thanksgiving
- Supplication**

### July 4. Closer Than Any Friend (Philippians 4:4-7)

Before you read, take some time to put your worries into God's hands...

...Then ask Him to speak as you read his word

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus

#### To Think About

The Bible is always true to real life. The Christian walk with God acknowledges anxiety, and yet is characterised by God's peace.

Why does Paul start by talking about rejoicing?

"The Lord is near" (v5) What does that mean for you today?

Do you ever get anxious? What does Paul suggest v6?

You may like to try 'palms down, palms up':  
Palms down – giving the anxieties to God  
Palms up – receiving God's peace

#### Practising the presence of God

God is closer than our very breath – throughout the day we can talk to God and the whole of our lives becomes time walking with God. It starts from choosing not to see anything as separate from God. In this sense, Monday is no different to Sunday....

We can pray to God anywhere, and at any time. Before you pick up the phone, a quick word with God 'bless this person'.

As you open the door 'bless this person',  
As you start a work project 'Lord, guide me in this'.  
As you feel anxiety rising ' Lord take my anxiety, and help me in this'  
These are sometimes known as 'arrow prayers'

### June 29. Closer to God (John 1:1-14)

Before you read, take time to put your worries into God's hands...then ask Him to speak as you read his word

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning.

<sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

<sup>6</sup> There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

#### To Think About

"The importance of God's speech as a fundamental means of his self-disclosure cannot be overestimated. Creation itself is the product of God's speech: God speaks, and worlds leap into being.... So central is God's speech to his own self-disclosure that when John the evangelist casts around for an encompassing way to refer to God's ultimate self-disclosure in his Son, He chooses to refer to him as 'the Word'." (New Bible Commentary)

What do we learn about Jesus? (vv. 1-5)

How can we know God? (v. 1, 12, 13)

What does it mean to be God's daughter or son? Spend some time dwelling on all this means for you

*The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. God has shone his light into a dark world – spend some time thanking him for this, some people find it helpful to light a candle as well.*

## June 30. Closer as We Praise Him (Psalm 16:7-10)

Before you read, take some time to put your worries into God’s hands...  
...Then ask Him to speak as you read his word

*<sup>7</sup> I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.*

*<sup>8</sup> I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

*<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure*

### To Think About

“I will praise the Lord” – this phrase appears often in the Psalms. Frequently this is not a response to a wonderful situation, but a choice to praise God whatever is going on

Appreciation is essential to any relationship – so it is with our relationship with God. Not because God needs it, but because we love Him

Here are some examples of how you might do this:

- reading a Psalm
- playing a worship tape or CD
- singing a hymn or a chorus
- lighting a candle and focusing on Jesus’ love
- going for a walk and enjoying being with God
- thanking God for who he is
- saying ‘I love you Lord’
- thanking God for what he’s done
- thanking God for answered prayers
- saying ‘Jesus’ repeatedly
- saying a Bible verse out loud

#### **Adoration**

Confession  
Thanksgiving  
Supplication

## July 1. Closer as We Say Sorry (Hebrews 10:19-22)

Before you read, take some time to put your worries into God’s hands...  
...Then ask Him to speak as you read his word

*<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water*

### To Think About

Just as in any human relationship, we need to say sorry to God for the things that have come between us and him v.22

Ask God to help you see the things that have spoilt your relationship with him, then say sorry to him for them

According to verse 19, why can we come close to God?

Now forgiven by God, take time to enjoy his forgiveness and to enjoy his presence

#### Adoration

**Confession**  
Thanksgiving  
Supplication

## July 2. Closer as We Say Thankyou (Ephesians 5:19,20)

Before you read, take some time to put your worries into God’s hands...  
...Then ask Him to speak as you read his word

*Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

### To Think About

“Thank you” – How important it is to say thankyou. Try this exercise:

Thank God for something that has done for you in:

- the last 20 years
- the last 10 years
- the last 5 years
- the last year
- the last month
- the last week
- the last day
- the last hour
- the last minute

(I find this really helpful when my relationship with God feels a bit stale)

Many people find it easier to start by thanking God for big general things, like the world we live in, our friends, our food... then to thank God for Jesus and for our salvation... and then to thank God for more immediate personal things...

Why not try keeping a ‘prayer journal’ – for example, you could write down what you asked God for on a particular day – it makes it so much easier to say thankyou to him.

Adoration  
Confession

**Thanksgiving**  
Supplication