

Lk 11:1-13 Lord's Prayer Chad's 270725

Call me old fashioned if you like, but when it comes to my day to day business I much prefer face to face interactions. Whether it be relating to those I love, purchasing my life necessities or carrying out a transaction through my bank, I'd much rather be facing the one I'm trying to connect with./

But have you noticed that these days we're increasingly having to deal with others through some technology, such as our phones or computers & now increasingly through impersonal AI - generated voices or even images!/
During the week I started to muse about what our interactions with God, or our prayers, would be like if God worked through an AI generated voice prompt response technology .. if we punched in God's number on our smart phones & the following happened

just imagine

(Angelic voice) 'Hello, thank you for calling Heaven. We value your prayer and will make every effort to take care of your concerns properly and efficiently. Please stay on the line to enable us to deal with your prayers more quickly'.

(Pause)

'To help us to direct your call to the most appropriate assistant please select from the following: If you wish to speak to one of our martyrs, press one; to one of the saints, press two; to one of the angels, press three; for the Virgin Mary; press 4; to Jesus, press five; for the Holy Spirit, press six; if you wish to speak directly to God, press 7.

(Pause) If you'd like to hear these choices again press 8'.

I pressed seven, I wanted to go right to the top.(pause)

(Heavenly music:)

Then I heard the voice, it seemed to vibrate through the very molecules of nature and permeate my cells and thoughts. I knew it must at last be God, (pause)

‘Thank you for calling. Your call is very important to me. I’m sorry, but I’m either away from my heavenly throne or tied up with another prayer request. If you wish to speak to my secretary, St Peter, press zero. Otherwise please leave details of your needs and we’ll see to them as soon as practicable.

(sound of the harp.) At the final chord of the heavenly harp, please leave your message’ (pause)

‘Lord, things aren’t going too well-I’ve had this rotten cold, please heal it. And the kids have been playing up big time - God give me patience. And the car needs a service but I haven’t been able to find the time-please help me find the time. And work is not very fulfilling - find me another job. And.....’

God : sorry your time is up. Please hang up and try again later....’ / What!!!! Was this a scam or something????

Hardly the form of. prayer Jesus calls us to follow in his instruction on prayer in Luke’s gospel this morning/

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray by allowing them to listen in on **his** prayer. Now I have often defined prayer as conversation with God. Prayer is not simply talking to ourselves or even just talking to God. Most importantly prayer is listening to God. Martin Luther said that if we stopped and listened to the way we spoke to God - our incessant demands, our constant pleading via our shopping lists, we might learn to speak differently to God.

‘You ought to just listen to yourself Jeffrey’, my mother used to say when I was whining. Prayer is primarily a matter of listening to God.

And in order to perfect our prayer life, we ought to first listen in on our prayers.

So now, as we silently reread Luke's shortened form of the Lord's Prayer in Luke's gospel, let us pause after each line to let it sink in, listening to what Jesus means

Lk 11v2-4

What do you notice about the prayer as a whole?

What strikes me most is that Jesus' pattern of prayer is communal, and it constantly refers to relationships:

Back to a line by line look at the Lord's Prayer.

In saying to them, "When you pray, say: Father,

Jesus means : 'Refer to God personally, on the warmest & most intimate level. Consider God as a Father, as one who is as near to you as a father & whom behaves just as a loving father behaves towards his children'. And note that Jesus refers to God as OUR Father, we are all his children & therefore brothers & sisters of each other. So this opening sets the whole tone for the Lord's Prayer - one of relationships. As the ad reminds us, 'we're all in this together'. (pause)

'hallowed or holy be your name' refers to God's holiness, being in God's love & truth, in who God is & who we really are made to be, as we reflect God's holiness or love in our own lives & in our loving relationships to each other. (pause)

In 'Your kingdom come', the Gk word for kingdom here is more accurately translated kingship & God's kingship is to work towards a

reality of a world built on truth, love, compassion, justice, freedom, human dignity & peace in the lives of all people. (pause)

‘Give us each day our daily bread’, asks God to satisfy not just MY daily needs, but through our sharing of God’s gifts for the needs of ALL. And we are not to be anxious for the future, but focus only on our needs for this day. (pause)

‘Forgive us our sins, as we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us’ refers again to relationships &, as the only conditional part of the Lord's Prayer this stanza links God’s forgiveness of others to our forgiveness of those who have sinned against us! (pause)

And ‘do not bring us to the time of trial’, reads more appropriately as “be with us in the time of trial” & acknowledges that future temptations & trials might well threaten to overwhelm us, & our relationships with each other, but God promises to strengthen & guide us in the face of these threats. (pause)

Finally in a parable about a man wanting some bread in the middle of the night, Jesus reminds us when we really need something from God we must keep asking, as we are dealing with a loving & compassionate Father.

Last Sunday Gary explored how **Mary** heard a different call as she sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to him. As Gary concluded in our own lives, we are to follow the example of both Mary & Martha by being

contemplatives in action, praying in our doing. And today's Lord's Prayer reiterates this,

To pray in Jesus name means to pray in the spirit of Jesus, speaking and listening to God as Jesus spoke and listened in our prayer today: speaking of our own needs & at the same time listening to how God would have us address our own needs & the needs of others

And we are to remember that at any time of the day or night, we can call on Jesus, connect with him personally He is always waiting, listening for our call.

What a wonderful blessing.

For our Lord there is no phone needed, no e-mail, we need just whisper in our hearts through God's Holy Spirit & she WILL hear us /

So let us now take a moment and greet our loving God.