

Bible study outlines on the Lord's Prayer

- Overall intro to 24-7 and Lord's Prayer.
- Outline for each day: 1 page Bible study on a phrase in the Lord's Prayer and suggestions for group and independent prayer.
- Daily themes:

Day 1 - Our Father

Day 2 - Hallowed be thy Name

Day 3 - Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done

Day 4 - Give us this day our daily bread

Day 5 - Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us

Day 6 - Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

Day 7 - For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory.

- Conclusion: Into the world.

The purpose of this package is to give a series of Bible studies that will complement a 24-7 prayer time. The theme of the bible studies is the Lord's Prayer: Jesus' instruction to his disciples on how to pray. There is a short introduction on the concept of 24-7 prayer and on the Lord's Prayer. Then each day will focus on one phrase within the Lord's Prayer, and will give some ideas for prayer topics and prayer exercises, both for individuals and for groups.

Intro to 24-7 prayer:

'Lord, teach us to pray...' (Luke 11:1b).

This was a request made by one of Jesus' disciples just before the giving of the Lord's Prayer. It is only one small portion of one verse in the New Testament, but in a way it sums up much of the purpose of 24-7 prayer. 24-7 prayer was birthed out of the desire of one youth Church in Chichester to become better at praying. Prayer, they recognized, is the lifeblood of the Church, and so they would give it the priority and attention it deserves.

Great idea, but how do you accomplish this? How do you become *good* at praying? There is an endless supply of decent prayer manuals and prayer programs written by well-informed and well-intentioned prayer warriors who want to turn YOUR church into a PRAYING Church! But the youth Church in Chichester did not feel called to embark upon a new prayer program. They were simply called to pray, and to let God himself teach them how as they went along.

Thus, they set aside a room in their Church building for non-stop, round the clock, day-in day-out, no-holds-barred prayer. People would take turns; they would work out an organized rota and supervision system; members of the congregation would sign up for prayer shifts, and would be relieved at the end of their time by other members. They would enter the prayer room, not sure what to expect, not sure what to do, not even sure if they would be capable of praying for an hour or two at a time. They would leave the room having experienced the very presence and intimacy of God. It was the start of an incredible season of prayer.

The rest of the story is fairly well known. Other Churches began to catch onto the 24-7 vision of an army of young people marching on their knees. It quickly became a world-wide phenomenon; Churches on every continent took up the battle-cry (COME ON!) and bathed their communities in 24-7 prayer. The Salvation Army in the UK Territory grabbed hold of this prayer movement at ROOTS 2000, when the youth venue hosted a 24-7 prayer bus that was filled to capacity and beyond with Salvationists pouring out their hearts in prayer. Those who experienced the prayer bus got a glimpse of how exciting, radical, and earth-shattering spending time with God can be. Many took their new knowledge back home for others to share in this reality of prayer.

And that really is the purpose of 24-7 prayer: to learn *how* to pray by *practicing* prayer. To set time aside to be instructed by God in the art of prayerful communication. To ask of God, as the disciples did while he was on earth: 'Lord, teach us how to pray...'

Intro to the Lord's Prayer.

'This, then, is how you should pray:' (Matthew 6:9 a)

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, this was his response. Jesus then gave the disciples the Lord's Prayer, which is as complete and as powerful a model for prayer as you will ever find.

Participation in 24-7 prayer means you are taking your place in a prayer chain that has links all over our present world. Praying the Lord's Prayer means that you are taking your place in a prayer chain that began with Jesus, and has links that reach to every corner of the globe and that span across the last two millennia.

Virtually every Christian who has ever lived will have prayed this prayer at some point in their lives. Illiterate or scholar, rich or poor, king or beggar; all would have memorized and repeated these words that were taught to the disciples by Jesus himself. In a world where disunity has been the reality both past and present, the Lord's Prayer is one example of a common ground, a force for spiritual unity. Richard Foster says this in his book on prayer: 'As I prayed it [the Lord's Prayer] this morning...I was joining with the voices of millions around the world who pray in this way each day. It is such a complete prayer that it seems to reach all peoples at all times in all places.'

Tom Wright gives us an even more impressive reason for participating in the Lord's Prayer. Just as the crucifixion summed up in action the entire message of Jesus, explains Wright, so the Lord's Prayer sums up in words the entire ministry of Christ. It reveals what he thought of himself, his mission, his world, and his followers. The prayer was part of Jesus' gift of *himself* to his disciples. The prayer was given so that the disciples could breathe in the life of Jesus as they spoke it, so they could become alive with his life.

This means that when we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are joining with all the other Christians throughout the last 2000 years in the act of breathing in the life of Jesus. As Wright points out, when these words cross our lips, we are standing on holy ground.

Day 1: Our Father...

'I think that every time we say the Our Father, God looks at his hands, where we are etched. 'See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands...' (Isaiah 49:16). What a beautiful description and also expressive of the personal love God feels for each one of us!' - Mother Teresa

Only two words form this opening phrase, but both are essential for the understanding of the Lord's Prayer.

The word 'our' determines the nature of the whole prayer. It can be prayed in private, by individuals, but it is in essence a corporate prayer. All of the pronouns in the prayer, starting with the first word, are plural. It is a prayer that is designed to be experienced by the whole Christian community, not just by one isolated member of it.

The word 'Father' obviously tells us to whom the prayer is addressed. Many people do not have a positive image of their fathers, and so this term may cause some difficulty. After all, if the word 'father' brings up memories of abuse, shame, or absence, it would be hard to carry on with this prayer. So what kind of Father is God? Who are we praying to?

There are many instances in the Old and New Testament when God is revealed as a Father to his people, but the most striking example may be in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The son rejects his father, demands his inheritance (saying in effect that he wished his father were dead), and squanders his wealth. When the son finally returns home, his father - in total contradiction to what would have been expected, or even respectable - runs out to meet him and pours out his love for him. Some have suggested that this story should really be called the prodigal father, because the father is so free and 'wasteful' with his love, expecting nothing in return. This is the Father that we address when we begin the Lord's Prayer.

But while it costs us nothing to be the recipients of the Father's great love, the opening words of the Lord's Prayer should not be uttered lightly. For these words represent our desire to be imitators of Jesus in the relationship he had with his Father. In Israel at the time of Jesus, children would watch their fathers carry out their work, and would learn their trade alongside them. Jesus became a carpenter by watching Joseph and helping him in his work. So when Jesus addresses God as 'Father', he is not just using a term of intimacy; he is claiming to be working alongside the Father in his great work of building the Kingdom. Jesus' great task in this work was his suffering and death on the cross.

Therefore, when we imitate Jesus in calling God 'our Father', we are stating very boldly where we want to be in relation to God. We are saying that we want not only to share the intimacy that Jesus had with the Father, but also that we want to be considered apprentices in his Kingdom work. To be apprentices in this work, we need to take the road that Jesus took; that of ultimate humility and servanthood. And while we have already been made children of the Father, we are not yet the people God wants us to be. So, in calling God our Father, we are also asking that he would prepare us to be more and more like our older brother, Jesus.

Some suggestions for prayer:

- Spend time in communal prayer. Represent this by holding hands or linking arms as a group. Pray in particular for the return of those who have left your fellowship (friends, family) and who have rejected their Father's love.
- Write down on a sheet of paper the characteristics of God that make him a Father. On the back of the sheet, write down what it means for you to be his child.
- Write a modern psalm, either by yourself or in a group, praising God for his prodigal love for you.

Day 2: Hallowed be thy name.

'Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' (Philippians 2:9-11).

This second piece of the Lord's Prayer is concerned with 'hallowing', revering, or glorifying the name of God. Names are very important today, but were even more so in ancient times. A person's name in Jesus' day represented the entire character, everything that was known about that person. When we are talking about the name of God, then, we are referring to *everything* that God has revealed about himself, past and present.

Therefore, when we pray 'hallowed be thy name,' we are saying that we want all of creation to worship the name - the entire revealed character - of God. This is a name that should be praised because of its majesty; after all, God is in heaven. As Melinsky once said: 'God shall be God...man shall not whittle God down to a manageable size and shape.' We humans need to have a proper humility and reverence when confronted by the awesome power and beauty of our God. But the name of God should also be hallowed because of the fact that we are encouraged to call him our Father. This, when understood in the context of God's majesty, should reveal to us what an unbelievable and undeserved gift it is to be called children of the living God.

The exciting, and somewhat frightening, aspect of this is that God has chosen to reveal aspects of his character through his children. He did this through Israel, he did it through Jesus, and now he is doing it through the Holy Spirit working in his Church. When we pray the Lord's Prayer we are saying that we want the world to see who God really is by seeing what we, his children, are doing in this world. This highlights both the glory, and the failure, of the Church.

It is our responsibility to bring all of creation before the Father so that it can be healed, released from sin, pain, and death. This requires standing in the pain of the world, and kneeling in the presence of God. By doing this we show to the world why the name of God - the name above all names - should be hallowed. But it is because many Christians don't do this that Mother Teresa was prompted to say: 'Often we Christians constitute the worst obstacle for those who try to become closer to Christ; we often preach a gospel we do not live. This is the principle reason why people of the world don't believe.'

Some suggestions for prayer:

- Have everyone write some prayer requests on some sheets of paper (one request per sheet) and tape them to the walls. Then have everyone write down on coloured sheets of paper some of the characteristics of God (i.e. healer, provider, savior - one characteristic per sheet). Each person can go around the room reading the prayer requests, and if they have written down a characteristic of God that applies, tape it over the request. (For example, if someone has asked for healing, and your sheet says Healer, tape it on).
- Bring in some newspaper articles that describe incidents in the world that require our prayer (some local, some international). Read them and pray for them in groups, or, if there's a cross in the room or drawn on the wall, lay the articles before the cross and pray that God's name would be glorified in the situations.
- Draw a picture of how you want the world to see your corps; what you want to be revealed about God's character through the corps and the Salvation Army.

**Day 3: Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.**

‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.’
(Luke 22:42)

Many scholars are of the opinion that this third portion of the Lord’s Prayer (Thy Kingdom Come) is the central phrase of the prayer. Tom Wright holds that this saying - the Kingdom announcement - is the focal point of Jesus’ entire ministry. This prayer, then, can only be understood in the light of how Jesus ‘lived the Kingdom’ while he was here on earth. Bringing the Kingdom of God to earth was Jesus’ great task, and being radically obedient to the will of the Father is what he demonstrated in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. As Henri Nouwen has said, ‘Christ became King by obedience and humility. His crown is a crown of thorns, his throne is a cross...Jesus allowed the will of his Father to be done through Pilate, Herod, mocking soldiers, and a gaping crowd that did not understand.’

This means that when we pray this prayer we must again recognize that we are saying we want to model our lives on the life of Jesus - his humility, his servanthood, his love, his suffering, and his uncompromising obedience to the will of the Father. Because Christ is King, the criterion for our actions must be his will, not ours, even (especially) when that makes us uncomfortable. C.S. Lewis explains our responsibility this way: ‘Thy will be *done*. But a great deal of it is to be done by God’s creatures; including me. The petition, then, is not merely that I may patiently suffer God’s will but also that I may vigorously do it.’

So how do we ‘vigorously’ do the will of the Father? A good starting point is to look at how Jesus lived his life, to get involved in the things that he thought were important, and to understand what Jesus meant by the term ‘Kingdom of God.’ We will be looking at how all the rest of the phrases in the Lord’s Prayer illustrate something of the Kingdom of God in the next couple of days. But it might be good today just to relate what Jesus believed was his own personal mission statement:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year for the Lord’s favour.’ (Luke 4:18-19).

Preaching the gospel, reaching out to the poor and the captive, bringing healing and freedom, proclaiming the truth about God: these were the things that the Father wanted Jesus to do. And if we want to be obedient, to see the Kingdom of God brought to earth, these are the things we must devote our lives to as well.

Some suggestions for prayer:

- Begin living the Kingdom in your own corps during 24-7. Wash each other’s hands (or, if you’re bold, each other’s feet) as a sign of humility and service to one another. You can do this in a large group, or as each new person comes into the prayer room have someone wash their hands.
- Write on the walls of the prayer room the things that Jesus thought were important in this world, the things he spent his time on (i.e. feeding the hungry). These activities were ways that Jesus was bringing the Kingdom to earth, and they are things that we can imitate as Christians.
- While the Kingdom of God won’t be here on earth completely until the end of time, it is in one sense realized here and now on earth. Christians who live for God, who accept his will in their lives, are ‘living the Kingdom of God’ here on earth. Pray for the extension of God’s Church on earth, and for the return of those who have left the Kingdom. Pray also that the Church - starting with your corps - would more perfectly be obedient to the will of God.

Day 4: Give us this day our daily bread...

'If we were not so familiar with the Lord's Prayer, we would be astonished at the petition for daily bread. If it had come from the lips of any other than Jesus himself, we would consider it an intrusion of materialism upon the refined realm of prayer. But here it is smack in the middle of the greatest of prayers...' - Richard Foster

There are generally two ways of understanding this part of the prayer. One way is to 'spiritualize' the words 'daily bread' and say they are an anticipation of the feast we will all share in heaven. In heaven, we will all be in the daily presence of Jesus, the bread of life. So this prayer could be asking for the Kingdom of God to come in all its completeness now.

The other way is to say that 'daily bread' means just that: daily bread. This shows that we are to pray for our daily needs - food, shelter, finances, relationships, etc. Nothing is too small for us to bring before the Father. He wants us to be in complete, daily dependence on him. He will satisfy our needs.

Both ways of reading the prayer can be helpful. The mention of bread in the prayer clearly does look forward to a time when there will be no more hunger, when the Kingdom of God is brought to earth completely through the work of Jesus. During Jesus' life there were definite hints in this direction; Jesus miraculously fed the 5000 with bread and fish, which pointed to the fact that he was the Messiah; Jesus held banquets where *all* were invited, especially the 'wrong' sort of people, just as the Kingdom will be open to all who will come; during the last supper, Jesus said that his very body was the bread that would feed his disciples. So our prayer for daily bread is in fact a prayer for God to bring about that time when all will be sustained by the presence of Jesus.

But the prayer is also about our day to day needs in this world. Jesus was obviously interested in these things during his life. He provided wine at a wedding feast, food when people were hungry, and rest when people were weary. He took care of the poor, the widows, the sick. His actions prove that it is not 'unspiritual' to pray for the material things of life. After all, it was Jesus who pointed out that our 'heavenly Father knows that you need...' food and clothes and shelter, and that if you 'seek first his kingdom and his righteousness...all these things will be given to you as well.' (Matthew 6:32-33).

Besides, it would be impossible not to pray for the 'little things of life.' Richard Foster illustrates this well:

'Try to imagine what our prayer experience would be like if he had forbidden us to ask for little things. What if the only matters we were allowed to talk about were the weighty matters, the important things, the profound issues? We would be orphaned in the cosmos, cold, and terribly alone. But the opposite is true: he welcomes us with our 1,001 trifles, for they are each important to him.'

Some suggestions for prayer:

- On one sheet of paper, write down the things in your life that you consider luxuries (not necessities) and the things in your life that you would consider 'unrighteous', or not pleasing to God. On another sheet, write down the essentials in your life, and the things in your life that you think God is pleased with. Pray that God would deal with the stuff on the bad list, then crumple it up and throw it away. Then pray for the stuff on the good list - that God would take care of the essentials, and would increase righteousness in you - and keep the list.
- Share some food together as a group to represent the feasts we will share in the Kingdom. Open this Kingdom party up to anyone and everyone.
- Intercede on behalf of those you know who have material needs. Pray also for the Salvation Army's work in providing daily bread and shelter to thousands of people every day.

Day 5: And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

'It is impossible to lift our enemies up in the presence of God and at the same time continue to hate them.' - Henri Nouwen

The scariest words in this prayer are the words 'as we.' We understand that God wants to forgive us our sins; he showed that by sending his son to die for us. We also can come to grips with the idea that we are supposed to forgive others, as hard as that may be. But things get serious when we put in the words 'as we.' We are asking, in this prayer, for God to forgive us in *exactly the same way* as we forgive those who wrong us. The gospel of Matthew puts this in stronger terms: 'For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.' (Matthew 6:14-15).

Jesus wasn't setting up a merit system here; there is no way our forgiveness of others could ever *earn* the forgiveness of God for our sins. It is only by the grace of God that we can ever be forgiven. What Jesus was doing was setting up a culture, or 'paradigm', of forgiveness. His followers would forgive others because it was the righteous thing to do, and because they had seen this modeled by God himself. Forgiving sins is an essential part of what it means to be a child in the Kingdom of God; if you refuse to forgive others, how can you claim to be a follower of the forgiver-God? It is the equivalent of saying: 'I don't believe in the Kingdom of God.' But when the world sees that men, who are sinful, can forgive each other, then they can know that God, who is infinitely merciful and graceful, can certainly forgive them.

Unfortunately, we live in a world that has rejected the idea of sin, and therefore perceives no *need* for forgiveness. It has raised up the concept of 'tolerance' in place of forgiveness, and is satisfied if we merely put up with each other. But tolerance is at best a weak parody of forgiveness. The father in the story of the prodigal son didn't tolerate his son, he ran to forgive him. Sin does exist, and we need the forgiveness of God. We don't want to be simply tolerated, to settle for second best.

Forgiveness is shocking, it is dangerous, it makes people angry. This was a major part of Jesus' Kingdom announcement. He claimed to be able to forgive sins, something only the Temple was supposed to do. And then he called his followers to live out that same model of radical forgiveness, to implement the victory of the cross in a sinful world. We are expected to confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness, to offer our forgiveness freely and repeatedly to others, and to stand in the pain and sin of the world and plead for its forgiveness from God as well. It is our birthright as children of God to breathe in his divine forgiveness, and it is our responsibility to breathe it out onto a broken world.

And don't be surprised if we see the Father running down the street to meet his prodigal children.

Some suggestions for prayer:

- Get some 'Hello my name is...' tags, and write a person's name on it that you need to forgive, or to ask forgiveness from. Wear it over your heart as you pray, and keep it until you forgive or have asked for forgiveness.
- You may, in pairs, wish to confess your sins to one another, and together ask for forgiveness from God. (Read James 5:16, and 1 John 8-10 as you do this).
- Go over some more world or local events (newspaper is a good source) and pray that forgiveness would be brought into the pain, sin and brokenness of these situations.

**Day 6: Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

‘To cry out to the God of life in the midst of darkness, to hold on to joy while walking in a valley of tears, to keep speaking of peace when sounds of war fill the air - that is what prayer is about. It is indeed clinging to the Lord when all is being torn apart by greed, hatred, violence and war.’ - Henri Nouwen.

There is a recurring theme in Jewish thought that says salvation will come out of pain and suffering. An image that was often used for this was childbirth; the pains of giving birth are great, but out of those pains comes new life and new hope. Jesus truly lived out this very Jewish theme, as his life was characterized by temptation, trials, and suffering. Perhaps the moment of Jesus’ life that best symbolizes all of these things is in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus prays that he might be spared from the cross. Jesus shrinks momentarily from his duty, but will not yield to temptation; he resolves to give himself over fully to the will of the Father. This is obedience staring evil in the face and defying it. And it was out of this trial, this temptation, this pain, that eternal salvation was brought to the world.

So why, if we are trying to imitate Jesus, are we taught to pray ‘lead us not into temptation,’ (or, in a different translation, ‘lead us not into the time of trial’) ‘but deliver us from evil’? When Jesus prayed this prayer in the Garden, the Father refused his request. Jesus was delivered into the hands of the evil one. But that is precisely why we can pray this prayer with confidence; Jesus defeated evil on the cross, so that we could be delivered.

This does not mean that evil no longer exists, nor that temptation and times of trial will not occur in our lives. There are generally three wrong ideas we have about evil. The first is to believe that evil does not exist, or does not matter; the second is to see only evil in everything and to forget about the good of creation; the third is become self-righteous, and to believe that deliverance will come as a result of our own virtue. The reality is, to pray this prayer is to recognize our own weakness, and the danger of sin, but at the same time to know that we have a Saviour who is strong enough to deliver us. The evil one is powerful and active in this world, and he is opposed to God’s good creation and perfect will. But the victory of Jesus is more powerful, more active. This prayer asks that we would not be tempted more than we could bear, and that with the strength of Jesus we would be able to resist evil and pass safely through the testing of our faith.

We do have some responsibilities when it comes to this part of the prayer. We need to be disciplined in our attitude towards sin. We should not be seeking out temptation, nor should we allow sin to go unchecked in our lives. But this is also a prayer for the world. We are asking for the forces of evil to be bound, and for the light of God to shine into the darkest places. And this is not a request that can be made from a safe distance. Christians need to live and pray right in the place where the world is in deepest pain. In a way, we need to allow the Kingdom of God to be ‘birthed’ in us, and through us into the sin and brokenness of the world. This requires sacrifice, and often pain, on our part. But we have the promise that, through our trials, and because of the victory of Jesus, new hope and new life will be birthed into the world.

Some suggestions for prayer:

- Read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 with a partner. Discuss what temptations exist in your life, and pray for your partners, that God would reveal the way out. Discuss some practical ways of avoiding or dealing with temptation, and commit to praying for each other and holding each other accountable.
- Take a walk around your community (not during your prayer shift) and look for the ‘strongholds of sin’ that need prayer. Write them on walls, and spend time praying that God’s deliverance would break in.
- Reflect on the cross, and praise God for the victory he won over evil.

Day 7: For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

'[Jesus] must have been either the prince of impostors or, what He really was, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Saviour of mankind.' - William Booth.

Jesus was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus, the most powerful man in the world. Augustus' kingdom was enormous, and he was able to enforce a strict peace (the *Pax Romana*) within its borders. In many ways, Augustus was the best the world could offer as far as power and glory were concerned. Against this imposing King we see the familiar setting of the nativity: a poor couple, away from home, a young woman giving birth in a room occupied by animals. It does not seem very impressive at all. And yet the nativity is very much about the competition between two rival kingdoms, one represented by Caesar, the other by a little, wailing baby called Jesus. Where did the real power and glory lie?

Augustus caused the known world to be counted in his census; the birth of Jesus caused the angels to sing in the heavens. Augustus altered the course of a young couple's lives, making them journey to Bethlehem for the birth of their son; the birth of that son altered the course of world history forever. Augustus used the threat of his armies to force a temporary peace amongst men; Jesus used obedience, humility, and suffering to bring about an eternal peace between God and humanity. It was under the authority of another Caesar that Jesus was put to death; that death, and the subsequent resurrection, made salvation possible for all who would call Jesus Lord. Augustus and Rome reflected all the glory of the world; Jesus reflected all the glory of the God who made the world.

The Kingdom that Jesus ushered in was and is the dangerous, radical alternative to the powers of this world. By praying this last part of the Lord's Prayer we are declaring that we pledge our allegiance to the Kingdom of God. We are also declaring that we will dedicate our lives to seeing this alternative Kingdom become a reality here on earth. It is thus a prayer of mission, a subversive prayer, a commitment to not simply accepting the 'kingdoms' of this world or their values.

It is also a prayer of empowerment. Jesus spoke and acted the way he did because he was the rightful King of kings. We are his children, and are therefore rightful heirs to the Kingdom. We have within us the very Spirit of Jesus, and that is a Spirit of true power, authority, and glory.

Finally, this is a prayer of confidence. It is only because God is King that we can pray the rest of the Lord's Prayer with conviction. We pray with boldness because we are praying in the name of the King, the victor over evil, the true light of heaven who outshone the glory of this world with the glory of the cross.

Jesus showed us that the world's understanding of power and glory is flawed. Real power and glory is found in obedience, humility, grace, justice, love, forgiveness, and all the things that characterized Jesus' life. This is the power and glory that exists in the Kingdom of God.

Some suggestions for prayer:

- Write on the walls the things that count for power and glory in this world. Then write the things that count for power and glory in the Kingdom of God. Pray that your life and the life of your corps will find its identity in the Kingdom of God.
- Read Revelations 5:1-14. Jesus is described here as both a lion, and a slain lamb. What images do both of these descriptions bring to your mind? Discuss in groups what they tell you about the power and glory of Jesus, and how they can help you in your prayer life. You may wish to use these images in some artistic prayers for the walls.
- Have group time of praise and worship to end off your week of 24-7 prayer. Give to God all the praise and the glory for the week you have had, and for the prayers that will be answered.

Conclusion

One thing that has been mentioned throughout the Bible studies is the necessity to imitate Christ. This cannot be done simply by wearing a WWJD bracelet and by asking yourself in every situation: 'What would Jesus do?' Jesus spent his whole life preparing, praying, and waiting on God, so that when difficult decisions had to be made he knew that he was following the will of his Father. He lived a life of spiritual discipline, and that is the aspect of Jesus' life that we really must imitate. It is no more possible to 'all of a sudden' be loving, forgiving, merciful, humble, and obedient like Christ, than it is to 'all of a sudden' be a world class football player. Dallas Willard, in his book The Spirit of the Disciplines, puts it this way: 'The secret...then, is to learn from Christ how to live our total lives, how to invest all our time and our energies of mind and body as he did. We must learn how to follow his preparations, the disciplines for life in God's rule that enabled him to receive his Father's constant and effective support while doing his will.'

This is why 24-7 prayer can be misleading. It is, of course, a fantastic opportunity to take time out to spend exclusively with God. But you cannot live your life in a prayer room. Christians are needed in the world, to stand in the pain of the world, and to share the knowledge of Christ with the world. And one week of prayer, even if it is 24-7, will not adequately prepare you to be Christ-like in everything you do. The real value of 24-7 prayer is the experience you gain of coming into the tangible presence of the Father. That is an experience that will travel with you wherever you go, and should spur you on to strive for the discipline needed to become ever more and more like Jesus.

It is fitting, now, to give the last word to Mother Teresa:

'Prayer does not demand that we interrupt our work, but that we continue working as if it were a prayer. It is not necessary to always be meditating, nor to consciously experience the sensation that we are talking to God, no matter how nice this would be. What matters is being with him, living in him, in his will. To love with a pure heart, to love everybody, especially to love the poor, is a twenty-four-hour prayer.'

This, then, is how we should pray.