



Week four:

Biblical Prayers

Paul's praising prayer

- **Welcome (5-10 minutes)**

What is the best / most memorable compliment you have received? _____

What would you most like to be complimented about? _____

- **Worship (10-15 minutes)**



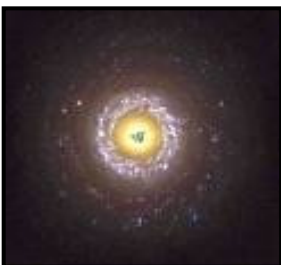
pray

*Our Father in heaven,
 may your name always be kept holy.
 May your kingdom come
 and what you want be done,
 here on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us the food we need for each day.
 Forgive us for our sins,
 just as we have forgiven those who sinned
 against us.
 And do not cause us to be tempted,
 but save us from the Evil One.
 [The kingdom, the power, and the glory are
 yours forever. Amen.] (Mtt 6: 9-13 NCV)*

- **Word (50 minutes)**
- **Think of as many words as you can that express pleasure or praise & write them below:**
Fabulouswonderful

Read the passage:
Romans 11 (NLT)

30 Once, you Gentiles were rebels against God, but when the people of Israel rebelled against him, God was merciful to you instead. 31 Now they are the rebels, and God's mercy has come to you so that they, too, will share in God's mercy. 32 For God has imprisoned everyone in disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone.



33 Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!

34 For who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice?

35 And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back?

36 For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.

Romans 12 A Living Sacrifice to God

1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. 2 Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Paul is a man of prayer. In this passage in Romans, we see the content of his prayers. In Paul's letters to the Churches, he gives examples of what prayers should look like as well as simply instructing the Christians that they *should* pray!

It would be great if we all thought about God first in all our living! In 12v2, Paul suggests this is not only possible, but definitely the BEST way to be!



- Spend exactly 2 minutes in silence, thinking! Note down everything you think about in that time.



Do our thoughts naturally turn God-wards, or do they need marshalling in the right direction? Paul's prayer of praise is like a sigh of relief after writing 11 chapters of tough theological lessons to the Church in Rome. His response to all the thinking and wrestling with the tough questions about God and Jesus is to praise him! There is no point in being so serious about religion that we forget to find delight in God ...

Maybe our image of God affects the way we praise him ... Paul loses himself in consideration of the extent of God's power and 'mind'. As God has shown himself to Paul, Paul's response is to worship. This passage is known as 'doxology', (meaning worship).

- Over the past few months, God will have shown you something new about himself. It may be to do with his character or his gifts or maybe his love for you or the world. Write them in the space below.
- Talk with each other about how you express your worship to God in response to the personal understandings you receive. If you wish, use the words below as a guide for your thinking ...

Who I am in his sight	sharing/showing grace	forgiveness	wholeness of
body/mind	healing of relationships	trust	hope
fresh beginnings	new creation	fatherhood	freedom
peace	God's power	obedience	stillness
			love



Paul recognises that we need to know God in order to worship him; to celebrate his character and relationship with us. John Stott sets out his thinking in this way;



It is of great importance to note from Romans 1-11 that theology (our belief about God) and doxology (our worship of God) should never be separated. On the one hand, there can be no doxology without theology. It is not possible to worship an unknown god. All true worship is a response to the self-revelation of God in Christ and Scripture, and arises from our reflection on who God is and what he has done. It was the tremendous truths of Romans 1-11 which provoked Paul's outburst of praise. The worship of God is evoked, informed and inspired by the vision of God. Worship without theology is bound to degenerate into idolatry. Hence the indispensable place of Scripture in both public

worship and private devotion. It is the Word of God which calls forth the worship of God.

On the other hand, there should be no theology without doxology. There is something fundamentally flawed about a purely academic interest in God. God is not an appropriate object for cool, critical, detached, scientific observation and evaluation. No, the true knowledge of God will always lead us to worship, as it did Paul. Our place is on our faces before him in adoration.

As I believe Bishop Handley Moule said at the end of the (19th) century, we must 'beware of an undevotional theology and of an untheological devotion'. (Stott pp 311&312)

- It is the Word of God which calls forth the worship of God.

Talk about your favourite verses of Scripture and how they can be used in your prayers.

Verses:

The second part of Stott's comment concerns the purely academic discussion of God. I agree with Stott as he cautions against this. Paul's example and indeed Stott's observations need to be borne in mind in every situation that we find ourselves discussing God. We should speak of him as our gracious and loving heavenly Father ... All our talking of him should inevitably lead to our heartfelt praise of his glorious Name.

pray

- As you come to the end of your discussion, spend some time praising God for what you have learnt of Him. Conclude with a traditional 'doxology'. (sing if you know a tune!!)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him you creatures here below
Praise Him above you Heavenly Host
Praise! Father Son and Holy Ghost!*

- **Witness (20 – 25 minutes)**

pray

Pray about your outreach event/activity that will point people in the direction of Jesus.
Now do some planning!

You should have a clear plan by the end of this session ...

I am looking forward to hearing of your plans and discussions!

38Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." Acts 2 (NIV)

Time for refreshments, you've earned them!

Bibliography

Stott, John RW; *The Message of Romans*; BST; IVP; 1994
Chester, Tim; *The Message of Prayer*; BST; IVP; 2003

