

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Letter of Jude (*Jude 17-21, 24-25*)

But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy - to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Praying in the Spirit, the Way to Pray

Prayer is necessary to keep our faith. A person with a shallow faith will have a shallow prayer life. Spending more time in deeper prayers will result in deeper and stronger faith as a result of God’s grace outpoured on us during prayer. Prayer is an integral part of the life of a disciple of Christ. Christ Himself showed the way by praying constantly to God the Father. His prayerful attitude moved His disciples so much that they said to Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray...” (cf. Luke 11:1). Prayer is necessary in order to persevere in our faith. God is the only one who can prevent us from stumbling in our faith, and for Him to do that we need to pray that He will do this. Peter denied Jesus three times but because Jesus prayed that Peter’s faith may not fail (cf. Luke 22:32), Peter was able to pick himself up and continue to be a loyal apostle of Jesus to build up His church.

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions... (cf. Ephesians 6:18). Pray in the Spirit does not mean solely praying in tongues as many people do not have this gift. However, from Scripture it is clear that when we pray, we should pray in the Spirit and not in any other way. How do we pray in the Spirit? It is simply to pray with such openness of heart that we allow God’s Spirit that is living in us to take over our prayers: how we pray and what we pray for. For this we can contemplate the attitudes of the heart implied in the prayer the Lord teaches us: the Our Father prayer.

Attitudes of the heart when we pray:

Putting ourselves into the presence of God. *Our Father in heaven ..* Am I in full awareness that I am in the holy presence of God when I pray? If I tend to rattle and be in a hurry to finish off my prayers then I have to cultivate a greater awareness of the presence of God. As Scripture tells us, fear of God is the start of wisdom (cf. Proverbs 9:10, Psalm 111:10). A need for a greater reverential attitude towards God will be recognised and can be put into practice.

Acknowledging the need to praise God. *Holy be Your name...* God is God and we have to praise Him. We are just doing our duty and manifesting our love and not doing Him any special favour.

Acknowledging God’s supremacy over our lives / Putting our priorities right. *Your kingdom come...* I need to expand my mind and heart in order to see things from God’s eternal perspective that cares for the eternal good of everyone and not just my narrow self-interest. Thus, the Our Father prayer starts by addressing the concerns of God. For my part, I see to it that I do everything I can to build up His Kingdom.

Praying with a desire to conform to God’s will. *Your will be done...* Jesus again led by example. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to His Father “... not My will but Yours be done.” (Luke 22:42).

Acknowledging God’s providence in our lives. *Give us today our daily bread.* I may have a lot of control over my life but ultimately it is the Lord that provides for my life. Let this fact fills me with humility.

Understanding the seriousness of sins and seeking God’s forgiveness always. *Forgive us our sins...* God wants us to be always aware of our sins so that we can seek His forgiveness and remove the distance that sins put between God and us. The Our Father prayer encourages and builds up faith and trust in God and waiting on Him. It teaches us what and how to pray and the attitudes our heart should adopt in prayer.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, thank You for the gift of the Our Father Prayer. It is the most beautiful prayer that anyone who prays it from the heart can gain a deep insight into the love of our Heavenly Father. With this prayer entrenched in the heart, no one will feel unloved or hopeless. Send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts to convince us afresh of the wonderful truths of our faith and to help us pray in the Spirit. Through this, detach our hearts from all things of this world and from ourselves, and to rise up in our spirits to offer You worship and adoration in truth and in the Holy Spirit. Mary, Mother of Salvation, help us pray in truth and in the Holy Spirit. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus. www.twohearts.hk