

## **Mission Focus in Home Groups - The Lord's 'Missionary' Prayer**

### **Why are we doing Mission Focus in Home Groups?**

BEC has a long history of supporting many different UK and Overseas mission partners. This is a good thing that as Elders we thank God for. Yet our partnership with these people should not just be financial. As we study Philippians this term we hear Paul describe his partnership with the Philippians it was far more than a financial transaction. It involved a deep love and commitment to one another as together they worked for the advance of the gospel. Is that the sort of partnership that we have with our Mission Partners?

Many in our church have a strong connection and sense of partnership with JR as she was sent out from us. Yet, as Elders, we suspect that many in our church have little knowledge of or sense of connection with the rest of our Mission Partners. We therefore want to raise the profile of our various Mission Partners and also raise and sharpen our mission focus as a church.

We currently run the monthly Mission Focus evening but this is often not as well attended as the regular Home Group evenings. To try and raise the profile of our Mission Partners and to help people feel more connected with them we have already started to include a different mission partner in our prayers every Sunday morning. This helps to raise the profile of our partners but perhaps does little to create a sense of connection with them.

That's where Home Groups and Bible Study groups come in. We would like every group to adopt one or two of the church's mission partners. Each group will then seek to foster a closer relationship with their mission partner through prayer and communication. We would love to see groups becoming Ambassadors within the church for their particular mission partner.

Many of the groups have already chosen their mission partner and so by doing Mission Focus in Home Groups this month it will be a chance to introduce the group your particular partner and to spend time praying for them. Other groups can use this evening to make a decision about who they want to adopt.

### **Why are we studying the Lord's Prayer when the focus is on mission?**

Many of us will be very familiar with the Lord's Prayer and can recite it from memory. We often learn the Lord's prayer as a prayer to pray for ourselves and our own circumstances. The prayer is often divided into two sections. The 1st three petitions are about God and his kingdom and then the 2nd 3 petitions are about us and our needs (both physical and spiritual.) Alternatively the first half of the prayer is seen as corporate while the second half is personal.

But the two parts of the prayer are not unconnected. The first half of the prayer is about praying that God's kingdom would advance all over the world and that God would be worshipped by everyone everywhere as he deserves. In short, the first part of the prayer is for global mission. The second half of the prayer is also about global mission because in the second part of the prayer we are asking God to give us what we need to play our part in the spread of God's kingdom and worship around the globe.

This prayer then will not only teach us about global mission and why it is so vital. It will also help us to pray for ourselves and our involvement in world as well as praying for our specific mission partners.

To make sure that there is plenty of time to pray for ourselves, our partners and global mission I suggest that you limit the Bible study part of the evening to 30 minutes maximum. The aim of the study is not to understand every detail of the passage. Our aim is to see how it relates to world mission and helps us to pray for ourselves and our partners.

I suggest therefore that you simply take each clause of the prayer and ask two questions;

- What are we asking for in this clause?
- How does this relate to world mission?

Hopefully the table below makes sense. The aim of the study is to help people see the connection between the two halves of the prayer so that we can then be better focused and equipped to pray for world mission. I have put some optional extra questions in bold that might help us to think and apply things further. I have also attached a blank table if you want to get your group to fill it in as they go (this is purely optional but some groups might like it.)

Having done the Bible study you can then use the different parts of the Lord's Prayer to pray for ourselves and our own involvement in World Mission. You can also then use the prayer to pray for the particular mission partners adopted by your group.

May God use our study of his word and our prayers for the advance of his kingdom!

|  | <b>What are we asking for?</b>  | <b>How does this relate to world mission?</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...</b>  | <i>God to be praised and worshipped as he deserves.</i>   | <i>For everyone everywhere to worship God as he deserves. "Mission exists because worship doesn't." (John Piper.) God's glory and worship should be a big motivation for mission as well as our concern for the lost.</i>   |
| <b>... your kingdom come...</b>  | <i>God's rule to be seen more and more in our own lives as we repent of our sin, trust Christ as saviour and live lives that worship him as our King.</i> | <i>That more and more people would come into his kingdom through repentance and faith in Jesus so that more and more people all over the world would worship God as he deserves.</i>  |
| <b>... your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...</b>  | <i>God to be perfectly obeyed.</i>  | <i>Look up a few passages that help us to see God's will - e.g. Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Peter 3:9.</i>  |
| <b>... Give us today our daily bread...</b>  | <i>Give us what we <u>need</u> today to worship you as you deserve, to be obedient to your will and to play our part in the advance of the kingdom.</i>   | <i>Praying that God would give us what we need to play our part in world mission. Praying that other parts of our global church family have what they need for the advance of the kingdom.<br/><b>What do we need to be involved in global mission?</b><br/><br/><b>How could we be better at using what God has given us for the advance of his kingdom?</b></i> |
| <b>... And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...</b>                                     | <i>Asking for forgiveness that the gospel promises. Spiritual need looking back.</i>  | <i><b>When it comes to world mission are there particular sins that we need to repent of?</b> e.g Generosity with what God has given? Lack of concern for the lost? Lack of concern for God's worship? Disobedience in going?</i>   |
| <b>...And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one...</b>                                   | <i>Spiritual need looking forward. Asking that God would help us to walk in righteousness.</i>  | <i><b>What particular temptations do we face when it comes to world mission?</b> Greed and selfishness? Cowardice? Apathy.</i>  |
| <b>Optional summary question - From what we have learnt in the Lord's Prayer, why is World Mission so vital?</b> |   |   |

|  | What are we asking for? | How does this relate to world mission? |
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| <b>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...</b>                          |                         |  |
| <b>... your kingdom come...</b>  |                         |  |
| <b>... your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...</b>                    |                         |  |
| <b>... Give us today our daily bread...</b>                                    |                         |  |
| <b>... And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...</b>   |                         |  |
| <b>...And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one...</b> |                         |  |
|  |                         |  |