



Week of April 19, 2020: The Lord's Prayer – “Our Father in Heaven”

Discussion Questions Set #1

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” (Matthew 6:9-13)

“For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you”. (Acts 17:23)

1. Why is it significant that we are directed to pray to a known, relational entity, rather than a non-descript deity? What difference does this make in our approach to prayer?
2. Why is it important that we acknowledge that by nature God is primarily revealed as Father? What difference does this make to our knowledge of who God is? How might recognizing God primarily as “Creator” – or any other title you can think of - change our understanding (knowledge) of who God is?
3. Why do you think it is important for us to know that, as JI Packer puts it, “Father” is the Christian name for God” (*Knowing God*, pg. 201)?

Discussion Questions Set #2

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more they were called, the more they went away from me ...” (Hosea 11:1)

“... because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child.” (Galatians 4:6-7)

In sermon, I suggested that the parable of the Prodigal Son might be a good metaphor for us in understanding God’s “family” situation. In this case, God could be viewed as the father, Israel as the elder brother and the rest of humanity as the prodigal son.

1. How does understanding God’s interaction in human history as an attempt to adopt us back ever since the fateful incidents of Genesis 3 impact your view of biblical events? How does viewing God as the father from the parable of the Prodigal Son shape our knowledge of Him? What does this tell you about the heart of God?
2. Why do you think we see the pattern of Hosea 11:1 – the more we are called, the more we go away from God – historically in the people of Israel? Do you think we see this same pattern in our world today?
3. In sermon, we learned that God has revealed Himself as an Abba Father, which is an Aramaic term of endearment akin to “Daddy” in our vocabulary. Think of referring to God as “Daddy”. How does this make you feel? What reservations does this thought bring up in you?
4. Would you suggest that your relationship with God is more of a Father-child (aloof and formal) or an Abba-child (warm and intimate) relationship? Why do you think this is the case?
5. How might one develop an Abba-Father relationship with God? Brainstorm.

Discussion Questions Set #3

1. In sermon, we learned that the “our” portion of our clause helps us to understand that we never approach God in isolation of others. We come before Him, even with our individual concerns, as part of a community. How might this help us to keep our prayers from becoming selfishly self-centered? Is it your normal practice to envision approaching God from a communal perspective?
2. In sermon we suggested that the “in heaven” portion of our clause help us to recognize both God’s immanence (closeness) and His transcendence (otherness). When you think of your own practice of prayer, of which of these aspects are you more aware? Describe.