



# Summer of Prayer

## How to Improve Your Prayer Life Week 5

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website ([www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk](http://www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk)). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.

### **HELP I NEED SOMEBODY!**



### **Read Romans 8:18-27**

This is the fifth in our Summer of Prayer series 'How to Improve Your Prayer Life.' We all struggle with prayer. We need to pray. We have an urge to pray but things just get in the way. We are busy and our brains like to be busy so any attempt to be still before God meets with an inner resistance. Even when we have plenty of time, as on holiday, we still don't seem to find the time to pray. So we either feel like failures and become dispirited or we grow more and more indifferent and apathetic for the things of God. We need help as the Beatles put it... but not from just anybody. We need help from the one person who can provide it - we need God's help. 'God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need him' (Psalm 46:1 Message).

### **Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection**

1. It is the 'in' thing in business circles to do a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). What would you consider to be your weaknesses? Do you try to deny them, hide them or compensate for them? By contrast, what would you say your strengths are? Be positive and encouraging!
2. Do you think you might be a perfectionist? How does this impact mental health and a sense of well-being? Richard Rohr writes about 'The Spirituality of Imperfection' which he considers 'is, quite simply, the Gospel'. What do you think he means by this? He also states that 'we grow spiritually much more by doing it wrong than by doing it right? What is your response to this?
3. Romans 8:26 is about praying in weakness. It is only as we accept and embrace our weakness and inability that we really experience the help of the Holy Spirit. See 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.
4. The Holy Spirit is the *Paraclete* – 'the one who stands alongside us in order to help us.' Read John 14:15-27, 16:5-15 as a reminder of this help. Write down all the ways outlined here.
5. In our weakness the Holy Spirit prays through us. We often don't really know how to pray. What are the areas in your life that you would like to be praying for but just do not have the words?
6. In our sense of inadequacy for the task of prayer, the Holy Spirit interprets our wordless longings and God is able to make sense of them and answer in line with his plans and purposes. Does this make you feel more useless or encourage you to pray?
7. Reflect on the statement, prayer is not so much something offered **to** God but something that takes place **within** God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that we are invited to participate in?
8. Paul writes here that our inexpressible longings reflect those of the whole of creation. The Holy Spirit helps us to wait in this state of tension for the culmination of God's plan of redemption. How does he do this? See 1 Thessalonians 5:8; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Psalm 37:7 and Isaiah 40:3.
9. Read Psalm 141:1,2 and Revelation 5:8, 8:1-3 and reflect on the symbolism of prayer as incense rising up to God and all the prayers of God's people being joined together and offered before the throne of God. So every prayer counts. Every prayer matters.

All prayer is directed towards the coming of God's kingdom. Close by saying the Lord's Prayer.