

# CHAPTER SIX



## GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD PETITION

“Prayer, at its simplest and most straightforward, is asking God for help”

Whether we are asking for a parking space, a new job, a life-partner, a financial break, an improvement in health, a noisy neighbour to be quiet, the car to get through its MOT or a headache to disappear...the most common and (perhaps) most simple form of prayer is to ask God for something. To ask for help in providing something that is not a current reality.

“Jesus unmistakably rips prayer out of the sacred, stained-glassed, ornate walls of the church and places it in the commons of everyday life”

We have a thousand smart objections to this kind of prayer, but let's not rush past the words of Jesus in our modern wisdom. Maybe there are gifts hidden in this simple way of asking? Maybe there are clues about the character of God and the nature of discipleship buried here?

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray each day “give us today our daily bread”. This is no metaphorical prayer actually centred on global hunger and corrupt food distribution patters. This is an instruction to actually ask God to provide the very things we need for life each day.

Jesus illustrates this teaching with stories. One of a person who bangs on the door of their friends house late at night asking to borrow a loaf of bread so that they can entertain surprise guests. The other of a good father who *of course* gives his children bread and fish for dinner rather than tricking them into eating rocks and snakes.

This teaching and these stories teach us that:

- The nature of God is good, kind and eager to help
- Asking, in and of itself is a good thing. It promotes relationship. You ask people that you trust, and though the act might seem to risk vulnerability and disappointment, when you ask of someone good and worthy of trust, it strengthens relationship and opens the possibility of surprise and fulfilment.
- We are “co-labourers with Christ” and we become empowered to actively participate in the ongoing creation of the world rather than robotically endue whatever pre-designed path tomorrow might take.
- Asking for practical, tangible things promotes gratitude. High and lofty prayers for global hunger to be eradicated are of course good, but they will never lead to a “thanks for fixing that!” - Prayers of gratitude for the meal in front of us each evening will promote thankfulness.
- We can become reliant on our own selves, our own plans and our own strength if we only ever rely on ourselves to fix things rather than involving God in the process by asking for help.
- Asking for help remotes relationship...and God is all about relationship!

So if the Father is good, and loves to gives good gifts to his children, and eagerly seeks our questions... what holds us back?