

God's Word calls us to 'be transformed by the renewing of our minds'.
But HOW? What does that look like in actual practice?

A helpful starting point is the prayer that Jesus taught us. The prayer we've said so many times. I invite you to join me on an adventure of inviting God to transform our minds through His prayer. You may find it helpful to keep a journal to record the insights you gain and your awarenesses of God's grace in your life.

'Our Father,' we pray. But, if you're anything like me, you're really praying, 'My Father.' The Spirit nudged me to realise that I had been seeing myself as a solitary pray-er – as though the Lord's Prayer was just between God and me.

But Jesus didn't tell us to pray, 'My Father.' He taught us to pray, 'Our Father.' If we, as the Church, want to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, the words of the Lord's Prayer can be helpful stepping-stones. Let's pray the words of the Lord's Prayer slowly, mindfully, regularly - dwelling on what new understandings we gain when we think about these words as our communal prayer. Rather than having a mindset that this is an individualistic prayer, let's pray the Lord's Prayer from the perspective of seeing it as our response to God, as His church – as His people together. If this perspective excites or challenges you, please share this with others in your Christian community.

I invite you to take time to reflect on the Lord's Prayer:

1: Say the Lord's Prayer slowly and meditatively, as soon as you wake, last thing at night, and at other times through the day. Meditate on the word, 'Our'.

2:

Say the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase. Meditate on the word, 'Father'. Ask God to reveal new insights to you. If God is Father, we are in *relationship*.

Mediate on your relationship with God.

As an individual and as a church, what is your relationship with God?

What does God desire it to be?

What relationship does He intend us to have with one another if we are children of God?

3:

Meditate on the phrase, 'Our Father'.

If Jesus is here with us today, who does He include in 'Our'?

Who might you be tempted to exclude?

What might God be calling your community to?

4:

Continue in the pattern of mindfully praying the Lord's Prayer.

Meditate on the phrase, 'Who is in heaven.'

Where is heaven? What is heaven?

Pray, asking God what does He want us, as His church, to understand about heaven today?

5:

Meditate on the phrase, 'Your Kingdom come.' What might it mean?

If we, as God's people, are praying this as a communal prayer then what might this phrase be calling us to be?

What might this phrase be calling us to do?

Are we seeing ourselves as passive requesters of God to act alone to make His Kingdom come? Or, in praying 'Your kingdom come', are we asking God to inspire and convict us, as His body of believers, to be the ones to bring His Kingdom into being here and now in this place?

Ask God to renew your mind that you would see and respond to the opportunities each day to bring his Kingdom to come.

Pray for God to renew the mind of your church that, as a community of believers, you would see and respond to the opportunities each day to bring his Kingdom to come.

6:

Meditate on the phrase, 'Your Will be done.'

Ask God to reveal to you, and to your church, what is His will that he desires you to do in this place. Listen for God's whisper.

Are you praying 'Your will be done' as an act of submission to his perfect will? (Even if God's will is not what you think should happen?)

Share with others in your church who are sharing this journey with you.

If possible, pray the Lord's Prayer together, phrase by phrase. (Perhaps you may choose to sing it).

7:

Meditate on the phrase, 'On earth as it is in heaven'.

Where, and how, today, can you, as God's people, bring heaven to earth?

Commit at least one anonymous, senseless act of kindness today.

(Don't tell anyone you did it, else it's no longer anonymous!)

8:

Meditate on the phrase, 'Give us this day'.

Hold in mind, your meditations upon: 'Your Kingdom come, your will be done'.

As part of God's people in this place – called to be part of the active work to bring His Kingdom to come – what are you asking God to 'give us this day'?

9:

Meditate on the phrase, 'Our daily bread'.

What sustenance do you, as a church, need to fulfill that which you are praying?

How and when are you, as a church, coming to God for 'daily bread'?

10:

Meditate on the phrase, 'And forgive us our trespasses.'

Mediate on the word 'trespass'. We 'trespass' when we step on to territory that is not ours to tread upon.

Where / on whose territory (physical or emotional) have you trespassed?

We might also rephrase that as: 'And forgive us our sins.'

What does sin mean to you?

What if we were to explain to someone that sin is a disconnection? And out of that disconnection comes evil.

'And forgive us our disconnections.'

Reflect on how we disconnect from others, from God, from the care of our planet, from ourselves, from our values.

Be specific in asking God's forgiveness.

Reflect on how you may have disconnected, as a church, from God's vision for your Christian community in the place you are called to serve.

What will it mean to ask God's forgiveness?

What repentance ('about turn') does your church need in order to be fulfilling God's vision?

What is one small doable step *you* can choose to do today to begin fulfilling God's vision for your church?

11:

Meditate on the phrase, 'As we forgive them who trespass against us.'

Note: Jesus does not give us any small-print exceptions or circumstances about whom to forgive!

'As we forgive them who *trespass* against us.'

('As we forgive those who *step over our boundaries*.)

'As we forgive them who *sin* against us.'

'As we forgive them who *disconnect* from us / from our needs/ from our experiences / from our values/ from our security.'

As we pray this, what is God saying to us individually and as the church?

Forgiveness is a process. We need to be returning to God again and again with this cry on our hearts to reach a point of complete forgiveness.

12:

Meditate on the phrase, 'For Thine is the Kingdom.'

This sentence is in the present tense (not the future tense!)

Are we living, individually and as a church, as though we truly believe this?

What difference does this phrase make to our lives (individually and as a church) when we truly embrace it?

13:

Meditate on the phrase, 'The power and the glory'.

Are we, individually and as His church, trusting in God as all-powerful?

What difference does it make in our decision-making and our actions as a church if we hold, first and foremost in our minds, that God is all-powerful?

Where do you see His glory today?

Where and how are you shining His glory today (individually and as a church)?

14:

Meditate on the phrase, 'For ever and ever'.

Meditate on this wonderful God of ours who has been here since the beginning, and who holds our today and all our tomorrows, individually and as a church, in His hands.

What difference does it make to the decisions we make, individually and as a church, when we hold in mind that this is the *Eternal* God?

15:

After mindfully praying the Lord's Prayer, meditate on the phrase, 'Amen.' 'Amen' is not an expression to be used flippantly or carelessly. It is a serious statement, 'So be it.'

'Amen' is our resounding 'Yes' that we, individually and as a church, join with God in His vision and in bringing his power and glory into this world.

Don't say 'amen' unless you mean it!

And if you mean it, what are you, individually and as a church, going to do about it?

What is God calling you to be? What is God calling your church to be?

What will you do about that today?

I encourage you to continue in the pattern of slowly and reflectively saying the Lord's Prayer on a regular basis - that God's Holy Spirit would work in and through you, your church and your community to bring His power and His glory into this world.

Like the caterpillar that is transformed into a different and more beautiful creation, the glory of God will only become evident when we let go of life as we think it should be, and flow with His vision.

What, do you need to let go, in order for transformation to happen - in your own life? ... in the life of your church, community and your country?

As a community of God's people, let us meditatively and corporately pray the Lord's Prayer.

In what ways is God calling us - individually and as a church, community and country - to be transformed by the renewing of our minds?

Rev. Bill Mullally