

Session 4 A Conversation about Life (Chapter 6 in *The Only Prayer You'll Ever Need*)

"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"

Life is the subject in the middle of the prayer, between the three alignments and three assignments. It is a subject important to all of us. As a petition of the prayer, it includes not only the things we need or want, the stresses and pressures of our life, but also relationships and the people who are part of our life.

According to the gospel of Matthew, Jesus shared this prayer as a part of the sermon on the mount, a sermon in which he taught about how best to live. Among other things, Jesus taught the importance of living from a sense of abundance rather from a sense of scarcity. He also warned against letting anxiety steal life.

The words of Jesus seem especially on target for a harried modern world. How anxious could those Galilean fishermen have been as they sat on a hillside and listened to Jesus? In fact, the words speak across generations and circumstances to life. Jesus invited them and us to consider this: the birds and the flowers, so exquisitely beautiful, live without anxiety and God cares for them. And then the point: we are more precious still to God than the birds or the flowers. The message speaks to the concerns of every time. Do we live anxious lives or do we live with confidence that God cares for us even in the midst of challenges and pressures? These are words that speak to us. They are words of life.

Open the time with prayer, inviting God to be present, and then praying the words of the Lord's prayer through the fourth petition, concluding with the words "give us this day our daily bread."

Opening questions

When you prayed as a child what did you ask for? How have your prayers changed?

What do we want? What do we need? What's the difference?

What item(s) in your home would you be most happy to let go of? ...Why do you still have it?

Our experience

How has your relationship to your stuff changed through your life?

How has worry about not having enough impacted your life?

Do you need anxiety in your life to motivate you? What alternatives are there?

How might your life be different with less worry?

The prayer

This petition marks the first prayer specifically for "us" – not just for "me". How does that impact your understanding?

How does the context of the Exodus experience help us to understand this petition?

Have your prayers been bold enough? What would bold prayers in your life be?

How might it affect your life to pray daily through the prayer Jesus taught?

Our aspirations

How might you live more from a sense of abundance than of scarcity?

How might praying for your life be impacted by first praying the three petitions for alignment?

Is there a person who models for you how to live well? What is it you particularly admire?

How might praying this petition of the prayer encourage you to change something in your life toward others?

Close with prayer for your life and the lives of those present with you.

“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” (Matt 6:25-27).