

# Learning to pray

## session handout

In this part of *Emmaus* we will be thinking together about how Christians grow: through prayer, reading the Bible, fellowship and worship (especially through Holy Communion).

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,  
to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

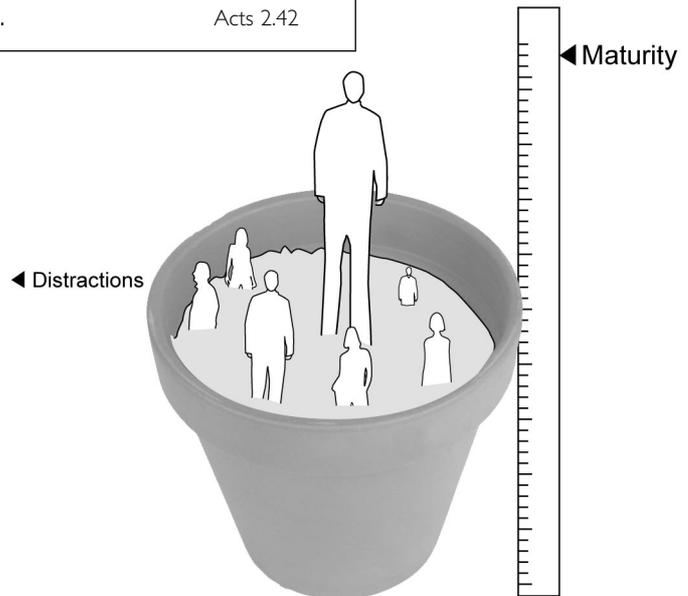
Acts 2.42

## The parable of the sower

Luke 8.1-15.

Jesus tells this story to teach us lessons about how Christians grow to maturity and what dangers and distractions to expect.

- *The seed on the path*
- *The seed on the rock*
- *The seed among thorns*
- *The seed on good soil.*



## Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11.1)

Jesus responds to the disciples' question by giving them his own prayer which is the foundation of every Christian's life of prayer:

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.



Jesus encourages the disciples to develop good habits of personal prayer...

Whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6.6

... and of prayer together:

Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. Matthew 18.20

## Some first steps

Here are some steps you can take to establish a daily time of prayer:

- Find the time.
- Find the place.
- Plan the time.

There is no single, 'right' way to pray that suits everyone. Some people use Bible reading notes as a framework. Others use a simple outline for prayer called a 'Daily Office'. The best guide is to discover what helps you and to use that.

There are different ways of planning a daily prayer time.

This is one way that many have found helpful.

Divide your time into three parts:

- preparing (through praise, confession and stillness);
- listening (through attending to Scripture);
- talking (prayers on behalf of the world and yourself).



## Praying with others

The following pointers may help:

- Keep your prayers short and to the point.
- Pray so that others can hear.
- Don't worry about how others pray.

Give your prayers a beginning, a middle and an end and finish with 'Amen'.

Be natural and persevere. Like anything else, it gets easier with practice.

## For reflection

Think about how you might develop a helpful pattern of prayer. Try to learn the Lord's Prayer by heart and pray it slowly each day, thinking carefully about the words.

