



PRAY  
FREELY



RAISE  
PASTORS



GO  
OUT



LEARN  
ALWAYS



CHURCH  
AS FAMILY

# Pray Freely.

## THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

It is worth stopping sometimes and seeing what big doctrines like justification by faith and adoption by God mean in relation to prayer.

We know from Romans 5:1 that justification by faith in Jesus results in a declaration from God of 'Not Guilty!' (put negatively) or 'Completely Right with Me!' (put positively). Therefore, we have peace with God. We also know that this justifying power begins with the work of the Holy Spirit in us, who is the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:14). By faith in the work of Jesus we are declared totally OK before God, and by the work of the Spirit we become even more than OK - we become his children! Zephaniah 3:17 says of people in this position that 'He will rejoice over you with singing'.

The Who used to sing a song called 'The Kids are Alright'. That's us. We are all right. We are God's kids, and he has said we are all right. Who could doubt him? This all happens through the work of God through Jesus and the Spirit.

But what does it have to do with prayer?

## THE WHO'S WHO OF HEAVEN

Let's start with how this justification and adoption stuff works in some of the images given to us by the bible which also happen to paint the picture of how Christian prayer works. I'll do a mash-up of these images and see if they are as moving for you as they are for me. Here we go:

Now we come into the presence of a Heavenly Father who loves to hear from us, and who holds all the love we could ever possibly need and a character that will cause us to worship Him.

We come into his presence, standing next to Jesus, our great brother who carries our name written on his shoulders just as the great high priests of Israel did. He represents us to God. He never leaves our side. When his Father sees and loves him, He sees and loves us with Him. We are just as much a part of this great Heavenly family as He is. On his hands and side are reminders of the blood that purchased our entry and washed us clean before we stepped through that heavenly door.

All this happens in a deep peace, because we have the same Spirit of Love dwelling in us that dwells in and between the Father and the Son. It's a peace that assures me that I am really meant to be in this great and heavenly room, with this Father and this Son, without any feelings of inadequacy and with every feeling of freedom. So now I come into the presence of our Father: 'bold I approach the eternal throne'.

(Ripped from: Father - Matthew 6:9; Keenness of God to hear us - Matthew 7:7-11; His available love - Hebrews 4:14-16; He being worthy of worship - Revelation 7:9-12; Jesus our brother - Hebrews 2:6-11; Jesus our high priest - Hebrews 4:14-10; Blood redemption and washing of sin - Hebrews 9:11-14; Spirit of Love - uniting us to the life of God - Romans 8:14-16; Peace - Romans 8:6, 15)

The Who's Who of heaven are obvious - God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And us. We are there too and we matter. We really, really do belong there and they delight in us. So there is every possible incentive and motivation to enjoy this peace with God by coming into his presence to speak with our Dad. This is the thing we call prayer.

Why does it often seem so hard, and feel so heavy?

Well, no-one said prayer had to be easy, but it should be free, and to prepare to pray (especially if you are leading others) it is good to know what to enjoy, and also to know what fears lurk in prayer that should be chased away.

'The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.' (Romans 8:15)

Prayer should be part of our new freedom as kids of God.

#### THE FREE PRAYER

As I read my bible, we are:

1. Free to pray for everyday basics to be given (Matthew 6:11)
2. Free to pray for his whole future kingdom to come (Matthew 6:10)
3. Free to pray in easily recognised forms (Matthew 6:9-13)
4. Free to pray in forms others may think weird or despise (2 Samuel 6:12-16)
5. Free to pray short in public (Matthew 6:7)
6. Free to pray long in public (Nehemiah 9)
7. Free to pray without performance in public, and refusing human approval (Matthew 6:5)
8. Free to pray without doubt (James 1:6-8)
9. Free to pray through your doubt (Ps. 73) I know, it seems contradictory!
10. Free to pray for the most extraordinary things (Eph 3:20-21)
11. Free to pray for the most obvious things (Matthew 6:11)
12. Free to pray in all circumstances (Phil 4:6; James 5:13)
13. Free to pray for the sick (James 5:14)
14. Free to pray with anointing oil (James 5:14)
15. Free to pray with laying on of hands (2 Timothy 1:6)
16. Free to pray in song (James 5:13)
17. Free to pray happy, sad, joyful, despairing. (James 5:13; The Psalms)
18. Free to pray Satan away (Ephesians 6:18)
19. Free to pray in tongues personally (1 Cor 14:39-40)
20. Free to pray persistently (Luke 18:1-8)
21. Free to be encouraged by God that we are praying even when we think we can't pray (Rom 8:26-27)
22. Free to call God our Father (Matthew 6:9)
32. Free to pray to Jesus (Revelation 5:12)
33. Free to pray 'in the Spirit' (Ephesians 6:18)

We have a heavenly Father that enables and frees us in so many ways to draw near to Him, through Jesus and the Spirit. This ought to give us great joy.

#### THE FEAR PRAYER

Why is prayer then, sometimes, so full of fear?

It is possible to pray badly. To pray in a way that neglects what God has done, or to pray to someone other than God, or to pray as way to gain approval, rather than enjoying being the approved kids of God. This is prayer in chains.

1. Chained prayer is fearful about performing up to scratch.
2. Chained prayer fears God's approval, as if it were a question, rather than rejoicing in it as a promise.
3. Chained prayer fears the approval of others, as if it were important.
4. Chained prayer fears uselessness and futility in our words.
5. Chained prayer fears humility.
6. Chained prayer fears people more than God so chatters to humans rather than God.

All such prayer as I have mentioned looks like prayer, but always adds something or someone to prayer, and so robs it of everything. It is 'prayer plus'. And the plus really takes away the actual prayer.

## PUTTING FREEDOM INTO PRACTISE

### Praying in Public

- a. Praying in Public Up the Front  
You are speaking to God in front of (and with) others, but you are not speaking to God and others.

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.

- b. Praying in Public in Song  
Most of our songs - many, many of them - are prayers. Not all are, but I could argue that even most of the ones that aren't we end up singing to God as prayers if our hearts are right.

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

- c. Praying in Public in Small Groups

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.

### Praying in Private

- a. Praying & Tongues

- i.
- ii.

- b. Praying & Fasting

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

## THE LAST WORD

The last word in prayer is Amen. It is 'I agree'. I pray that you agree to what you have found in this paper, though it is possible it stretches you and prompts questions.

Please do discuss these questions with other leaders at St John's. 'Amen' is too good a word to miss out on.