

## The challenge for the first 10 days...

### The big questions:

**What can I learn about prayer from the example of Nehemiah?**

**How can Nehemiah's example help me to pray?**

*For the more independent amongst us: Feel free to answer these questions by reading the book of Nehemiah, identifying the places prayer is mentioned and also considering what relates to the topic of prayer.*

### OR

*Here is a more step by step approach...*

**Read Nehemiah from chapter 1 to chapter 7, verse 5** to find where prayer is mentioned and to get an overall understanding of the story. Amongst other things, it's a great example of leading, courage, teamwork, facing opposition from outside and inside and of getting something done. Hint: chapter 1 has the most specifically about prayer- but there are other places as you go. **Highlight or note down parts to look at in more detail later.**

**When did Nehemiah pray?** That is, what provoked him to pray the prayers that we have recorded here? Would you say he heard from God?

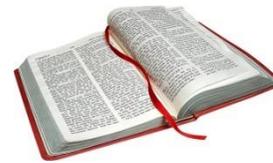
**How did Nehemiah pray?** What was his manner? Was it relaxed, urgent, intense, just words etc.?

**What did Nehemiah pray?** The content. What kind of thing - praise, confession etc. What details do you notice / find interesting / could relate to your prayer life.

**What did Nehemiah want God to do?**

Overall, what did **Nehemiah believe that God had done?** How did this relate to what Nehemiah saw as his own responsibility?

***Now think about the big questions. And see if you have anything to write on the front page as a result of all this.***



## Lord, teach us to pray

## Bible Challenge

### 40 days to grow in prayer

A verse to remember:

A challenge to work on:

An encouragement to help me:



**We talk** to a God that we cannot see. We have to relate by faith (he made it that way), believing that he is there at the other end of our conversation. Sometimes what we pray for happens, and sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes we 'feel' close to God and other times we don't. For most of us there have been times and seasons of life where praying has been easier and others where it has been more difficult.

Many of us say it's important, 'I should do it more'. It is one of the greatest generators of guilt (by our lack of prayerfulness) and also one of the greatest sources of delight known to mankind. It's a God given means to an end - receiving answers when we ask. Even more than that - it's at the heart of our relationship to the One who made us and loves us.

**Prayer is** mysterious in many ways. Mysteries are to be explored but you never have all of the answers. We have to learn to live with that. But prayer is, in a way, very simple: Talking to your Father in heaven. A conversation with God which includes speaking and listening. An encounter with the creator who wants to meet with us - and never tires of doing so if we come in faith and humility.

If we will **grow the desire to know God better** and have the **humility to say 'I want to learn'**, then prayer can take on a central place in our lives that is very special.



**Books have been written** on the subject, some of them very helpful. But rather than read an ordinary book or listen to a talk, I'm inviting you - us together - to do some **original research**: To look into God's book and see what we can find, then apply and share what we find.

**The Bible** encourages us to have belief in the God who hears our prayers. In the New Testament letter to the **Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 6** it says:

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists **and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**

So let's seek him - in the Bible and in prayer - and anticipate a reward for our labour of love.

## The proverbial elephant

You have probably heard the question, "How do you eat an elephant?" and the answer, "One bite at a time." Faced with a big challenge, **start small and keep going**. The Bible is a big book - a library of books - and the topic of prayer is huge. So, I'm encouraging us all to **focus** on two main areas for these 40 days: first, **Nehemiah** from the Old Testament, and then **Jesus** (from the Gospels).

Do make notes as you go. The detail you record is up to you, but please don't be passive and just skim read through.

We also have a significant amount of **experience** between us and I want to give an opportunity to add to the main focus by sharing the best of what we have picked up from the Bible that helps and informs our prayer lives generally.. You can use the church facebook page. (Ask Andrew Weatherly about this if you need help). We will also have a board at church to put verses and comments as we go. Please do add to it.