

**No.2 The Lord's Prayer – Our Father in Heaven**

Most of us belong to more than one 'fellowship'; be that an organisation, group, club or community. Though often based on shared interest, what is it, at base level, that we are seeking? Of all the memberships you hold, which is the most important to you?

"The most powerful narcotic in the world is the promise of belonging." (Kalle Lasn (author)). Discuss.

In answering the above questions, hopefully, both family and church featured heavily, and as Christians we have a further 'belonging' of infinite value. God has declared we are his children; He is our Father; we are part of the family of God; we belong.

**Read Psalm 103: 1-13**

David, the author of Psalm 103, offers overwhelming praise as he proclaims God's love and mercy, as he has himself experienced. Can you identify with David's words?

How would you describe the characteristics that we inherit from God our Father? Are these characteristics common across all humanity? If so, what might distinguish Christians from others?

It is accepted by most that children are most influenced by what they experience in the parental home. The heavenly family home, to which we will be going, is the perfect home. Whilst we wait for that, where are the places in this earthly life that should be attempting to replicate the 'heavenly home'? In these places, do you believe you belong and are a family member? As children of God, would you say we are each charged to be a father (and mother) figure to all in the home, or as children, that role is for someone else? Or perhaps it is possible to be in both roles?

Why does God invite us into relationship with him? Could it be another example of His careful creation of humanity and His love for us? "A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick." (Dr Brene Brown – Research Professor, writer)

Take a few quiet moments to reflect upon the above. Reflect also upon God Almighty inviting you into a relationship with him, the intimacy of which is encapsulated by His invitation to call him 'daddy'. (Rom 8: 15)

Every relationship is dependent upon communication, and with God, most obviously, that is prayer. Without communication, the relationship will fade and eventually die. "Some talk to God in their free time, others free their time to talk to God." (source unknown)

**Prayer.** *Eternal Father, the light of the minds that know you, the life of the souls that love you, the strength of the wills that serve you; help us so to know you that we may truly love you, so to love you that we may fully serve you, whom to serve is perfect freedom.* (St Augustine)

