# Sunday 19th January – Connect Group Notes

## ‘Our Father’

**Read Romans 8:14-17**

1. **How do our foundational beliefs about God shape the way we pray?** What specific truths about God’s character help you approach him in prayer?
2. **Jesus’ disciples were already familiar with prayer as part of Jewish life and practice.** Why, then, did they ask Jesus to “teach them to pray”? What do you think they were seeking from him?
3. **Jesus begins his teaching on prayer with the words “Our Father.”** Why is this so significant? What did it mean in a Jewish context? You might want to watch this video for background on how Jews addressed God: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLrGM26pmM0>.

A transcript is provided on the next page.

1. **Jesus teaches us to address God as “Father,” and both he and Paul (Romans 8) use the intimate term “Abba” (meaning “Daddy” or “Papa”).** How does this shape your understanding of prayer and your relationship with God?
2. **Romans 8 describes what God has done for us using powerful images—setting us free from slavery, adopting us into his family, and making us his heirs.** How do these images deepen our understanding of God’s love and our identity in him?
3. **Paul follows this with a discussion on sharing in Christ’s sufferings (Romans 8:17ff).** Why do you think he makes this connection? How does it challenge or encourage you?
4. **How does knowing God as a loving Father—who has set us free, adopted us, and made us heirs—change the way we approach prayer?** How does this encourage you to pray with confidence and trust?
5. **A natural response to this kind of relationship with God is gratitude.** What regular practices do you have, or could develop, to help you recognise and respond to God’s love and generosity with thankfulness?

Video Transcript:

For thousands of years, every morning and evening Jewish people have prayed these well-known words

as a way of expressing their devotion to God.

They are called the "Shema".

Hear O Israel, the LORD is our God, the Lord is one,

and as for you, you shall love the LORD your God with all of your heart,

with all of your soul, and with all of your strength.

We are going to look at the second key word here, LORD, written in all capital letters.

This is the personal name of Israel's God.

We first learned the meaning of this name in the story of Moses and the burning bush

in the book of Exodus chapter 3.

God appears to Moses and He commissions him to liberate the Israelites from slavery.

Moses wonders, what if people ask the name of the god who has sent me?

And so God responds, "Tell them EHYEH has sent me to you."

That Hebrew word EHYEH means "I will be."

In other words, God's name means that He is the one who is and who will be.

God's existence doesn't depend on anyone or anything else.

This God simply is.

But it will sound kind of strange for Moses to go say to the Israelites, "'I will be' has sent me to you."

Only God can say, "I will be."

So, in the next sentence, God tells Moses the version he should say aloud:

"'Yahweh,' the god of our ancestors, he has sent me to you.

Now that word 'Yahweh' is the ancient Hebrew form of the verb "He will be."

And this is the personal name of the God of Israel.

It appears over six thousand five hundred times in the Old Testament.

Now here is what is interesting.

Over the centuries, Israelites wanted to honor the sacred nature of this divine name.

So as they read the Hebrew Bible aloud and they came to this name, they stopped saying "YAHWEH".

And instead, they started saying the Hebrew word for "Lord" which is "Adonai."

Now this practice has been continued throughout the centuries.

And so later, when people started translating the Bible into English, they adopted the same practice.

Instead of spelling out the divine name, they translated it as "LORD" spelled in all capital letters.

Okay, you got that? Good. Because, there is more.

Ancient Jewish scribes wanted to prevent anyone from even accidentally saying this name aloud when you read the Hebrew Bible.

So they came up with a visual device to remind you to make sure you say, "Adonai".

They took the four consonant letters of the divine name.

These letters correspond to our English letters YHWH.

Then they inserted the three vowels from the word "Adonay" and combined these together

to create an artificial hybrid word which, if you pronounced it, it would say "Yahuwah".

But no Israelite ever said "Yahuwah."

It is simply a visual reminder to say the word "Adonay".

Now, it gets more interesting.

Much later, Christian scribes came along who didn't know that Yahuwah was an artificial word.

So they began to say it aloud and spell it in their writings.

This is the word that eventually entered into English as "Jehovah".

It's a word many people still use today.

But the main thing is, the word "LORD" in all capital letters is an indication of the divine name.

Don't confuse it with the word "Lord" in your English translations that's not in all capital letters.

That is the actual Hebrew word "adon" which just means "Lord" or "master".

This word can refer to people like kings or the master of a servant, even a shepherd over his sheep.

Sometimes biblical authors will use this word to refer to God,

like in the phrases "the Lord of all the earth" or "the Lord of lords".

But behind all of these words, Jehovah, Lord, Adonay, stands the original divine name of the God of Israel.

It refers to the one who was, who is, and who forever will be.