



STARTER: You will need paper and pen. Write down **your** answer to Jesus' question, fold the paper, put your initials on the outside and put it in a container in the middle.

CONTEXT: Today's passage begins with the word 'Therefore', so it's important to set it in its context. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapters 5-7, is all about the alternative life style and attitudes which should characterise Kingdom

people. Read Matthew 6 verses 19-21, and 24, aloud.

Earlier in the same chapter, Jesus has given the disciples his model for prayer. Say these words together:

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,

your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

LECTIO: Read Matthew 6. 25-34 aloud. Spend several minutes re-reading the passage in silence, digesting what Jesus is saying. Read the passage aloud again.

DISCUSS:

- Jesus has just told his disciples to call God 'Our Father in Heaven' (verses 9-13). Look at verse 26 and notice the same description of God. This means that the teaching that follows is in the context of a loving Father's care. How does this colour your response?
- Jesus had a keen and appreciative eye for the world of nature. We're fortunate to live surrounded by beautiful countryside so we can appreciate the illustrations Jesus uses. How could these be adapted, to make sense to people living in a city?
- How hard do you find Jesus' teaching not to focus on food and clothes? How is what we see on TV programmes and in the media at odds with this? Where do you stand? Are we called to be counter-cultural in these matters? How do you interpret the highlighted petition in the Lord's prayer? Do verses 19-21, which you read earlier, have a bearing on this?
- Some of us may have more cause than others, to worry about these things. How differently would I read these verses if I couldn't afford to eat and heat my house, or was having to use the Food Bank? Have you had personal experience of God's provision in difficult times?
- Are these words specifically addressed to Jesus' followers, or to people in general? Did Jesus mean them to apply in all situations? Would you dare to share these words with people who've just suffered earthquake in Morocco or floods in Libya, with loss of everything, including many family members? Many followers of Jesus are going through severe trials. So did St Paul! Look at what he says in Philippians 4. 10-13, 2 Corinthians 6. 4-10. But also see James 2. 14-17, and reflect on how aid agencies like Christian Aid and Tear Fund seek practically to channel God's care.
- Read Matthew 6 verse 33 again. What does this command mean in practice, for us? Give thanks for our mission partners, who have obeyed this command, and pray for them.
<http://www.standrewsandallsaints.org/mission-partners/>
- Verse 34 shows how realistic Jesus is. Have you tried following this advice? What is the antidote to worry, and what is its opposite? See Philippians 4. 6-7

APPLY, LEARN AND PRAY:

Take back the folded papers you placed in a bowl at the beginning. Do you want to add or change anything? Share and pray for one another in pairs. Look again at Philippians 4. 6-7, and also 1 Peter 5.7

POSSIBLE SONGS FOR WORSHIP:

Seek ye first; Great is thy faithfulness; Good good Father; Goodness of God