



#PLEDGE2PRAY

REFLECTION 1 : EXPERT TUITION!

Just imagine that when you get home at lunch time you find a message on the answer phone from Tiger Woods saying that he wants to fly you out to America to play a round of golf with you on one of America's finest courses and to give you a few pointers to help you improve your game!

Maybe you're not a golfer, perhaps you prefer cooking. Imagine if the message on the answer phone was from Gordon Ramsey and not only did he want to teach you how to cook but he would throw in a five course gourmet extravaganza! Surely any sane person would jump at the chance of getting top-flight instruction by the world's greatest master in the area of their deepest passion?

The disciples had been watching Jesus for some time. They realised that everything he did was bathed in prayer. Jesus prayed when his schedule was demanding and before he made big decisions. He prayed when he was disappointed. Mt. 14 recalls how Jesus prayed when he heard the news of John the Baptist's death. He prayed when he was worried about his friends. Lk. 22: 31-32 records him as saying, "*Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.*" And he prayed when he faced his ultimate challenge in Gethsemane.

The disciples saw that Jesus was at home with prayer. It came naturally to him. In fact the disciples would have said that prayer was the secret to Jesus' success, that it was the most significant aspect of his life and ministry. Through it Jesus was filled with peace, wisdom, power and grace.

But I guess, perhaps like many of us, the disciples struggled with prayer. So after having watched him for a long time they eventually plucked up the courage to ask him about it, to teach them to pray as he prayed. And the funny thing is that was what Jesus was waiting for them to ask. You see, God does not want us to struggle with prayer. He doesn't want us to feel guilty about it. He wants us to relish it and become experts in it.

But I wonder, how many of us actually feel like prayer experts? How many of us find our minds wandering when we try to pray and feel guilty because of it? Over the next few days as we embark upon the Global Prayer Initiative that is called "Thy Kingdom Come," I shall share some reflections which I hope will enable you to better understand the purpose and place of prayer in the life of a follower of Jesus. We will begin that process tomorrow. But for now just spend a few minutes in quiet reflection upon the words that Jesus taught us to pray that we call the Lord's Prayer. Consider what it means and has meant to you? How has God spoken to you through it? What might change in your life if you were determined to live by its words?

'This, then, is how you should pray: '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. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. **Amen.**'