

## May 2024: Thy Kingdom Come

In May this year, from Ascension to Pentecost (9<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> May) Christians around the world will pray particularly for the love of Jesus to be better known, around the world, around our communities and families, and within ourselves.

Christians pray regularly 'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done,' but maybe we reflect less often on what that means. Since it began in 2016, the annual Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative has grown into a prayer movement uniting over a million Christians in prayer around the world, in nearly 90% of countries worldwide, and across 85 different denominations and traditions. Each person, each church, is encouraged to pray in their own way, but united in the prayer 'that those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and his love for the world, will hear it for themselves and respond and follow him.'\*

But what is prayer? When I was a Street Pastor, one of the questions we were asked regularly was, 'How can I pray? Tell me how to pray.' We often used to respond that wanting to pray is itself prayer, that there are probably as many different ways to pray as there are people praying, and that if you don't know how to pray, simply tell God that you want to pray but don't know how to, and let him guide you.

Many of us may have heard prayer described as 'talking to God,' and certainly our prayer will include telling God – out loud or in silence - about the people and situations that are important to us, though God already knows everything we can tell him. But I prefer to think of prayer as a conversation with God, in the way that we may share time with a friend who knows us well. There will be times when we talk to them, time when we listen to them, and times when we are simply silent together, enjoying one another's company. But what we certainly do need, I believe, are those times when our focus is on our friend rather than on something else. I have known people who tell me that they find it easiest to pray when they are alone and silent, those who prefer to pray in a group of others praying too. Those who tell me they pray when they are washing up, or walking the dog, or dancing, or singing, or playing music, or looking at art, or making something. The list is endless, and as varied as we are.

One thing that I have learned from my own prayer life is that prayer does not usually 'just happen.' I have to set aside those times and places, where I intend to pray, and I have keep the discipline of doing so, even when prayer feels difficult, as it is at times for every Christian I have ever known. So my prayer for us all is that this year we will find something from the Thy Kingdom Come initiative that 'works' for us, that encourages us in our prayer or, if we feel we have never prayed before, encourages us to 'give it a go.'

Yours in Christ,  
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If you would like to sign up to receive the regular newsletters from churches and Christian groups across Hope Valley, please go to <https://mailchi.mp/f29b1286b3df/2t1gk3uwy2> or email me and I can sign you up.

\*quote from the Thy Kingdom Come website <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>