

Friends

Ascensiontide is upon us once again and with it "Thy Kingdom Come". Started ten years ago by the Anglican Church, it has spread from England out to over 170 countries and multiple denominations, becoming a truly global initiative. The idea is to think of five people that you would love to see come to church and pray for them every day between Ascension (Thursday the 29th of May) and Pentecost (8th of June). There are prayer and Bible Study resources that you can pick up in church, and this year we are looking at The Lord's Prayer, from which of course, the title "Thy Kingdom Come" is taken. Written by Stephen Cottrell the Archbishop of York, they will be available on the entrance tables of each church from Thursday. They are a free resource, and there are enough for you to pick up extra for any friends who might be interested.

It has been said that "Prayer first changes us; then the world." I am nervous of that definition, as it can imply that it is only humans who have any agency in the world, and ignores the truth that God still works miracles. However, it is also true that a lively and regular prayer life makes a difference to our own attitudes and behaviours and opens us up to God's calling. Perhaps also, it makes us more aware of the times when God answers our prayers. It is too easy to dismiss God's actions in our lives as coincidence or happenstance, especially when the answer comes through the actions of others. I know a Christian comic who speaks of praying that he would see a petrol station because his car had become dangerously low on petrol. He had reached a point of bargaining with God: "O God, if you will just let me find a petrol station before my car grinds to a halt, I will come to church every week." He goes on to see the petrol station and says: "Oh, it's okay thank you God. I've just found one – I don't need you after all!" It's a joke, but it is also a reminder that we can and do behave like that sometimes ourselves. We pray and

pray, and when the prayer is answered, we attribute it to almost anything but God.

Thy Kingdom Come therefore encourages us both to join with others and to re-invigorate our own prayer lives. May you find it a blessing this year.

God bless, Vicci