

God, the Father of Jesus

session handout

Lord, show us the Father

How can God reveal the full nature of his love and purpose in Christ without also jeopardizing the human capacity to choose? The answer is that he is revealed to us in Jesus. That is what this session is about: God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. Philip says to Jesus: 'Show us the Father and that will be enough for us.' Jesus answered . . . 'Whoever who has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14.9).



Whoever has seen me has seen the Father

This passage of Scripture sets the scene for thinking about our experience of Jesus as a revelation of the Father's love.

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?'

John 14.8-10

I am the way to the Father

- *The basis of Christian faith is relationship with God.*
- *As Christians we believe that God has taken the initiative in this relationship by becoming a human being. The whole story of the Old Testament prepares the way for this coming of the Christ.*
- *Therefore, if we want to know what God is like, then we must first ask what Jesus is like. Jesus is God's way to God! 'I am the way . . . to the Father' says Jesus. (John 14.6).*



St Paul wrote to the church in Philippi:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death –
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2.5-11

I am in the Father and the Father is in me

- *What do our experience of the Scriptures and our experience of Jesus reveal to us about the nature of God?*
- *What words would you use to describe God the Father as seen through the person of Jesus?*



The word Jesus used to describe God is the Aramaic word Abba, which would be best translated into English not as Father; but as Daddy. This is the intimate relationship Jesus describes. St Paul picks up the theme. When we don't know how to pray, he says, the Holy Spirit comes and prays within us, crying out – Abba, Father (Romans 8.15).

When his disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray he began with this same familiarity born of love and trust, 'Our Father in heaven ...' (Luke 11.2).

Putting it into practice

Some of us have had bad experiences of earthly fathers and mothers. This week try and focus on the good qualities of parenthood shown in Jesus' revelation of the fatherhood of God. If you are a parent, can this help in your relationship with your children? We are all children. Whether our parents are alive or not; whether we liked them or not; however good or bad our relationship with them: let us give thanks and pray for them this week with God the Father's love and concern.

