**Matthew 6:5-15**

**Big Idea:** Prayer is heartfelt conversation with God

**Purpose Then:** Challenging a twisting of prayer to a performance

**Call now:** Follow Christ’s example in prayer

This is my mobile phone, and it can do all sorts of things. I can play games on it, I can check the weather and the football scores, I can listen to music on it – I can even use it to pay for things! But when phones were first invented, the main thing they were for was just to make calls – to speak to people.

To be able to phone someone you need to have their phone number. I’ve got lots of numbers saved in my phone - I could call my Mum, I could call all my friends, you know I could even call Ali. But you see I’m quite an important person. So in my phone here, I even have the number for some very important people – let me just show you. In my phone, I’ve got the number of the England Football manager – watch! “…Hi Gareth, yes, yes I know you’re busy getting ready for the world cup, no I’m not phoning to help out, I just wanted to show all these people that I’m very important, and can call up the England football manager!” See. And you know I even have the phone number of the President of France, Emmanuel Macron (I’m going to have to speak French here). He’s in France so it takes a while. « Bonjour Monsieur Président. Non, non, je ne veux pas t’aider avec tous les problèmes en France. Je seulement veux que tous les gens ici voir que je suis très important, et j’ai le nombre du Président de France. A bientôt ! ». Ahem, excuse me.

Just now we heard [name] read us some things that Jesus said about prayer, and you know, prayer is a bit like being able to call up God, and talk to him; except you don’t need the right number, and you don’t even need a phone. He is always with us, and so we can just speak to him whenever and wherever we are! And what’s even better, is that God is even more important than the manager of the England Football team, and even more powerful than the President of France! He’s God, and we can just talk to Him!

But you know, just now when I called up the England Manager, and the president on France. I wasn’t really interested in talking to them, or hearing what they had to say, and understanding what I could do for them – no, I just wanted all of you to see how important I was, and how good I am at using French words. Jesus warned that sometimes we can turn prayer into a way of showing off. We can sometimes say prayers in front of other people so that they will see how good we are. Sometimes we try to use long words, to make our prayers sound clever. Sometimes we even try to show off to God, and try to show him that we’re really good at praying, and can use all the right words.

But Jesus said that prayer is not about putting on a show for other people or for God, but really, we can talk to him as if he was our Dad. We can tell him we love him, we can ask for the things we need, say sorry for the things we get wrong, and ask him to help us. Prayer isn’t a show for God and other people to see, but it is personal speaking with God. Isn’t that amazing!

I’m going to say a prayer now. If you want to join in and make that prayer your own you can say Amen at the end.

Our Father in Heaven, thank you that even though we are so small next to you, we can call you Father, and talk to you like our Dad. Please help us not to turn prayer into a show, but help us to remember that we can talk to you at any time, and in any way. I pray that this week we would want to speak to you more. Amen.