



TALKING WITH GOD

THE PRAYER JOURNAL OF
ST. PETER'S WOOLTON
(2 MAR 2021, ISS. 6)

“Why do Christians pray?”

Prayer is something which Christians do, some more often than others, but why *do* we pray?

Jesus prayed

It is in the gospels that we see one reason why we should pray: Jesus prayed. St. Luke particularly presents Jesus as praying regularly (e.g. 3:21; 6:12; 22:39-46). If *Jesus* saw a need to pray as he walked this earth; if *Jesus* needed to commit things to God in prayer, to seek God’s wisdom, then if I am his disciple, someone who is seeking to learn from him, and follow his example, then who am I to think that I can walk this Christian life without a reliance upon prayer?

While we often see Jesus praying in situations where others are around him (e.g. Matt. 11:25-26; Luke 9:18; John 17), Jesus also models another example about prayer: “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Luke 5:16). While a prayer to God in the midst of a busy day, or a quick, silent prayer as we are faced with a particular situation

is often necessary or appropriate, Jesus shows us that we also need regular time away from all other distractions to focus on speaking with God; and notice that I say “*with*” God, for we need to listen for his voice, as much as doing the talking.

We are God’s children

Throughout the gospels we see Jesus addressing God as “Father”, and, as his disciples approach him and say, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1), Jesus leads them to address God as *their* Father. The word translated as “Father” in our English translations doesn’t quite give the full meaning of the Aramaic word: this word more rightly should be translated as “Daddy”, because it is the word that a small child would use to address their father. So, Jesus is telling his disciples to see God as a little child sees their father. Yes, they are led to remember God’s power and holiness, and to have a proper reverence for God as they say, “hallowed be your name”, but this powerful, holy God is also their Daddy, and, as such, he has a deep concern

and love for them, his children. And, like little children, they should recognise that they have an utter dependency upon their Father for their physical needs, know that they can approach their Father for forgiveness and also for his help when they are tempted (Luke 11:3-4).

God responds to our prayers

As Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray, he also leads them to trust in the faithfulness of God in answering prayer: he speaks of a son asking his father for things to eat and asks whether a father would give the boy a snake or a scorpion. Of course, the answer is “No”; a good father would not do that, for he loves his child. In an even greater way, with an even greater love, God, our Heavenly Father, answers our prayers.

That is not say that he answers our prayers as we might like him to. But what is the greatest gift God can give us in response to our prayers? His very self, and Jesus says, “how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (Luke 11:13). What a gift to have God’s presence, the Holy Spirit, as we walk this life! The Holy Spirit who empowers us, who comforts us, who endows us with all necessary gifts!

(Rev. J. Pratt)



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers



Doing Prayer

Why not join in with the latest Deanery 24/7 prayer event? Sign up for half an hour or an hour, or commit to pray at a set time each day, joining others in our deanery as we pray for the hope which Christ brings to be more widely known in our communities:

Sharing Prayer

A prayer of the prophet Habbakuk:

*LORD, I have heard of your fame;
I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD.
Repeat them in our day,
in our time make them known;
in wrath remember mercy.*

*Though the fig-tree does not bud and
there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails and the
fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the
sheepfold and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will be joyful in God my Saviour.*

*The Sovereign LORD is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a
deer,
he enables me to tread on the heights.*

(Hab. 3:2, 17-19)