

Sunday 24th July 2022

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.
God is ever present, around us and within us,
we worship together in God.

Story Crispin the Pig who had everything ([listen here](#))

Reflect People are more important than things.
Making friends makes the kingdom.
Think what we ask God for!

Reading Luke 10:38- 42 (NRSV) ([Read here](#))

Reflection

This reading from Luke is about prayer. Prayer is consciously sharing with God our thought, concerns and ideas, and it is consciously listening for God in our thoughts, concerns and ideas. How do we know we have heard God, when our thoughts, concerns and ideas are the best they could possibly be?

Stillness can be a part of prayer. Taking time to sit and still our minds, opening them to receive ideas and even answers. To do this we need to practice going inwards, sit and breathe out fully and feel yourself relax, then listen to you own breathing and as you do so let your breathing slow and your mind empty of conscious thought, simply be. To begin with you may only manage this for a little time but with practice you will be able to hold this space for longer. When thought do intrude, don't fight them, acknowledge them and then let them go. However, if something new comes to mind let it dwell in your prayer, play with the idea does it connect with an issue you have been thinking about, is it a new aspect, sometimes just let your mind daydream in prayer. Daydreaming at other times can also be prayer, it can be your subconscious connection with God breaking in with imagination and opportunities. Not all prayer is practical.

We often think that personal prayer is silent prayer but that is not the case. Talking with God does not have to be silent, when we are wrestling with something we can have a conversation with God, a real conversation, we can make our case, preparing what we would say, and sometimes we will find ourselves with knowledge we were not aware we had, we find ourselves joining the dots and discovering a solution or new insight. It is a powerful experience.

Prayer is energy, and energy acts in a certain way. One aspect of energy is that it is relational and connective; our bodies are created from energy bound together. The very moment we think of something that though becomes a part of creation, apart of the oneness we call God. There is no need for words. Cumulative energy happens when more than one person thinks the same thing at the same time, and this is far more powerful than one person praying on their own. God is. God is creation. God is everything and everyone, knows everything, experiences everything so prayer is not about making God aware. Rather, it is about being aware of our own concerns and sharing them with God, it is about acknowledging there is a need to be concerned about. In this sharing we should explore our relationship with that need, recognise our part in its creation and our part in its solution.

Praying together should be more than listening along with someone. Praying together should begin with a conversation and agreement on what we are going to pray about together. Such prayer is about specifics not generalities. Donald Hilton called what often happens in church washing line prayers, something on which we hang out all the generalities, the poor, the hungry, the homeless, Afghanistan, Ukraine, the middle East. For example, Peace is a generality, what do we want peace to look like, where do we want peace to happen right now, what is causing a lack of peace and what can we do to remedy that.

All of life should be a prayer, a continuous awareness and conversation with God. we all long for a different world, a peaceful world where everyone has the opportunity to reach the fullness of their humanity regardless of where they were born, the colour of their skin, their gender or their ability to pay. Jesus called this Kingdom, and in when the disciples asked for their own collective prayer, Kingdom was at the heart of that prayer. In Luke 11 we read the form of that prayer and we recognise the words as a part of what we call the Lord's prayer, but the church has changed that prayer and added to it, which is a shame. This prayer is written in the plural, it is meant to be said collectively not individually.

Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.

We address God, we acknowledge God's worth and majesty, we express our desire for that longed for world. We ask God to nurture us with what we need, and we ask for forgiveness, saying that we ourselves forgive those who are indebted to us. indebted is much broader than sin or trespass, it is a reminder that love is unconditionally given, and it speaks of relationship. Forgiveness is about giving, the clue is in the word, and we are made for giving, our bodies respond when we gift things, we produce hormones that make us feel good. The final sentence is a bit of a mystery and could be attributed to the author of Luke and the time in which it was written, but it can also act as a reminder to live in the NOW rather wishing our lives away by always looking for the next big opportunity. When we suffer FOMO (Fear of missing out) than we are always in danger of devaluing the relationships we have and the opportunities we have already acknowledged.

Sometimes our prayers are limited by what we want to happen, we settle for our limited experience rather than listening for Gods creative experience and exploring new possibilities we have not dreamt of. In prayer, we can and should connect with the limitless potential of God and having connected allow creation to inspire us in our response to a situation. We are still training our imagination and so we need to connect to God's imagination.

When we live prayer then, when we see and respond to need, when we willingly share what we have, when we long for a different way, and when we do this together then we are disciples.

Jesus reminds the disciples that they are to ask, seek and knock. To ask questions and explore possible answers, to seek the best solution and to recognise the relationship of oneness in God, and to keep knocking on the doors that society slams shut, challenge prejudice, create opportunity and share the message of God's unconditional love with everyone we meet, through our behaviour. We must live the kingdom to create the kingdom.

Dom Bede Griffiths wrote, the church has no other purpose than to communicate love, to create a community of love, to demonstrate the connectedness of humanity through our behaviour and invite others to live that connectedness. This is how we will be judged, not though our creeds and doctrines.

John O'Donohue wrote, through prayer we learn to see with the eyes of the soul.

Living life as a prayer is not about shutting down on living to focus on God, it is living life in its fullness aware of God and ourselves in the world.

Try being still and listening to God

Try having a conversation out loud with God

Try doing prayer together as a conversation and then silence to all think about the same things.