

Sermon Topic: Prayer: Integrated and Interconnected by Mr Gilbert Lok
Scripture text: Psalm 118

Psalm 118

- Cited in Holy Communion
- Thanksgiving psalm
- Form of prayer set to music

1. Prayer is more than asking God for stuff

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication

God is our Friend, Master and Father, when we speak to our friends and family we don't only keep making request but we speak to them. We have a conversation with them and this is how we should be when we speak to our heavenly Father. We speak of our joy, our happiness, sadness and troubles. It is like having a conversation with a person.

Prayer is also: Waiting, Listening, Responding

2. Prayer is interconnected with community

From Psalm 118, it is not just the psalmist alone giving thanks
First part of Psalm 118

Singular: verse 6 – "In **my** constraint I called to the Lord"
Verse 28 – "You are **my** God and I will exalt you"

Plural: Verse 24- "**we** will rejoice and be glad in it"
Verse 27 – "he has given **us** light"

Matthew 6 – Jesus did say to shut your doors and to pray in secret. But the context further down in Matthew 6 (The Lord's Prayer) also suggests we are not to pray alone.... "Our Father..." Also the disciples gathered to wait for the Holy Spirit, they gathered together as a group to pray together. What Jesus meant when he said "shut the door" was to exhort pray-ers not to use prayer to show off their holiness.

Prayer is not about hitting a mark of accomplishing a goal. Prayer is conversation with God undertaken in the rhythms of community. Joining the community with a shared conversation with God.

3. What matters is that we see prayer in a holistic, integrated manner. Its not about one style versus another.

Types of praying styles – monastic chants, praying in tongues, written prayers, pray spontaneously, praying in circle, pray simultaneously, we can walk about, bow our heads, etc... the different styles of prayer have their time and place and it also depends on individual personalities how we best connect with God.

God responds to our prayer in ways that are bigger than we imagine and that are life changing.

4. Prayer is interconnected with service to God and men

CR set up a school just for the blacks and through their work in helping the blacks in South Africa, they were faced with many challenges. But through all these they still had their daily rounds of prayer, systematic prayer. This was a deep integration of prayer with service to others.

Prayer ought to integrate our inward spirituality with outward actions. Prayer interconnects our inward devotion of our soul and outward acts of service for the good of the society.

5. Prayer ought to be integrated with life's rhythms

Everyone has their different daily schedules and it is hard to gather several times a day to pray. But we can gather remotely with the help of technology.

Suggestions:

- Methodist Prayer – has several prayers for midday prayer, night prayer, morning prayer.
- Setting a common time with cell group to pray remotely
- Breath prayers – prayer that can be said in less than a minute. Set an alarm on our phones to remind ourselves to take breathe prayers. Since we always pause our activity when a whatsapp or email comes in, we can do the same for god.
- Get a book and pray with spouse or friend at regular meet ups. Leave a bible at the dinning table and prayer a Psalm at meal times.

Adapt different prayer models to specifics of our daily lives; yet also adapt our lives to be daily moulded by prayer.

Conclusion

- Pslam 118 demonstrates this truth that prayer is interconnected with our daily lives.
- Hosanna which means “save us we pray” is not a solo shout, but a communal cry.
- The bible doesn't not give us a direct reply to the struggles in life, but it does say 2 things:
 - We are allowed to struggle together, cell group to support and to pray for you and pray with you. We cannot avoid life struggles but we can avoid struggling individually.
 - Prayers can be answered by God in uncertain ways. God's answers are bigger and better than our little dreams.

Questions

1. What was one major takeaway from today's talk? How do you plan to put that takeaway into practice?

2. Are you part of a group that prays together?
 - a. If not, will you considering joining a cell group and be connected? Speak to the church office for more information.

 - b. If you are part of a group, how is your group's communal prayer life? What are some practical suggestions from today's talk that you could try in your group? What different styles of prayer could you learn from?

