



Week 6. Praying Community

- Have you ever met with others specifically to pray?
- Read John 17:6-19 (you may find it helpful to read from The Message overleaf). Jesus is praying to the Father, for his disciples on the evening before his arrest.
- Jesus speaks of having revealed various things to the disciples during his time with them. What are they?
- Jesus prays for those who will be continuing his mission in the world. What is that mission?
- Jesus sets an example in praying for his disciples. We also know that he frequently withdrew alone to pray.

Jesus can be found throughout the Gospels, praying for himself, asking others to pray for him, praying for others, encouraging his disciples to pray, he prayed alone & with his disciples.
- What is at the heart of his prayer life? Why is prayer so important to Jesus?
- How can we follow his example?
- What might be the benefits to our Church & wider community if more of us joined together in prayer?
- Read the quotes opposite. Do you agree with Keller's thoughts on prayer?
- How might meeting with someone else or others to pray be an encouragement in our walk with God?
- Look at Keller's 'touchstones of prayer' overleaf. What is your response? Do you find it helpful, challenging, interesting etc...?
- Something to think about later : your personal pattern of prayer. Do you have a daily 'quiet time', space / time for prayer, what resources do you use / need to invest in....?
- Close with prayer for each other.

Christian Community

'Prayer is the only entryway into genuine self-knowledge. It is also the main way we experience deep change ~ the reordering of our loves. It is the way we know God, the way we finally treat God as God.' (p.18)

'If we give priority to our outer life, our inner life will be dark & scary' (p.22)

'Prayer is awe, intimacy, struggle ~ yet the way to reality.' (p.32)

"Prayer is continuing a conversation God has started through his Word and his grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with him.' (p.48)

'Prayer turns theology [learning about God] into experience [of God].' (p.80)

[All quotes above : Timothy Keller : Prayer, Experiencing Awe & Intimacy With God : Hodder : 2014]

Helpful Resources to enhance Prayer

A dedicated time & place

Time alone and / or with other Christians eg. Parish Prayers

Daily Bible Readings - a wide variety & approach available both as booklets or online eg. YouVersion App.

Use of an App on a phone / tablet eg. Pray as You Go, Sacred Space, Taketime Spiritual Meditations

Times of Retreat - dedicated time alone with God.

Use of tangible objects ie. holding cross, icons, candle, music



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The Message John 17:6-19

I spelled out your character in detail
To the men and women you gave me.
They were yours in the first place;
Then you gave them to me,
And they have now done what you said.
They know now, beyond the shadow of a
doubt,
That everything you gave me is firsthand from
you,
For the message you gave me, I gave them;
And they took it, and were convinced
That I came from you.
They believed that you sent me.
I pray for them.
I'm not praying for the God-rejecting world
But for those you gave me,
For they are yours by right.
Everything mine is yours, and yours mine,
And my life is on display in them.
For I'm no longer going to be visible in the
world;
They'll continue in the world
While I return to you.
Holy Father, guard them as they pursue this
life
That you conferred as a gift through me,
So they can be one heart and mind
As we are one heart and mind.
As long as I was with them, I guarded them
In the pursuit of the life you gave through me;
I even posted a lookout.
And not one of them got away,
Except for the rebel bent on destruction
(the exception that proved the rule of
Scripture).
Now I'm returning to you.
I'm saying these things in the world's hearing
So my people can experience
My joy completed in them.
I gave them your word;
The godless world hated them because of it,
Because they didn't join the world's ways,
Just as I didn't join the world's ways.
I'm not asking that you take them out of the
world
But that you guard them from the Evil One.
They are no more defined by the world
Than I am defined by the world.

Make them holy—consecrated—with the truth;
Your word is consecrating truth.
In the same way that you gave me a mission in
the world,
I give them a mission in the world.
I'm consecrating myself for their sakes
So they'll be truth-consecrated in their mission.

What It Is

Work	Prayer is a duty and a discipline.
Word	Prayer is conversing with God.
Balance	Prayer is adoration, confession, thanks, and supplication.

What It Requires

Grace	Prayer is "In Jesus' name," based on the gospel.
Fear	Prayer is the heart engaged in loving awe.
Helplessness	Prayer is accepting one's weakness and dependence.

What It Gives

Perspective	Prayer reorients your view toward God.
Strength	Prayer is spiritual union with God.
Spiritual Reality	Prayer seeks a heart sense of the presence of God.

Where It Takes Us

Self-Knowledge	Prayer requires and creates honesty and self-knowledge.
Trust	Prayer requires and creates both restful trust and confident hope.
Surrender	Prayer requires and creates surrender of the whole life in love to God.

The Touchstones of Prayer from Timothy Keller (2014 : P.141)