

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

April 28, 2019 - Prayer

Scripture: Ephesians 5:18-22 New International Version (NIV)
18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Congregational Prayer: "Our Father"

Our Father, Which Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven. Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread, And Forgive Us Our Trespases, As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil. For Thine Is The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory. Forever And Ever. Amen

Message: "Prayer 15: Prayer Strategies:1"

Introduction:

- I am surprised - today, I received a letter from my cat - from my cat of all things. Here is what she wrote to me: "Dear.. You It's me, the Cat. Notice that I did not start this letter by saying, "Dear owner." If you think you "own" me... Then we do have a whole lot more to talk about, now don't we! And I do love our are long, heart-to-heart talks, when I can find all sorts of ways to do mischief, like wake you up all night, or decorate the back of the nice couch, until we figure out who the real boss is. But that's not what I wanted to talk to you about. Let me get to the point by talking to you about my tough week as a cat in the Stead household. You would not believe how difficult it is for me to have to wait to get my food from you twice a day. I have to sing, dance, run

after you, and make a tremendous amount of noise just to get my food. Do you really think that this is a good idea? Life is already tough for me as a cat,. So, don't you think that I should have my food available 24 hours a day? And our play times - why do you get to pick them? Don't you think that I should be able to play with you anytime that I am finished my nap, like midnight, for instance? As soon as I'm ready to play, you'd better be there with at that laser light thing, or a scratchy post thing, and a bunch of squeaky toy type things, or again, we'll have to have a little talk, won't we? Now, the main reason for me to talk to you today has to do with my difficult day. Maybe you don't realize how hard it is to sleep for 20 hours every day. It is tough to find the right location, the right position, and the right mood to sustain such a rigourous sleeping schedule. Therefore, when I get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to sing you my love songs, and to play with my squeaky toys, and to ask for some food, well... Hello... I can't figure why you don't think that's wonderful. I have learned how to sing Celine Dion, and Kenny Rogers, and one or two songs from AC/DC, and all I ask at 4 o'clock in the morning is an appreciative audience. You can do better. Signed the cat of this house.

- Honestly, my cat did not really write this note, but one look at her will tell you that is what she would write if she could. She would tell you that I have a duty to do, a job, centred on her.
- Aren't you glad that our God is not that demanding? God is not a God of "must do's" and "must be's." But the Lord does expect a high standard from us all - and prayer is one duty that we must take seriously. Today, we shall do the first of two sermons as we finish our three months of looking at prayer by ask ourselves about praying strategically.

Part 1: Becoming A house of Prayer for All Nations.

- Can we, as a Church of the Living God, accept the challenge, individually and as a Church body, of becoming a house of prayer for all nations? Can we accept the challenge of remembering that specific prayers leads to specific answers? Can we leave here today ready to know and to remember that God responds to specific prayer lifted strategically to His throne of grace?
- God wants to use our prayers to bring people to salvation, and to grow in Christ Jesus their Lord. Can we accept the challenge of developing a prayer strategy? How? How can we develop a prayer strategy? How can

we pray for family and friends? The goal is to bathe your world in prayer. Pray scripture over your family that they would find their roots, their faith in God. Pray for their success and pray that your family and friends would be guarded against evil. Pray for your Church and your community leaders. The more time you spend in prayer the more you will develop a hunger, a thirst for it, even a burden as you begin to see the power of God in your life.

- Jeremiah 29:13 says that if we seek God we will find Him if you seek with all our heart.
- Next, let me encourage you to prayer specifically for two main groups of people in your life:

Part 2: Praying for believers:

- God has given us brothers and sisters in Christ and we need to remember them in prayer. We want what is best for them. Here are six ways to pray from your Christian brothers and sisters:
 1. Pray for their physical needs. 3 John 2 says: *"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."* Have you met someone who ignores a physical need, like hunger, and tries to take on a person's spiritual

needs? Can you address a person's spiritual needs if they are hungry or thirsty? We all need around 2500 calories every day, and we all need between 2 and 3 litres of water every day. If you don't eat or drink, it is really hard to think. Praying for **physical** needs will help open the door to **spiritual** needs. When we pray for others heading for surgery, or for their aches and pain, when we ask God to care for them, we show we care. People don't need to care how much you know, people need to know how much you care.

2. Pray for their spiritual condition: Ephesians chapter 1 and chapter 3 has specific prayers for believers in the Church of Ephesus. Would you pray for others to grow everyday in their walk with Jesus? Would you pray for them to learn to pray, to learn to read God's Word, learn to successfully navigate school or work as a believer?

3. Pray that they would know the love of God. Philippians 1:9-11 (NIV) says: *"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."*

4. Pray for believers' hearts. The parable of the four soils from Luke 8 reminds us that God's mighty, powerful Word needs us to ask God for a pure heart, ready to receive His Word. Can we pray for believers in our life to get rid of stones, and thorns and hardness to have a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26)?

5. Pray that God would do a deep work in their heart. Remember: Jesus tells the parable of the friend who arrives at midnight (Luke 11:5-8) and is taken care of. We know a God who can meet our needs.

6. Thank God for the great things other believers are doing for you and for the kingdom of God.

Part 3: Praying for non-believers (not-yet believers)

1. Pray for them to know Christ and to have salvation. The apostle Paul said that knowing Jesus is the greatest thing in your life: Philippians 3:8 says: *"What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ."*

Matthew 9:36-38 has a very tired sounding Jesus looking as at all the people: *"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then*

he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Be careful how you pray this request: your asking someone to know Jesus may involve you getting out of your comfort zone, standing tall for Christ as your Saviour, and telling your family or your friends or even that stranger the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.”

2. Ask God to raise up believers around those who need Christ. Again, this might be you. Or it is you praying: “Lord, I give my son to you in college. Send other believers in to his path today that he might see your love in them.” The Apostle Paul has Ananias who accepted him and healed him of his blindness in Acts 9. God can send the right person, through prayer, to those you love, to those who need to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

3. Pray for the messengers of the gospel that your loved ones, and friends may hear the Good News. The most quiet and unknown person may well hold the key to unlocking you family or friend’s heart to God. It may come as a full sermon-length message, or as an act of loving-

kindness that is wordless. “God please send Your messenger.” We need to pray that our families and friends would hear, listen and accept what is being told. It really is Good News.

4. Pray for pastors and evangelists to speak the truth in love. Especially those who receive media time. Those who are influential. Those who write books or are on the radio, even the news. Let their message be the truth of God for all to hear, just as Rev. Billy Graham did his entire life.

5. Pray for God to fill us with His Holy Spirit that we can be His witnesses wherever we go (into all the world (<Matthew 28:19-20). It’s time for you to go. You say: “No way!” God says make your life a walking testimony of His goodness, of His saving grace and of His loving-kindness.

Conclusion:

- My cat and I are due for one of our talks later this month, the way she is acting up right now. I have a duty to treat her well as her owner.
- And I have a greater duty to serve the Lord well, especially when it comes to prayer. Will you be serious about making a plan to pray for your not-yet believer friends and family? Will you pray for the kingdom of God to grow as the Good News of Jesus Christ reaches across the

globe and across the street? Will you stand with believers using the most powerful gift God has given to you, and will you pray?