

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

January 6, 2019 - Communion Sunday

Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-21 (NIV)

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

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 1: Devoted to Prayer: 1”

Introduction:

- Did you know that the believers in early centuries of the

Church of Jesus Christ prayed with their faces toward God?

They looked to the heavenly father, and they lifted their

hands in praise and in surrender. But let me tell you about the

Homage ceremony. Homage in the Middle Ages was the ceremony in which a feudal tenant or vassal pledged reverence and submission to his lord. The vassal was, literally, his man (homme). And yet “homage” could only be given to one single ruler, as he pledged to be “his man.”

Imagine now a 13th century castle, with a king on the throne, and a line-up of people to fall before him. On his knee, the vassal would fall before the king. And, as a sign of

submission the vassal would place his hands out for the king to put his hands around the vassal's. This posture for an

earthly king caught the attention of Christians who felt that the King of Kings, Jesus, deserved such homage and more.

Therefore Christians started to fall into the posture when we came to God in prayer.

- Let me ask you the first of several questions today: do we pay homage to God when we pray? Do we look at God in

prayer with joy or as a chore? Let's spend the next several weeks becoming devoted to prayer, beginning with 5 questions this communion Sunday.

Body - 5 Prayer Questions

Question 1. How does prayer make you feel? Why? How does praying out loud with others make you feel?

- When I was a student living in Kitchener I was called to the home of a father for whose son I had just performed a funeral. He was distraught. He was a huge man, muscular and tough skinned, like the leather he wore. That dark night, his anger flared as he poured out his frustration about his son's death. He told me that he had a rifle in his car in the driveway, as he talked about his past with drugs and assaults. I did not seem to get too far in my talks with him, but when it was time to go, I asked if I could pray for him. Reluctantly he agreed. I opened my mouth and wondered if anything

would come out. I struggled for words as I cried out to God to lead my voice. And yet when I said "Amen," I felt that I just could not do enough. Until I looked at that rough man. Tears were flowing freely down his face. Sobs were consuming him. And he said that he has seen God. That is the power of prayer.

Question 2. What amazes you about prayer?

- Do you remember the wooden telephone on the wall? What about talking to the operator to call long distance - just to the next city! Do you remember the rotary dials on the phones? What about when they came and changed the telephone jacks and the telephone so you could plug them in? Do you remember your first cell phone - the big box? And now the things our smart phones can do that too will one day be seen as obsolete! I love the fact that I can now reach into my pocket and call anywhere in Canada at any time. I love

contacting my son in Norway as if he is across town. It's so portable. But it still has limits, like cell towers and internet connections. What I love the most about prayer is its complete portability. Any time. Any where. I can dial press the "on" button, the "power" button and talk directly to the Living God. Better still, since God is always there, he is always on the line. What amazes me the most about prayer is that He is always talking with me.

Question 3. How do you define prayer?

- I met Linda as a pre-teen, but we not date until we are adults. I never thought I would be able to conquer the wonderful Linda Pollock. And yet, there I was, talking to her as more than a friend. Our relationship started with talk - we had conversations. She would speak, I would listen. I would speak she would listen. To this day hearing her voice is one of the highlights. Now what would happen if our

relationship had no communication? How would it even start? How would we stay close if we never speak to each other? What is prayer to God? Having a relationship with the Lord of the Universe as we speak and listen to Him. Think about this: we get to talk, to have a conversation, with the Great I am. We can come before the one who created everything. We can talk to One who knows all, sees all, and is all. We can come to the One who is perfect in love. We can know the Truth, and the truth shall set us free. We can come in prayer to the One who knows the future - your future and the future of world. What a privilege it is to pray to God.

Question 4. If God compiled a list of the top five prayers He hears, what do you think would be on that list?

- When we were doing youth ministry we were teaching the junior youth how to pray. One young man was having a tough time trying to find words of prayer, and in particular,

how to pray out loud. We taught, encouraged, and simply asked each young person to pray just one sentence before the group. We got off to a good start, and then we came to our struggling boy. He paused, took a deep breath, and then simply said: “Thank God for my dog!” It was the most beautiful prayer I have ever heard. It was heartfelt, sincere, and right to the heart of God. That is prayer.

Question 5. When and how do you pray now?

- This week I was talking to a cousin from out west. She told me about how she is a new grandmother - of twins boys. But then she said, “But a month ago there were complications. We had to do a lot of praying.” We will talk more about spontaneous and scheduled prayers, but let me just say this: just pray. When and how? Just pray.

Conclusion:

- US Olympian Michael Phelps told CNN that he practices

every single day in the pool for three to six hours, and then did dry land exercises four to five days a week. Before the 2012 London Olympics, athletes reportedly put in 10,000 hours of practice before they came to the games. That is devotion.

- Before we gather together and partake of this table of communion, I want to ask just one more question: can we challenge ourselves to be devoted to prayer in 2019 here at FBC? Are you ready to devote yourself to pray to God?