

October 14, 2007; Intergenerational Worship
1 Chronicles 29:11-13; Colossians 3:12-17; Matthew 6:9-13
First Parish UCC, Brunswick
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Being Prayerful

Being Prayerful – being full of prayer means paying attention to God’s presence in all parts of our lives. It might be while we’re walking or running. It might be while we’re playing with a friend in the backyard. It might be while we’re helping to build a new house for someone through Habitat for Humanity. We might be thinking directly about God or we might not. Yet, as we grow in faith we seek to have our spirits become more attuned to God’s Spirit at all times.

One of the ways we become more attuned is to think about it and to use words to help us focus on God’s Spirit. Jesus’ disciples asked him to give them words to pray and he gave them what we call the Lord’s Prayer. Like the Ten Commandments, this prayer begins with sentences that have to do with loving God and follows with thoughts about loving neighbor. This prayer expands on the great commandment to love God and love neighbor.

The Lord’s Prayer is the central prayer of the Christian community. The church has been using this prayer for over two thousand years. In fact there is probably someone, somewhere in the world, saying this prayer every moment of every day. Even when we are asleep, people in other parts of the world, where it is daylight, are saying this prayer. Imagine that! A continuous saying of this prayer for hundreds and thousands of years.

Yet, each new young person must learn the prayer. It can be confusing for young children who are trying to put all the words together and to understand what they mean. Christine Dye in a “Reader’s Digest” entry told this story: *I had been teaching my three-year-old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord’s Prayer. For several evenings at bedtime she repeated it after me.*

One night she said she was ready to solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer. “Lead us not into temptation,” she prayed, “but deliver us some e-mail. Amen.”

Caitlin wasn’t familiar with the word evil so she used a word she knew that sounded like it. How creative! It takes time to learn and understand this prayer. If we are honest, even those of us who have been saying it for dozens and dozens of years are still learning new things about the prayer, about ourselves, and about God all the time.

One of the ways we think about prayer is to see it as a conversation with God. However, one of the challenges with this is that God’s answers are usually not direct. I’ve often heard people say that they wish God would just talk directly to them so it would be clear. Do we really wish that? The Youth Group spent some time last Sunday imagining what it would be like if someone was saying the Lord’s Prayer and God answered directly, in a voice or voices that you could hear. They are going to share with us now what they imagined.

*Lord’s Prayer Dialogue
(See script below. Presented by the youth.)*

It is profound. Even though we had one person saying the prayer this is not a “you and me God” prayer. It begins with the word “Our.” Whenever we say this prayer we bring each other, we bring our friends, and even those we don’t like, with us. In other words, we bring the whole world to God in prayer, when we say “Our.” So let us be prayerful and join our hearts and voices in saying the Lord’s Prayer...

Our Father...

Lord's Prayer Dialogue

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*(P: person praying; G(s): God voices speak together; G 1: one God voice;
G 2: another God voice; G 3: third God voice.)*

P: Our Father, who art in heaven,

G(s): Yes?

P: Our Father, who art in heaven,

G(s): Yes?

P: Who is that?

G 1: God

P: God?

G 2: God

P: God (*surprised*)

G(s): God! (*firm*)

P: Don't mess with me. Who are you really? Guys, this isn't funny!

G 3: It isn't meant to be funny.

P: All right wise guy. If you are really God, why do you have so many voices?

G 2: Because I appear in many voices

G 3: many forms

G 1: many metaphors

G3: But ultimately,

G(s): I am one.

P: This is getting weird. Ok. God(?) who art in heaven,

G(s): yes?

P: Don't interrupt me. I'm praying. Leave me alone.

G 2: But you called me.

P: I didn't call anyone. I'm just praying.

G 3: You said, “God, who art in heaven.” Well, here I am.
P: I didn’t mean anything by it. I was just saying my prayer like I always do.
It’s part of my routine.
G 2: Allrighty then. Go right on ahead with your “routine.”
P: Hallowed be thy name....(*hesitate*)
G(s): continue....
P: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread...
G 1: What do you think about that?
P: I think it is pretty self explanatory. I’ve had my PB & J today. It’s all good.
Can I move on now?
G 2: No, you may not. This is not just about you and your daily carb intake.
Look at the big picture.
P: Say what?
G 3: Excuse me?
P: Sorry, what did you mean by the big picture?
G 1: I meant you are not the only person in this world. Think about all those
who didn’t get PB & J today and tonight have to go to bed on an empty stomach.
P: I guess you have a point.
I’ve never thought about that when saying this prayer before.
(*Pause*)
G 2: Good. You are opening your mind. Now, we are getting somewhere.
Please continue.
(*Pause*)
G 1: Any day now, junior.
P: Well, I’m kind of afraid to go on.
G 3: Afraid?
G 2: Afraid of what?
P: Of what you will say next.
G 3: Try me and see.
P: Give us this day our daily bread. (*then fast*)
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
G(s): PAUSE!
G 1: Rewind.
G 2: Hold up, cowboy
G 3: I wanna talk about this one.
P: See! I knew you were gonna stop me!
G 3: Well, this is the most interesting line.
P: Really? Why?
G 2: Why don’t you like it?
P: It doesn’t pertain to me. I haven’t borrowed or loaned money recently.
I don’t owe any money.
G 2: This isn’t that kind of debt, chief.
P: Then what is it about?

G 1: It is about owing....forgiveness.
G 2: It is about moving forward.
G 3: ..the possibility of a better future.
G 1: ..new beginnings
G 2: ..second chances
G 3: ...grace
P: Stop. That's enough. I get it.
G 1: Are you sure? I got more. I'm just getting started.
P: No. Really. I'm OK. Honestly.
G 2: Exactly! It's about being honest!
G 3: Especially to yourself. Because if you can't forgive,
you stay bound to the past and all the pain that that entails.
(pause)
P: That's profound. *(heartfelt)*
G 1: And you aren't even done yet. Come on, champ.
P: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil....
(pause)
G 3: Take it home, skipper.
P: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
G 2: See? Now that wasn't so hard. You're finished.
(pause)
P: I don't think I'll ever be finished. *(sincere)*
G 1: Now...
G(s) ...that's profound.