

Notes from After the Sermon Is Prayer Your Steering Wheel or Your Spare Tire?

Have you had a friend who was once really close but then moved away or you both got busy with your own lives to where you were left with (maybe) just catching up once a year when the obligatory Christmas cards were exchanged. God does not want that type of relationship with us – he wants to be a friend, a confidant, a rock for us in times of trouble.

Our Scripture reading from 1 Kings 3:3-14 provides a template for prayer. A young King Solomon is asked by God, “What shall I give you?” Think of the thoughts that must have raced through Solomon’s mind? Health, wealth, an unbeatable army, greatness like his father King David? What would go through your mind if God asked you that question? What was Solomon’s prayer?

“A” – First, Solomon gave God adoration or praise. He praised God for the love shown to his father and himself. Adoration means starting your prayer, not with what you want, but with a recognition of what God means to you. If you want to start with poetry open your Bible to the Psalms and start your prayer there. If not, just take a couple minutes to acknowledge God’s presence in your life.

“C” – Second, Solomon confessed that he wasn’t up for the job of being king, he wasn’t qualified, he wasn’t ready. Confession means acknowledging you don’t have all the answers – in fact you don’t even know all the questions. Let God know that you know your weaknesses. It’s kind of a reality check.

“T” – Third, Solomon gave thanks to God that he is part of a chosen people, a people chosen by God. Thanksgiving is where you can thank God that He allows for prayer and that He answers prayer – perhaps not always as we would want, only He can see the end.

“S” – Finally, Solomon got around to his supplication (his request) where he prays for wisdom, an understanding mind to govern God’s people and the ability to discern between good and evil. Then and only then do we get to supplication. Asking God for His mercy, His healing touch, His presence, His hand on our lives to help us live better, be better, do better.

“ACTS” can be a pattern for our daily prayer. ACTS first of all means “action” – it’s like playing a sport, you have to practice to improve. So just start by praying!!! Pray even when it’s hard. Your mind may wander at first, but keep at it. Prayer is a conversation with the God who created you, loved you before you were born, loves you now despite all your faults, and gave His Son for you.

Last Sunday, I issued a 21-day challenge, 21 days to form a new habit, a habit of setting aside at least 15 minutes each day for prayer or adding some additional time if you are already praying. If you will join in the challenge, mark your calendar today. Schedule 15 minutes a day, at the same time every day, and in the same place, to “just” pray.

The sermon question asked, is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire? Does prayer direct the course of your life or is it something you get out of the trunk only when you need it? If it's in your trunk then you will never develop a relationship with God that will enable you to truly believe that God hears and answers prayer. So, let us pray!

Pastor Denise

