

Prayer Thoughts – Neighborhood Gatherings Mar – Apr 2000

From the *Lutheran* (March 2000) "10 Ways to Improve Your Prayer Life."

1. Learn to Pray –
 - A. By watching others you respect.
 - B. By listening to God and other Christians.
 - C. By surrendering our lives and wills to God – ala Jesus at Gethsemane
2. Center Yourself with One Word –
 - A. Meditation focusing on contemplative prayer. Using one word to focus.
 - B. This is an action of relaxation and opening oneself to what God has to teach.
 - C. It involves a choosing to take time apart and be alone with God.
 - D. Check it out on the Web at – www.contemplativeoutreach.org
 - E. Our ChristCare groups present such an option.
3. Pray without Ceasing –
 - A. Use daily life activities as a springboard to prayer.
 - B. When you see an ambulance, as you workout, as you drive, while you walk, etc.
 - C. Prayer can happen anywhere, anytime – Must practice ceaseless prayer.
4. Log On –
 - A. Check out this site for prayer! www.sacredspace.ie
 - B. Find Internet sites with notes and guides to prayer.
 - C. May seem strange at first, can lead to the ceaseless prayer.
5. Acquire (and use) a Moravian Daily Texts 2000 –
 - A. A book printed by Moravian Church (with whom we have an agreement).
 - B. Check it out at www.dailytext.com.
 - C. Offers Bible text and some things to think about for each day of the year.
 - D. Check out our Lenten Devotional as an example of what else is available.
6. Take Your Work Break at Faith @ Work -
 - A. Joint venture between of two Chicago-area Lutheran Churches.
 - B. Contains short meditations suitable for a coffee break at work.
 - C. To subscribe email to: joy@mw.sisna.com
7. Teach Our Children –
 - A. Allow children to experience and explore prayer via creative opportunities.
 - B. One church uses a *Mukuia Mass* – with stations of prayer the whole family joins.
 - C. You can help out at St. Luke by volunteering in many ways.
8. Draw Your Prayers –
 - A. This is not an exercise in art. It is a chance to experience things differently.
 - B. Allows expression to flow through image and language, which can be powerful.
 - C. This can open mind and consciousness in new and unexpected ways.

9. Phone Your Prayers –
 - A. The article tells of two famous authors who do not let distance separate them.
 - B. Prayer Partners don't have to be in the same time zone, just connected.
 - C. Use your phone. email, cell phone to keep in touch with other pray-ers!

10. Look to the ELCA for resources –
 - A. ELCA has hired Brent Dahlseng to coordinate praying efforts nationwide.
 - B. The ELCA will establish "prayer schools" to share ideas and opportunities.
 - C. Hope is to equip the saints to spread the word about prayer.
 - D. Feedback and information can be fed through Brent Dahlseng at: bdahlseng@elca.org

Now, here's what I have to say about prayer.

Jesus gives us the things we need to know about prayer in many different places, so let's take a sampling!

1. Matthew 6:5-8

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

2. Matthew 5: 44

"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

3. Mark 14:37-38

"Jesus came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

4. Luke 18:9-14

"He also told this parable... "Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man, went down to his house justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

5. John 17: 20 – 21a

Jesus is praying and says, "I pray not only on behalf of these (the twelve disciples), but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one."