

HEARTBEATS – Staying Connected

6/4/2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

As Christians, we are called to and often given the opportunity to pray for others. In fact, we should be offering to pray for others, asking the question, “How can I pray for you?” There are so many who would be deeply touched to know that someone is praying for them, or to have someone actually pray for them in the moment. It can be uncomfortable at first, but to take someone’s hand and pray out loud for their need, or hope, or reason for rejoicing is both a powerful witness to our faith and a wonderful blessing to give to someone else.

Ephesians 6:16 advises, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for the Lord’s people.” Often, we only think to pray when there is a need. “On all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” reminds us that there are many opportunities to pray each day. In addition to the prayers for the needy, the sick, the suffering, the hurt, or others, we should be looking for other times when we might pray. When someone shares good news or has something joyful happen, or when a loved one returns home safely, or when a task is completed—these and many more can also be times for prayer.

When another is in a health or situational crisis, sometimes, all we know is that this person would like prayers. Yet, we may not know the details of the person’s need. That may be frustrating, but it should not stop us from praying. Romans 8:26 says, “We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us.” In other words, when we don’t know the specifics of someone’s situation, we can remember that God does. We need to be respectful of the privacy of others who may not want to share the specifics of why they are having surgery, or need help, or are asking for prayers. In these cases, when we pray, we can know that the Holy Spirit will fill in the details for us. All we need do is offer the name of the person for whom we are praying.

The Ephesians passage above also encourages us to “be alert and always keep on praying.” How might we do that. First, simply look around you.

There is so much in creation for which we can pray. By observing the world around us, we also will become more aware of moments to pray for needs or to rejoice for others. And if you feel called to pray, but just don't have an idea for that prayer, here are some suggestions:

- Pray the scriptures. Reading the Bible can give us guidance and direction.
- Pray for the Lord's will to be done. This can be especially helpful when we don't know needs or what is the best outcome in a dilemma.
- Pray for wisdom. When you have a hard decision to make, wisdom and discernment are good things for which to ask.
- Pray for daily bread. What are the things that you need for this day or week?
- Pray for repentance. Take a moment for personal inventory and then seek God's forgiveness for those places in which you have fallen short.
- Pray for the salvation of others. You can do this in general, or for a specific person who does not know the Lord. You can also ask for God to use you in helping to bring that person to faith.
- Pray for spiritual growth. We all can use more of what God has to offer.
- Pray for unity. Whether it be in our church, our family, our community, our nation, or our world, God desires that all might be one in our concern for each other.

Prayer is an essential activity for all who believe. It is an act of faith that shows our trust in God. It is a way of helping others in need, especially when there seems to be nothing else we can do. And it is a way for us to keep our mind on God and on seeking to do God's will.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey