

## HEARTBEATS- Staying Connected 10/25/2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

***ONE AT ONE*** – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, October 26 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for the people of Afghanistan who face one of the world's most acute humanitarian crises. Ask God to provide sources of food to prevent malnutrition. Pray for the impoverished who are digging through trash to find something for themselves and their children. Ask that humanitarian assistance programs receive funding that can provide comfort and support to the many who are victims of the transfer of power in their country.*

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Do you expect great things of God? Does it even cross your mind that God will and does accomplish the amazing and unexpected? There is plenty to be cynical about in our world, but we should not let that limit how we imagine God might act.

The Bible tells us that prayer is one of the most powerful things we can do. Over and over, the Bible gives examples of people who prayed and saw the greatness of God's grace and love. Daniel prayed when he was thrown into a lion's den, but was kept safe through the night until his release in the morning (Daniel 6:1-23). Paul and Silas were chained in prison, so they prayed, and God responded to their prayers with an earthquake that broke their chains and opened the jail cells and set them free (Acts 16:16-40). Jesus prayed before He walked on the water (Luke 14:23-25). The early Christians prayed when Peter was arrested, and an angel freed him and led him out of the prison (Acts 12:4-11). Abraham prayed for Abimelek, and he and his wife and the females of his household were healed so that they could bear children (Genesis 20:17). Over and over, people prayed, and God acted to benefit God's people.

Still, we tend to dismiss these stories as "back then" or "people in the Bible." Yet we are also people, chosen and called by God just as they were. The Bible doesn't often tell us what these people were saying when they prayed, reminding us that there is no set formula that we are to repeat. There are no "right" words, which means there are no "wrong" words for our prayers, either. The only thing we are told to do is ask. Jesus even says, "*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*" You don't have to use formal words. You can even just talk—have a conversation with God about the situation. The only two mistakes we make are to fail to pray, or to pray without expectation.

God always answers prayer. Sometimes, the answer is "yes;" sometimes it's "no;" and sometimes it's "wait." Sometimes when the answer is "yes," the reply doesn't come the way we expected. God, who knows what is best, sometimes gives us differently from what we hoped, but always in the ways that are most excellent. So, when you pray, do so with expectation. Believe that God is going to answer. And then look to see how God is responding to your prayers. What great miracles or outcomes are coming from God? What amazing things

is God doing in reply to your prayers? Believe in the One who creates everything out of nothing and for Whom, nothing is impossible.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey