**About prayer…**

Conversation 2

Sometimes our prayer life can seem a little stale. We never want to admit it, but it’s more common than we think. When we feel a bit “stuck” in the same old routines, it can be helpful to consider different forms of prayer. There is no one way to pray and it’s far more than presenting a list of requests to God. Who can even define prayer? It’s so many things but, very broadly, it’s interacting with God and trying some new form of prayer can often revitalize our communion with him. We are used to praying in song, particularly when we meet together:

Build your kingdom here,

Let the darkness fear,

Show your mighty hand,

Heal our streets and land… is something we often ask of God.

Of the many different forms of prayer, only three are suggested here: praying the Scriptures, praying in silence and praying with nature.

**READ**

The following are all prayers from King David.

*Psalm 139:23 & 24*

*Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

*Psalm 139* speaks of God’s intimate knowledge of us, including our thoughts. David’s earnest desire is to be pure in thought, word and deed.

***If you are wondering if God is aware of your circumstances, you might like to read the whole of Psalm 139 for reassurance.***

*Psalm 51:10-12*

*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

*Psalm 51* is an expression of remorse and a desperate plea for cleansing. David’s sin has spoiled his close relationship with God and he longs for restoration.

***If you have lost the joy of Jesus that you once knew, this prayer might help you, particularly as your Life Group friends support you .***

*Psalm 145:1 & 2*

*I will exalt you, my God and King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.*

*Psalm 145* is an outpouring of praise to God, for all he is, does and makes possible.

***If you are just blown away by the goodness and grace of God, and you’re running out of words to praise him, this prayer is for you!***

**DISCUSS**

**Praying in silence**

Solitude and silence is an ancient spiritual discipline that can help us become very aware of God’s presence. Some of us are drawn to this expression of prayer and others find it rather difficult to be quiet and still. This is largely to do with our makeup but the truth is, we all need it. We live in a world that is increasingly busy and noisy – even in our homes. For Elijah, after the frenzied activity and noise of Mt Carmel, God came in the quietness.

 *1 Kings 19:12*

*…and after the fire came a gentle whisper.*

***What are the benefits of being quiet before God?***

***Discuss how you might try this, as a group. Some people are helped by providing a focus, like a small cross or sculpture or candle. Talk about this.***

**ACT**

**Praying with nature**

To gaze into the face of a flower and feel grateful to the Creator is a prayer!

Make arrangements to view a DVD, or download a nature documentary from David Attenborough, or similar. A simple “thank you, Lord” is eloquent praise.

**PRAY**

Go outside, or look through a window, at the world God made. With your eyes open, and using all your other senses as well, praise God for all that is good in nature and how it affects your spirit.