

Conversations with God

Sunday July 24th 2016 10th after Pentecost

A Reflection based on Luke 11: 9-11

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Prayer: Gracious God we realize that you invite us to talk with you at any time and in any place. And though you do always respond in the ways we desire, we pray that you will keep us steadfastly reliant upon your grace. Speak to us though the silence of reflection, the wisdom of your Word and the conversation of prayer. Amen

In this technology transforming time our ways of communication have become mind-boggling. Did you ever think the home phone would become obsolete? With satellites and cell towers grandparents can watch their grandchildren sing and dance anywhere in the world in real time, at the same moment. Facetime and Skype allows us to see and talk to them. Face-book connects you with the latest information. Emails and texting have almost made the Postal service obsolete!

I am here to announce that God can still be reached directly through prayer. No complicated high power technology, just the higher power.

We trust that God is always available, an ever-present God. You can just start talking to God, anytime, anywhere. Some people use pop-up prayers, sending a thought without waiting for a response. *Message sent*

We all need to remember that we can have two way conversations with God.

Conversations that include listening and waiting in silence. We need to take the time to listen for God. Do you have a place to pray, a quiet garden, a place by the ocean, I like to light a candle and just sit quietly. I don't usually get answers but that quiet space is good for my spirit.

Marjorie Thompson in her book Soul Feast reminds us that : "God is always present with us, whether or not we can feel this reality. In a very real sense, then, the foundation of all prayer is being present to the presence of God. We have all experienced times when we are present in body but unavailable mentally to one another. When we want to communicate well, we try not to be distracted by time limits, inner thoughts, or external circumstances. If we want to have a conversation with God, we need to give these considerations to God too."

Pause and BREATHE

When we take time to breathe easily, quiet our minds and center ourselves we are more able to focus on God in prayer.

You might be thinking, " even when I am very still and focused I still can't hear God speaking!" . Clear communication can be challenging with One who is invisible and intangible, an omnipotent God, everywhere....

God desires to be known and heard, so God has many ways of communicating with us.

God speaks to us through the scriptures. God speaks to us through creation and the wonder of nature. God communicates with us through other people. Perhaps someone who knows us very well speaks just the word we need to hear. Perhaps a complete stranger appears at a crucial moment with a word of encouragement, guidance or

warning. We may not be aware that God uses us to be messengers of Grace for others too.

Frederick Buechner writes about prayer in his book Listening to Your Life p. 211

And there is a sense of humour with the illustration we heard this morning;

“If your child asks for a fish will you give a snake or if your child asks for an egg will you give a scorpion? So how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

So the scripture answer about prayer is to be persistent in our praying and that we should **ask, seek, knock** --- then be patient. Answers to our prayers will come to us in unexpected ways, from unexpected places and through unexpected doors.

I love this assurance about God answering prayer:

Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. Luke 11:9

Scripture reminds us :

“Ask and it will be given to you: ... For everyone who asks receives....”

Take time to think about your prayer experience of asking and receiving

When you pray to God, what do you ask for? You can talk to God about your concerns; praying for a friend who is sick, or someone facing a life challenge, or a family problem. I believe when we pause and hold that person before God in our thoughts the power of prayer works. Often the answer is love in action. God works through people to help those we are praying for. When we pray to God for someone, although our words suggest we are asking God to fix things for the other person, what we are really doing is directing loving intention, energy, and care to the other person.”

Scripture reminds us :

“Search and you will find : ... For everyone who searches finds....”

What are you searching for? Are you searching for spiritual growth and a stronger faith? Are you willing to let God lead you on this search? You may need to let go of some strong convictions to allow room for new growth. Sometimes it is hard to let go of the past, our good ideas, our way of dealing with relationships, even our patterns for praying! Deep within us is a place where we can find God because God is always with us and understands us. Once in a great while we come to this place within us and we realize it is the goal of our seeking. It is a place where we can be at home with God and upheld by God’s love and peace. We may be challenged to grow and change, but always in the context of deep and strong love. Through this searching, seeking, prayer conversation, we may even find a new relationship with God.

Scripture reminds us :

“Knock and the door will be opened for you: ...

For everyone who knocks the door will be opened. ...”

I know it is stereotypical picture of Jesus knocking on the door but I happen to still find it very inspiring. Have you noticed that there is no door handle? We need to take the responsibility to open the door. So do we do the knocking or is God knocking and waiting for us?

Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. Luke 11:9

The passage from Luke reminds us of the abundant love of God. Jesus encourages us to be persistent and patient in our conversations with God.

So we need to be faithful and confident as we pray knowing that God hears our prayers but sometimes answers to our prayers will come to us in unexpected and surprising ways. God is always ready to have conversations with us, whether we are asking, seeking or knocking. Be confident that to persist in prayer is a two way conversation, enter into that conversation with faith, hope and love and your prayers will find answers. Amen