**‘Practice: Daily Prayer’ 6/5/18**

* Psalm 55.17

Praying all hours when in distress – carpet job!

Turning point: ‘**he hears my voice’**.

* 1 Thessalonians 5.16-18

What does Paul mean by ‘pray continually’?

TV interview from Wells cathedral: ‘I’m not far away from praying most of the time.’ ‘I think to God all the time.’ Find the complete interview here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/oj0cmd3trts2nil/Wells%20cathedral.mov?dl=0>

What are people’s experiences of this ‘habit’ of prayer?
**All kinds of everything remind me of you**. Dana.

But: **In order to pray everywhere all of the time, we have to start by praying somewhere, some of the time.** John Dalrymple, a Scottish spiritual writer.

* 3 Rs related to prayer.
1. Prayer rooted in our **Relationship** with the Lord.

Henri Nouwen: ‘**love does not tolerate distance’**. Prayer an intimate conversation with God. He longs for us to come to him.

Mother Theresa said to Nouwen, just spend an hour a day adoring Jesus and try not to do anything that you know to be wrong and you’ll be all right.

Often we just give him the fag-ends of our time.

Intimate conversation, not mechanical ‘saying our prayers’

St. Theresa of Avila famous for talking about friendship with God:

**Become aware of how close God is to you, lovingly, humbly teaching you. Stay with so good a friend for as long as you can before you leave him. You’ll never be able to send him away if you become accustomed to having him at your side… He is so near that he will hear us, however quietly we speak. We’ve only to find a place where we can be alone, and look upon him present within us. There’s no need to feel strange in the presence of so kind a guest. We talk to him very humbly as we should to a friend. We ask him for things as from a friend. We tell him our troubles and we beg him to put them right.**

1. Prayer a place of **Resting** in him, in his Presence ‘**Come to me, Jesus said, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**.

Luigi Gioia: ‘**Just like flowers, the moment we stop turning to the sun we start withering’.**

1. **Requests**. Rublev’s icon of the Trinity - hold people in the gap.
* Daniel 6.10 (Lion’s den)

Discipline of regular daily prayer helpful. What time of day do you pray?

Resistance to praying (Why is it?). The hardness of getting started.

* Getting started
1. Sing - list of songs, one for each day of the month.
2. Read a few verses of the Bible - good springboard into prayer.
3. Use a liturgy, eg CoE Morning Prayer, or Celtic Daily Prayer
4. How do you address God? Meditate on one of the names of God
eg. Father, Our Father, Jesus, Saviour; Saviour of the world. Jehovah Jireh, my Provider. Breath of God. God of all comfort. Friend of sinners. Shepherd of my soul. Bringer of joy. Beloved…
* Have a fallback plan

The CoE liturgy can provide a straightforward pattern:
1) praise and worship.
2) scripture
3) Prayer for myself and others, culminating in the Lord’s Prayer.

Another pattern might be:
1) Confession, receiving his forgiveness and cleansing.
2) Rest in his Presence, offer myself to him.
3) Think about favourite verses about God
4) Wait in the stillness, joyfully expectant, worship him, delight in him
5) Pray for other people and situations

* Ideas from Saint Francis de Sales, the French priest from the 16th century:

1) Simply imagine as we pray that God is all around us,
2) imagine him within us. He never leaves us.
3) imagine Christ peeping in at me, the one he loves, through the latticework of the window as I pray – Song of Solomon: **‘Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice**’.
4) ‘a little nosegay of devotion’ carry a verse with you through the day to inhale its perfume spiritually.

* Other ideas
1. A walk of wonder
2. Silence. Add short periods of silence into your prayer time, resting in his presence. Sinai example, using the ‘nosegay’ ‘There is a place near me where you may stand upon a rock’
3. Cut-up prayer lists, 3 a day
4. The BLESS acrostic:

**Body: health, protection, strength**

**Labour: work, income, security**

**Emotional: joy, peace, hope**

**Social: love, marriage, family, friends, community**

**Spiritual: salvation, faith, grace**

1. Pray after watching the news.
2. Crafted prayers (Graham Cooke). Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to pray for a person. Add ideas and Bible verses that come to you. Write it up as a coherent prayer that you can pray for them each day.
3. Review of the Day - think back over your day and what was good, what brought you life and give thanks, then what was not so good and offer that to God too.
* Conclusion

There is no one formula to follow. Do ask the Spirit to guide you how he wants you to pray

Mix it up, to keep it fresh, it’s a dynamic relationship. Any method of prayer can fossilise if it’s not constantly refreshed. Experiment.

Respond to the nudges of the Holy Spirit to pray at other times.

Remember it’s all rooted in our relationship with the Lord.

**Be joyful always; pray always; give thanks always**.