

Genesis 18:20-32

Psalm 138

Colossians 2:6-19

Luke 11:1-13

Sermon July 24th, 2022

God Wants a Meaningful Relationship with Us Too

Naturally, when we want to become more connected with someone, we look for ways to communicate with them. For example, you feel attracted to someone, and so, ask them out to dinner or for a coffee/tea (**Image**). This way you can get to know the person better. Seeing if this relationship is worth pursuing further. If the dinner or coffee date lasts less than an hour then it is probably the last time you will see this person. If it lasts for hours then bingo. Welcome to date number 2.

For those of us who are way past the dating phase of our lives. Sometimes we meet friends through our children. Maybe your children are both on the same sports team or in the same swimming class or in the same science club. You casually meet for the first time as you wait for your children's class to end. You enter into a conversation that peaks your interest about this person. So, you schedule a playdate so you can have a better opportunity to talk with this person more.

Sometimes we struggle to communicate with a significant other. The stresses of life become overwhelming, and instead of sitting down and talking it out with our significant other. We fight with them (**Image**). We shut down. We walk away. Eventually we get to a point where we either need to get help by seeing a counsellor together, or part ways. If we choose the former, we have an opportunity to learn how to better communicate with each other.

What we learn from the many different relationships we experience is that communicating well with others leads to deeper and more meaningful relationships.

Well, in our gospel this morning, the disciples see that Jesus invests a lot of time and energy into praying, into communicating with the Father, the Creator. In fact, they also observe John's disciples, and see that they too have a well-structured committed prayer life.

Even though Luke doesn't dive into more detail here, I'm sure the disciples witness how Jesus and John's disciple's committed prayer life helps them feel more connected to God. Helps them live out what God has envisioned for their lives.

When we communicate often with someone, we find that they rub off on us. We are influenced by their thoughts and behaviours, and vice versa.

Well, Jesus' disciples find themselves longing to have a commitment to prayer similar to Jesus and John's disciples. They too want to feel more connected to God, and God's kingdom come. So, they ask Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Do you struggle to pray? Do you feel insecure about your ability to pray? Am I praying the right way? Am I saying the right things? Should I kneel to pray or does it count when I am talking to God while driving or while going on a walk by the river? Or am I really just talking to myself? Should I pray only for others, or can I pray for my own needs as well? Does God even listen or take time to answer my prayers?

In response to Jesus' disciples request, he teaches them the prayer we have come to know as the Lord's prayer. A prayer that helps us stay connected to God in every aspect of our lives. From asking God to provide for our needs. To helping us bear witness to God's hospitality, forgiveness, healing, and redemption. God's kingdom come. From inspiring us to forgive others through God's grace. To protecting us from those who try to harm us.

Jesus gives us a template on what to say when we pray.

But on the subject of how we are to pray, Jesus leaves this up to us to wrestle with. Kneel. Sit. Stand. Lay down. Bow. Look up. Jump up and down (**Image**). You decide.

Did you know extroverts and introverts pray differently? Extroverts are much more likely to talk to God out loud on a walk or in the car. Extroverts are much more likely to feel comfortable in prayer groups. Introverts tend to feel more comfortable in our traditional ways of praying. Like, kneeling by one's bedside. Or sitting quietly in the church sanctuary. Bowing their heads, and folding their hands. Prayer isn't defined by what posture we use to pray.

Jesus gives his disciples, us, a template on what to say when we pray. Christians from every generation have said this prayer often to stay connected to God. To be reminded of the invitation to play an active role in God's kingdom come.

We say this prayer in worship. We say this prayer before we go to sleep. We say this prayer at the dinner table. We say this prayer as we grieve the death of a loved one. We say this prayer when celebrating the love of two people during a marriage ceremony (**Image**).

Sometimes we recite it word for word. Sometimes we speak what is on our heart using this prayer as a template.

How we pray, what words we use to pray, isn't as important as making time to pray. To communicate with God. To feel more connected to God. So, that God will rub off on us. So, that we will be influenced by what God says and does for us through Christ Jesus.

Through the word of God. So, that we can be revealers of God's kingdom come. Living out this kingdom in our communities.

And also, because God wants to feel connected to us. God wants to play an active role in our lives. God wants to communicate with us. God invites us into prayer as often as a persistent friend who needs bread, knocks on their friend's door after midnight over and over again, until their friend is willing to wake up, and part with some bread. That is how much God wants a relationship with us.

And so, God gives us opportunities to pray. God gives us a template for prayer. God invites us into prayer. So, that we can feel connected to God. So, that God can feel connected to us. So, that we can experience God's kingdom come.

Let us pray, loving God, thank you for inviting us into relationship with you. Thank you for blessing us with the relationships we have with one another. Help us stay connected with you and your kingdom come through prayer. Open our hearts to share with you our feelings and our needs. Open our ears to listen to your answers. **Amen.**

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