

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."² He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.³ Give us each day our daily bread.⁴ And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial."⁵ And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.'⁷ And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.⁹ "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish?¹² Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Luke 11:1-13 NRSV

There is an old saying that goes something like this, "Everything in life is location, location, location!" I would like to change that to say "everything in life is Communication, Communication, and Communication!" Yes, we do talk, and words happen at every instance, but really are we communicating? Words can be so misinterpreted that feelings can be hurt because of a failure of communication. I read somewhere about an individual who hated one of their family members for something said to him when he was younger. In fact it was like a weight on his life. Finally he confronted that family member about what was said at a family event. When the family member responded, the individual found out that wasn't what the family member meant! All those time, all those ill feelings, because of a failure to communicate a long time ago. There is also the rather humorous story someone told about going to church, and being afraid of the service when it was time for communion. In this tradition, it seems the elders would bring in the bread and wine during the offertory part of the service. Someone would announce that it was "now time to bring in the elements". The person, then, little, would hide under the pew, because he thought they were "bringing in the "elephants"!

In Luke's gospel, the disciples constantly see Jesus in prayer or taking time for prayer. They too would like to pray, but they want to get the "communication piece" right.

So Jesus gives them a pattern for prayer that we know as the "Lord's prayer" It is a very familiar prayer, but it helps us do many things in communication with God. First there is worship, with the clear title "Our Father" signifying that God is like a parent, family member that we look up to. Yet make no mistake God is other and so God's majesty is honored as well. It is a prayer of petition for our daily needs, and prayer of a need for the forgiveness of our sins as we forgive others.

Yet Jesus doesn't stop there because God honors our constant communication and petitions as well in the story of the persistent neighbor who has a need in the middle of the night.

All of this should keep reminding us that we need to keep in communicate early and often with God. If you don't know what to say, say the Lord's Prayer. A minister told the story of when he was in a life threatening situation, and he needed God's help, and all he could say was the Lord's Prayer.

Know that when you pray, God will answer, maybe not on your time table, but God will answer. As Pam and I remind the confirmands when we talk about prayer, ***God answers either with a "yes" or "no" or a "wait"***.

Need to connect with God? As the expression goes "Just don't stand there, pray something!"

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