

Kirk Qtrly



“Equipping the Saints”

Pastor's Letter

With this edition of the Kirk Quarterly, we are starting something new. Whereas before much of the newsletter was given to updates and upcoming events, beginning with this edition, we will focus less on the updates and more on one specific topic concerning our faith. Take for example this quarter's newsletter, it is all about prayer, a subject very near and dear to my heart. From various angles and to diverse ends, we have asked our staff and officers to write all with a focus towards prayer. I trust you all will see these throughout this newsletter and be encouraged in your prayer.

And while I have you, I would like to talk of the very practical subject of how one ought to pray, especially concerning the scheduling and organizing of our prayers. I will leave the motivational part of prayer to another. What I would like to talk about is how we all know we should pray, and pray

more, but seriously, how are we going to do something about it? Let me propose two helpful aids.

First, come up with a prayer schedule. Concerning the litany of prayers that we know we should be asking

and those that we told other people we would pray for, one way to tackle this is through a list. Whereas a list is a generally a good idea, the problem of it is the format, where we are pretty much forced to pray one by one through the entire list each time. Granted praying more is never a bad idea, practically speaking it doesn't always happen because we tend to peter out (does 'peter' reference to apostle failing to pray in

In This Issue

3 > We Pray!

4 > Nothing Left to Pray

5 > Upcoming Events

7 > The Lord's Prayer

8 > Missions Prayer

9 > Never Pray Alone

Pastor's Letter

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Gethsemane? I take issue with that phrase by the way!).

An alternative way to pray is a prayer schedule, where one prays through various categories and persons on different days. For example from my own prayer schedule (I geek out on it and call it my prayer matrix), every day I am praying for my family (category), but each day I pray something different for them. For example in the category of my kids, Monday is for praying through their schooling, Tuesday for honoring their parents, Wednesday for their future, etc. I am also praying each day for other categories such as my friends, church, and God's greater kingdom. This way each day I am praying for something different. I am covering in prayer all the various matters I need and want to pray about with regularity and variety. If you would like to see my prayer matrix, I would love to show it to you, though, you will not be able to see all of it, because I may be praying something for you!

Second, APTAT. Yes, I know it sounds like a terrible diagnosis, but truly it is a blessed aid to us in prayer. I stole it straight from John Piper, but I believe he would want us to do so. APTAT is an acronym for a method of prayer applied to very specific requests. Unlike ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication), which surveys all the subject matters of our prayer, APTAT addresses how should I pray for this one thing. For instance, I'm praying for help with my sermon preparation and delivery, how should I pray? This method suggests the following:

(1) Admit - admit or confess to the Lord that apart from Him we can do nothing. This very important step of humility is crucial for us to be reliant upon the Lord in our prayer, and especially when delivering His word to His people.

(2) Pray - ask the Lord to help you and particularly. Seeing that you cannot do it, and only He can, then we should seek, find, and ask of our Heavenly Father who only gives to us good gifts!

(3) Trust - Find the promises that God has given to us in this particular area that we may by faith cling to in our prayer. This requires us to know these promises, and have them memorized, so that we may use them! For example, I take Ezekiel 3:1-4, where the Lord has the prophet open his mouth and feed him the Word, and I say, "Lord, as you feed Ezekiel with the word, do so with me, that I may speak Your word to Your people."

(4) Act - This step reminds us God still calls us to do something, to step out in faith upon the promises to do what He has called us to do. Acting may come after a long time of prayer, but it still must be done; we must act. Yet, our action is one that is based upon faith in the Lord, and if God be for us, who can be against us? And finally...

(5) Thank- an often overlooked conclusion, but it is only to our own demise. Thanking God for what He has done or what He has promised to do despite what we may happen to see will promote our own joy and engender greater trust in the Lord.

So there you have it APTAT and the prayer matrix. May the Lord supply you the help you need to bend your knee in prayer. ❖

We Pray!

BY KATE DYER

An article by Tim Challies, “It’s Okay To Just Pray” recently caught my attention. He began the article with, “I have yet to meet the Christian who has mastered prayer. In fact, I have yet to meet the Christian who feels like much more than a beginner in the school of prayer. Though I know many who pray, I know few who understand prayer.” He continues to explain that we don’t need to understand prayer, we simply need to pray. Challies says, “we should press on in obedience and faith—obedience to God’s clear command and faith that our prayers are meaningful to God. We should press on in earnest prayer, in confident prayer, in constant prayer and in all kinds of prayer, trusting that God loves to hear them and act upon them.” That buoyed my spirit!

In the Ladies Tuesday Morning Bible study my heart has been so encouraged by our time in prayer. At the beginning of each study, a prayer sheet is passed around for each participant to share just one prayer request. We then pray for each of these at the end of the class. Many continue in prayer for those requests throughout the week. Praying aloud is strictly voluntary. Several who were reluctant to pray at the beginning of the study now jump in with the rest of us! Amazing things have happened as a result of studying and praying together. First, the ladies often share deep requests because trust has developed as

we’ve prayed together. In our current study of Behold Your God—Rethinking God Biblically

God is plowing up fallow ground in our hearts. Last Tuesday one of our ladies

requested that the Lord would uproot bitterness and self-righteousness in her heart. Wow...what a vulnerable and transparent request! It is a real encouragement to hear another Christian take your request before the

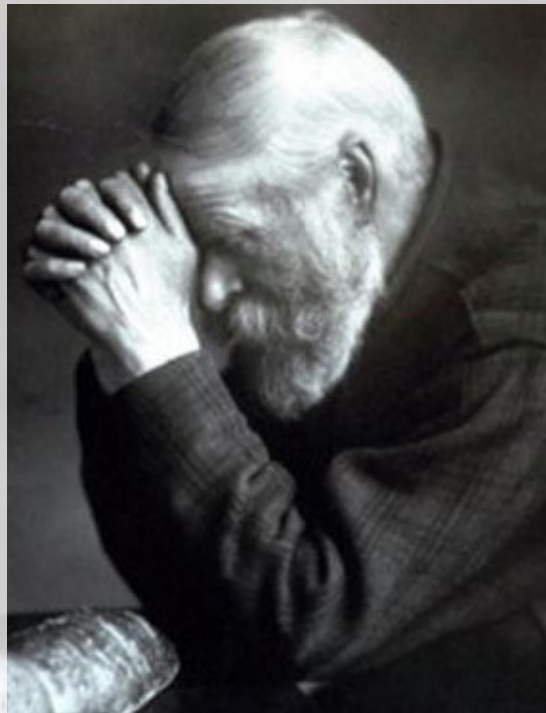
throne of God.

Secondly, a true camaraderie has happened among the women. Sweet friendships have been made between young and old and between those who were strangers at the beginning of the study. This has been so exciting to watch. Finally, because we pray earnestly for each

request we rejoice together in thankfulness and praise when our God answers a request. We are truly joyful which is what our Lord desires us to have in our relationship with Him.

We would love to have each woman at The Kirk join us in this sweet and challenging time on Tuesdays. If not now, think “Fall” when we will again study a book written by Nancy Guthrie on Acts. It is a precious time.

❖



Nothing Left To Pray

BY TY DONALDSON

There is something deep in the soul of humanity that naturally desires its questions to be answered. In marriage or friendships, ignoring questions is untenable. That



relationship will not stand because trust will be broken. Saying, “Let me get back to you on that,” will only last so long before the other party begins to question if you

really care or are listening at all. Imagine being in a lecture hall, as the speaker finishes his speech, he asks for questions from the floor. You raise your hand but, despite your persistence, other people in the room continue to be called on. If we are honest, these scenarios describe how we feel in our prayers. Does God hear us? Does He see what is going on? Why am I praying at all? What else can I pray that has not already been prayed? Does God even care? Let’s look at some real situations where we find ourselves struggling to pray and then pair those with Scriptures that aid us in how to respond when there is nothing left to pray.

A deep-seated desire within the heart of humanity, besides the desire we just discussed to be heard and valued, is the desire for

justice, retribution, and vindication. Vengeance can be desired for a wrong committed against us individually or something bigger. Sadly, sin is pervasive in all areas of life. We can feel violated personally if someone has stolen from us. We experience death and sickness. We also can see the wrongs happening through war, famine, natural disasters, and more. We know innately that this is not right. As Christians, we know injustice exists because of the pervasiveness of sin. How can we keep praying for justice, though, when there is nothing left to pray?

We find in Luke 18:1-8 the parable of the persistent widow. Her constant cry before the judge was “Give me justice against my adversary!” (18:3). The judge surrenders to the woman’s persistence not because of any goodness in him, but because he was beaten down and bothered by her “continual coming.” Christ gives us two things to glean from as we feel like this woman in our incessant groaning. First, God (the righteous judge) will answer our questions and cries for help. He will not just merely answer though, Christ says He will answer “speedily” (18:8). Then, secondly, with his closing question of “Will the Son of Man find any faith on earth?”, the implication is that persistence is a sign of faith (18:8). So when we are wearied to the point of becoming complacent in our prayers because we do not know if they are being heard, or if we are on the verge of seeking to take action into our own hands, trust dear saint that he will answer and he will “give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night” (Luke 18:7; cf. Romans 10:19; Hebrews 10:30; Deut 32:35-43; Isa. 40:10). ❖

Upcoming Events

A graphic for a family campout featuring a silhouette of a tent and trees against a sunset background with orange and yellow hues.

**FAMILY
CAMPOUT**

Mar 15-16 | 2024

4TH SATURDAY LADIES WALK



10AM | @ The Kirk

A graphic for 'Planters of the Gospel' featuring a tree in the center, surrounded by the text 'PLANTERS OF THE GOSPEL' in a circular arrangement. A small circular stamp with the word 'YOUTH' is in the top left corner.

**PLANTERS
OF THE GOSPEL**

Mar 30 | 9am

GRILLIN' ON THE GROUNDS

1st & 3rd Sunday
After PM Worship

A graphic for men's paintball featuring a paintball mask with a blue visor and red accents, surrounded by paint splatters and paintballs.

**MEN'S
PAINTBALL**

Apr 27 | 9am-1pm

4TH FRIDAY MEN'S LUNCH



12PM | Fellowship Hall

TRACKING OUR GIVING*

2019		\$395,723
2020		\$380,779
2021		\$487,091
2022		\$515,808
2023		\$577,215
2024 YTD		\$105,143

**Does not include special contributions*



The Lord's Prayer

BY DAN OPAZO

I've recently been blessed by one of my Seminary classes called "Personal Sanctification." Particularly, the required reading assignment that had me read my favorite puritan author, Thomas Watson, book entitled *The Lord's Prayer*. In this book, he details out the preface, six petitions, and conclusion of the Lord's prayer. Martin Luther also famously wrote a letter to his barber instructing him how to pray using the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles Creed, and the Ten Commandments, which I commend to you. You probably also know that our Catechism (Westminster) expounds the Lord's Prayer and really breaks down what Jesus meant when he said "pray then like this." He gave us a model prayer, or a sample prayer, or as Thomas Watson calls Jesus' prayer here, the "Prayer of prayers."

I'd like to share with you a few encouragements from the book as you think about the Lord's prayer. We have the great privilege of being able to go to the throne of grace as God's children, but often times, we neglect prayer. It's been said that while the new believer struggles with worldliness, a seasoned Christian may struggle with prayerlessness. Watson tells us that "Christ went more readily *ad crucem* [to the cross] than we to the throne of grace" and with that I would encourage you to be in prayer in two ways:

My first encouragement for you is that our Heavenly Father is just that, our Father. This is such a simple, yet such a profound truth for us as the adopted children of God.

Watson says "The word 'Father' works upon God; it toucheth his very bowels. What can a father deny his child? 'If his son ask bread,

will he give him a stone?' Matthew vii 9...We pray to a Father of mercy sitting upon a throne of grace." This first encouragement for you is to remind you that God is your Heavenly Father. He loves you, he has shown you his love in that he sent his Son



to redeem you and calls us you come to him in prayer for your every need. That very first line of the Lord's prayer has much power in it, I would encourage you to go to your Father in prayer.

My second encouragement is for you to REMEMBER that God is your Father! If God be our Father, and He is, then let us honor him as our Father. Watson in his book says this: "A young prince, having asked a philosopher how he should behave himself, the philosopher said '*memento te filium esse regis.*' [Remember, thou art a king's son] do nothing but what becomes the son of a king." Remember who it is that has redeemed you, the King of all creation, the King of Glory! Remember also, that he bids you to come to him in prayer as a Father: praising him, thanking him, relying on him, asking him for forgiveness, and ultimately, trusting him with your whole life. John Calvin called prayer the "chief exercise of faith." Exercise faith and go to your heavenly Father in prayer. ❖

Missions Prayer

BY DAN & LINDA BREEN

In praying for our missionaries, we should pray with **specifics** and **knowledge**. Remember that they depend on the prayers of the church for God's guidance, healing, courage, endurance, new workers, church facilities, financial and family needs among other very unique and specific situations. An excellent resource to learn about specific missionaries needs, may be found in the weekly "Catching Up with the Kirk." Every week you will learn about a mission or missionary's recent activities, trials, and requests for prayer. Another great resource is our monthly prayer card which has a section "Missionaries and Prayer Partners" which you may use to help you pray throughout the month.

Most missionaries send monthly or quarterly updates. You may request to be added to their list to receive their communications personally. When you read them, take time to pray for their requests right away. You may also want to be the one who brings up their prayer requests in your Wednesday small group. Occasionally, there may be a request for a specific time period, mark your calendar to pray for the event at that specific time.

Another great way to pray for our missionaries is to write them a personal note. Let them know that you enjoyed their latest update and that you are praying for them. You may even want to list some of the specific requests they made. This is a great encouragement to them. We have been told that of the hundreds of emails missionaries send out, few often receive replies. Last May,

Jonah even said of the churches that support him, "You never write!" Let that not be true of us!

You will find that your response may result in a grateful reply. Sometimes we receive prayer and encouragement from the missionaries we support. The Breens recently received an email from the Kitchen family ministering in London that they were praying for them and the Kirk.

Occasionally, an urgent request arrives at the Kirk. In these cases, we send the request out to the whole church immediately. Here are some recent examples: Jonah had an opportunity to teach and connect with Pakistani Muslims and Christians in an Urdu speaking community in Dallas. He asked for prayer for he and his son, Jeremiah, to step out in faith as witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ to those still walking in fear and darkness. Jonah also recently requested prayer for his granddaughter, Ella, who had brain surgery to hopefully alleviate seizures she had been suffering for eight years! We were able to pray and then celebrate as we heard the surgery was successful and she is now seizure free!

Some of you will remember that last fall the Halberts had an opportunity to buy the property they had been renting in Honduras. The Kirk, alongside many others, mobilized in prayer and financial giving and in a short period of time the Halberts were able to purchase their property. To God be the glory!

Finally, we recently had a wonderful visit with the McGinitys from the University of Cape Town, SA. We learned that Pamela is beginning to train counselors for Biblical Counseling Africa. Coby is starting a new RUF

Missions Prayer

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

campus ministry at the University of Cape Town. These added responsibilities have brought added financial needs. The Kirk Missions Committee is aware of other missionaries in similar expanding roles. Please join us in praying that the Lord meets the financial needs of the McGinty's and others.

The Lord provides through the prayers and generosity of His people. Armed with these specifics and knowledge, we can direct our prayers to better serve our faithful missionaries. ❖



taking a break to answer important questions

Check Kirk App for more info

You Never Pray Alone

BY PHILIP RYAN

In seminary, I was introduced to the most popular sport in the world - soccer. I say introduced because I only knew of the janky major league soccer teams of my youth. I had no idea of the rich history of Premier League Soccer, UEFA (Union of European Football Associations), or the thrill of the World Cup. Many of my seminary friends were fiercely loyal to a particular team. They often chose this team because of a particular player or history of the team. I decided to choose a team and landed on Liverpool. One of the traditions in European soccer is every team has a song that the fans sing during matches. For Liverpool, that song is "You'll Never Walk Alone."

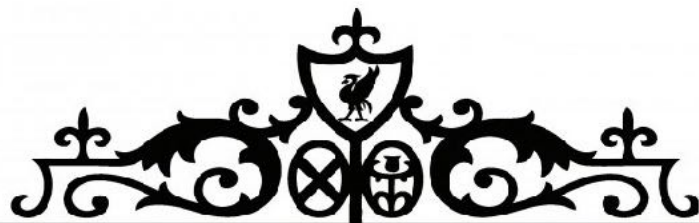
Look at the lyrics (right). It's a song full of persevering through dark and turbulent times. Walk with hope in your heart and you'll never walk alone. I share all this as a way of introduction to my thesis for this article: You Never Pray Alone.

In the song, you never walk alone as long as you've got hope

in your heart. As Christians we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a seal (Eph. 4:30), a convicter of sin (John 16:8), a comforter/helper (John 16:7), a teacher (John 14:26), and an intercessor (Rom. 8:26). It is this last role of the Spirit that I wish to discuss with you.

In Romans 8:26, Paul writes, "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with

groanings too deep for words." Have you ever been so overcome with emotion that you were rendered speechless? We all know how difficult it is to pray. I have always been comforted that the disciples failed so miserably at prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Yes, it is sad they could not stay awake to pray alongside their friend, teacher, and savior, but let's be honest and admit the many times we have failed to pray when it was needed. Maybe you have



YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

*When you walk through a storm
Hold your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark
At the end of a storm
There's a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of a lark
Walk on through the wind
Walk on through the rain
For your dreams be tossed and blown*

*Walk on, walk on
With hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk alone
Walk on, walk on
With hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk alone*

tried to stay awake in the wee hours of the morning only to wake up twenty minutes later? Maybe you've tried to pray but your heart was too overwhelmed with sorrow or grief or anxiety and you were at a loss for words. What do you do at times like that? When the storms and the darkness seem to surround you? When you think you are alone, pray on knowing the Holy Spirit prays with you and then you'll never pray alone.

John Murray writing on Romans 8:26 said, "The children of God have two divine intercessors. Christ is their intercessor in the court of heaven (cf. vs. 34; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1). The Holy Spirit is their intercessor in the theatre of their own hearts (cf. John 14:16, 17). Too seldom has the intercessory activity of the Holy Spirit been taken into account. The glory of Christ's intercession should not be allowed to place the Spirit's intercession in eclipse." I love that thought, "The Holy Spirit is their intercessor in the theatre of their own hearts." His groanings, whatever they might be, belong to him on behalf of you. When you lack the words, when you lack the thoughts, when you lack the heart, the Spirit will supply your prayers even if they come out as inaudible groans. They will be more than sufficient to reach the throne of heaven where your other intercessor, the Son, sits at the Father's right hand and lives to make intercession for you.

How does this change your view of prayer? Does it cause you to lift your head a little higher knowing that prayer is not solely dependent on you? Does it comfort

you to know that you never pray alone? The great Scottish Presbyterian minister Robert M'Cheyne said, "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me." Saints, take heart for you have two out of three members of the Trinity praying on your behalf to the other member of the Trinity who delights to hear their intercessions and your prayers. You never pray alone. ❖



1. Religious Affections by Jonathan Edwards
2. God Smuggler by Brother Andrew w/ John & Elizabeth Sherrill
3. Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor by D.A. Carson
4. Ministry in the New Realm: A Theology of 2 Corinthians by Dane Ortlund
5. J. Gresham Machen by Ned Stonehouse
6. The Christian Life by Sinclair Ferguson
7. The Bible & the Future by Anthony Hoekema



The Kirk Presbyterian
3212 Bee Road
Savannah, GA 31404
www.kirkpca.org