

“First Watch” Touch Points for Evangel’s Prayer Vigil team **For the week of January 4, 2014**

Developing a Praying Life – part 1

To begin 2015, we return to a series that has run before in Touch Points—a series that affirms the purpose of focusing on the importance of prayer in our personal lives, as well in our corporate desire to be the church that God wants Evangel to be. Whether it is new to you or you remember it from before, I hope it will be an encouragement to deepen your prayer life and, together with others at Evangel, know that others have been drawn to Christ because of prayer and obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives. -- *Stu Johnson, editor*

INSIGHTS

The Kingdom of Noise...

American culture is probably the hardest place in the world to learn to pray. We are so busy that when we slow down to pray, we find it uncomfortable. We prize accomplishments, production. But prayer is nothing but talking to God. It feels useless, as if we are wasting time. Every bone in our bodies screams, “Get to work.”

...if we try to be quiet, we are assaulted by what C. S. Lewis called “the Kingdom of Noise.” Everywhere we go we hear background noise. If the noise isn’t provided for us, we can bring our own via iPod.

One of the subtlest hindrances to prayer is probably the most pervasive. In the broader culture and in our churches, we prize intellect, competency, and wealth. Because we can do life without God, praying seems nice but unnecessary. Money can do what prayer does, and it is quicker and less time-consuming. Our trust in ourselves and in our talents makes us structurally independent of God. As a result, exhortations to pray don’t stick.

Where we are headed...

Miller uses chapter 2 to give a hint of what prayer can be.

The Praying Life...

- Feels like dinner with good friends
- Is interconnected with all of life
- Becomes aware of the story
People often talk about prayer as if it is disconnected from what God is doing in their lives. But we are actors in his drama, listening for our lines, quieting our hearts so we can hear the voice of the Playwright.
- Gives birth to hope
Many Christians haven’t stopped believing in God; we have just become functional deists, living with God at a distance. ...But as we learn to pray well, we’ll discover that this is my Father’s world. Because my Father controls everything, I can ask, and he will listen and act. Since I am his child, change is possible—and hope is born.
- Becomes integrated
...even a cursory glance at Jesus’ life reveals a busy life.
...Learning to pray doesn’t offer us a less busy life; it offers us a less busy heart.
- Reveals the heart

From [A Praying Life](#), Paul E. Miller, [NavPress](#) (2009), pages 15-16, 19-24 (chapters 1 and 2)

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray that God will use this series to provide you with new insights, and to help you develop (or deepen) a praying life. Pray that as you join with others, there will be a remarkable movement of the Spirit among us in the months ahead. Pray this week that God will reveal His heart and enable you to have a quiet heart.
- Reflect on this week’s worship service, the music, Scriptures, and Pastor Dave’s sermon from Romans 3 and John 10, “Jesus and his Bible – Part 1.” Pray that the Lord will lead you to ways to apply the lessons learned in your own walk with Christ and as you connect with different people this week.
- Continue to remember one family from your circle of influence for intercession. They could be a neighbor, coworker or relative. Pray for their struggles to be resolved, their health improved and their relationships strengthened. Ask the Lord to bring them to a fuller, closer relationship with Himself in faith and obedience.
- Continue to pray for opportunities to invite people to our services or become engaged in spiritual discovery with the people of Evangel in other ways as well. Ask the Lord to open doors of conversation, connection or compassion with others to enable that engagement this week.

* A podcast of the sermon and other materials are normally posted on the website by Monday.

Touch Points is e-mailed every Friday, posted on the website (www.evbapt.org), with printed copies available in the lobby.