

“First Watch” Touch Points for Evangel’s Prayer Vigil team

For the week of January 11, 2015

Developing a Praying Life – part 2

INSIGHTS

Become Like a Little Child...

[Like children] Jesus wants us to be without pretense when we come to him in prayer. Instead, we often try to be something we aren’t. We begin by concentrating on God, but almost immediately our minds wander off in a dozen different directions....life crowds out prayer....

Come Messy...The difficulty of coming just as we are is that we are messy. And prayer makes it worse. When we slow down to pray, we are immediately confronted with how unspiritual we are, with how difficult it is to concentrate on God....In contrast, little children never get frozen by their selfishness....we are delighted (most of the time) to find out what is on their little hearts. We don’t scold them for being self-absorbed or fearful. That is just who they are.

...Jesus opens his arms to his needy children and says, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28). The criteria for coming to Jesus is weariness. Come overwhelmed with life. Come with your wandering mind. Come messy.

Don’t try to get prayer right; just tell God where you are and what’s on your mind. That’s what little children do....like the disciples, they just say what’s on their minds.

The Real You...Why is it so important to come to Jesus just as you are? If you don’t, then you are artificial and unreal, just like the PhariseesJesus accused them of being hypocrites, of being masked actors with two faces. They weren’t real.

The only way to come to God is by taking off any spiritual mask. The real you has to meet the real God. He is a person. So, instead of being frozen by your self-preoccupation, talk with God about your worries. Tell him where you are weary. If you don’t begin with where you are, then where you are will sneak in the back door. Your mind will wander to where you are weary.

...In bringing your real self to Jesus, you give him the opportunity to work on the real you, and you will slowly change. The kingdom will come. You’ll end up less selfish. The kingdom comes when Jesus becomes king of your life. But it has to be *your life*. You can’t create a kingdom that doesn’t exist, where you try to be better than you really are....Instead of being the real, messy you meeting God, you try to re-create yourself by becoming spiritual.

Touching Our Father’s Heart...The opening words of the Lord’s Prayer are *Our Father*. You are the center of your heavenly Father’s affection. That is where you find rest for your soul. If you remove prayer from the welcoming heart of God, prayer becomes a legalistic chore. We do the duty but miss touching the heart of God. By coming to God “weary and heavy-laden,” we discover his heart; heaven touches earth and his will is done.

From [A Praying Life](#), Paul E. Miller, [NavPress](#) (2009), pages 29-34 (chapter 3)

PRAYER PROMPTS

- If you are troubled by a wandering mind, let it “wander to where you are weary.” Make them the subject of your prayer. In fact, prayer can be like a conversation with friends at dinner, which moves spontaneously from one topic to another (from chapter 1). Pray that God will use your wandering mind and weariness to reveal the real you...so that you can discover your heavenly Father’s heart.
- Reflect on this week’s worship service, the music, Scriptures, and Pastor Dave’s sermon from Exodus 24 and other Scripture references, “Jesus and his Bible – Part 2.” 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.

