



From Our Vicar

Rev. Wayne Walters

Nurturing a Life of Prayer John 16:23-24

Probably the most foundational activity of being a disciple of Jesus is to pray. Prayer at its basic level is communication with God. As with human-to-human communication, prayer is a means of building and nurturing relationship, in this case with God. When we withdraw from communication, the relationship drifts. A challenge of prayer is that we can't see God. This communication is spiritual – it arises from faith that God is there, faith which is strengthened through familiarity with the words and life of Jesus. And this does not depend on remote memory or example only – for Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to those who turn their lives over to God.

It is the Holy Spirit, with our own need and desperation at times, who moves us to pray, and whose presence we become so strongly aware of when we pray. This is particularly true when we pray with others. 'Where two or three come together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Mt 18:20

As the church year moves toward the celebration of Pentecost, our readings focus on John's gospel with Jesus' parting words to his intimate associates at the Last Supper.

Here we find repeated sweeping promises of answered prayer on the lips of Jesus. *'I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.'* (See also Jn 15:7)

How do we take hold of such a promise with confidence? A key, I believe, is where prayer arises from a knowledge of who we are as God's beloved children - a knowledge released into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, 'the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry Abba, Father'. Rom. 8:15

This knowledge enables us to have patience and to persevere when we see no answer. Yet also to recognise the voice of God prompting and encouraging us along the way, both in the part he would have us play toward the answer, and in recognising the often small steps of progress, which faith recognises as an encouragement that more is coming.

May God grace us with eyes to see, ears to hear and the perseverance in prayer that is both the fuel for and the evidence of faith. Such faith produces fruit that lasts, with resounding joy.

God bless,
Wayne